

Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond in Writing

Course Number COMM 310 or Degree Plan(s) _____

State the requested change and reason. A memo may be attached if more space is necessary.

Our department is requesting to add COMM 310 to the Arts and Humanities menu. See attached application and syllabus.

Indicate the requested change.

	Change to a Course	Dept./School ¹	College	Dean	TEC	UGEC	AUAC/Grad	Provost	President
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I	–	I	I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I	–	I	I	I
3.	Course term(s)	A	I	A	I	–	I	I	I
4.	Content (change of course outcomes)	A	A	A	I	–	I	A	I
5.	Number of hours (lecture, lab, contact)	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I
6.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I	–	I	I	I
7.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I
8.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I	–	I	I	I
9.	Course fee(s)	A	–	A	–	–	–	A	I
10.	From U to G <i>or</i> G to U	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I
11.	Cross-list course	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I
12.	Department of record	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I
13.	Close a course	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I
14.	New course (includes combining or splitting courses)	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	I

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	Change to the University Requirements (All Campuses)	Dept./School¹	College	Dean	TEC	UGEC	AUAC/Grad	Provost	Faculty	President	Trustees
1.	University Requirements — Change course outcomes of an included course ²	A	A	A	–	A	–	A	–	A	–
2.	University Requirements — Add or drop a required course from the University Requirements ²	A	A	A	–	A	–	A	A	A	–
3.	University Requirements — Add or drop a course from a menu within the University Requirements ²	A	–	–	–	A	–	A	–	A	–
4.	University Requirements — Change hours within a menu in the University Requirements ²	A	A	A	–	A	–	A	A	A	–
	Change to Catalog Information (for Campus)										
1.	General Requirements for Bachelor's Degrees and Associate's Degrees	–	–	–	–	–	A	A	A	A	–
2.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension	–	–	–	–	–	A	A	A	A	–
3.	Requirements for graduating with honors	–	–	–	–	–	A	A	A	A	–
	Change to a Degree Plan Proposed by Faculty or College										
5.	Educational Program — Revise ³	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	–	A	–
6.	Educational Program — Adopt/change admission requirements	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	–	A	–
7.	Educational Program — Add ³	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	A	A	I
8.	Educational Program — Discontinue	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	A	A	I
9.	GPA — Revise program-required GPAs	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	–	A	–
10.	Minor — Revise	A	A	A	I	–	I	I	–	I	–
11.	Minor — Add	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	–	A	–
12.	Minor — Discontinue	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	–	A	–
13.	Degree — Add	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	A	A	I
14.	Degree — Discontinue	A	A	A	A	–	A	A	A	A	I
	Change to a Degree Plan Proposed By Provost										
15.	Educational Program — Discontinue	R	–	R	A	–	A	A	A	A	I
16.	Minor — Discontinue	R	–	R	A	–	A	A	–	A	–
17.	Degree — Discontinue	R	–	R	A	–	A	A	A	A	I

¹ When an academic unit does not have a council, the UGEC and/or UUAC will serve as its academic council, depending on the nature of the issue.

² Courses that satisfy ACU's University Requirements will normally have lower-level numbering, be free of prerequisites and co-requisites, appeal to more than one or two majors, and "not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession" (SACS 2.7.3). Departments may request exceptions to the first three criteria.

³ For undergraduate majors, a minimum of 30 hours is required. These programs must have a minimum of 6 elective hours, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible.

Department/School Chair(s)	
 _____ <i>Signature</i>	9-15-2022 _____ <i>Approval date</i>
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

College Academic Council(s)	
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Dean(s)	
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Teacher Education Council	
_____ <i>Chair's signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

University General Education Council	
_____ <i>Chair's signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Abilene Undergraduate Academic Council	
_____ <i>Chair's signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Graduate Council	
_____ <i>Chair's signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Provost	
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Faculty	
_____ <i>Chair of Faculty Senate</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

President	
_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Approval date</i>

Application for Arts and Humanities Menu

Guidelines For All General Education Courses

1. All general education courses must be 100-level or above.
2. General education courses should present a breadth of knowledge, not focusing on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.
3. Individual courses will fulfill only a single general education requirement.
4. Courses free of prerequisites are preferred. Applications to add courses with prerequisites must provide additional evidence that the course contributes to a student's breadth of knowledge and is not specific to a particular occupation or profession.
5. Each course may appear on a maximum of two menus that accept applications (arts and humanities, cultural literacy, life and physical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences).

Arts and Humanities Description

Courses within this domain will expose students to other cultures, time periods, and points of view through a wide variety of media. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the human condition, relevance and aesthetics of rhetorical claims, interrogating one's own personal worldviews, and drawing conclusions from analysis of artifacts.

Instructions

Complete this form and submit it with a course syllabus and approval chart to the University General Education Council. Faculty submitting an application should be prepared to perform annual assessment for their course. The assessment will be conducted with the rubric included in this course application. See the last page of this document for explanation of disciplines that will be considered for the menu.

Subject code, course number, and title of course:	COMM 310
Terms offered:	Every fall
Catalog description:	Focuses on the need for civil conversations over difficult topics, the inner dispositions necessary for meaningful engagement, and the practical skills that make productive dialogue possible.
Course prerequisites:	None
Cross-listed courses: *Note: Many gen ed courses are cross-listed between the Abilene and Dallas campuses.	none
Other general education menus on which the course appears or you are applying for:	

Description of Menu Fit

Please describe how your class fits into the Arts and Humanities Menu (200 words or less).

COMM 310 – Civil Discourse rests on the assertion that healthy dialogue on controversial topics is possible *only* on a platform supported by respect for truth and respect for the person. The five course SLO's (see syllabus) connect either with respecting the truth (SLO 1, 2, 4) or respecting the person (1, 3, 5). COMM 310 fits the outcomes of the Arts & Humanities menu. Respect for the truth aligns with the stated Arts and Humanities outcomes "to listen to, understand, and critically evaluate rhetorical claims" (A2) and to draw informed conclusions based on careful analysis (C2). Respect for the person aligns with the stated Arts & Humanities outcome B2: "to understand the interconnectedness of the human experience with a posture of humility while celebrating difference." In their introductory sentence to their white paper, ACU's General Ed Proposal Committee stated that "increased dialogue around the nation's civic health" (Mulrooney & McKinney, 2019, as cited in GEPC white paper) is one of the characteristics of the changing landscape of General Education. Moreover, the same white paper reported a theme among faculty: "Civic responsibility is needed given our climate" (p. 6). This course responds to that need.

Prerequisites

If the course has prerequisites, provide evidence that the course contributes to a student's breadth of knowledge. Also provide evidence that the course content is not specific to a particular occupation or profession (200 words or less).

Relevant Outcomes

- A2: Listen to, understand, and critically evaluate rhetorical claims.
- B1: Demonstrate competent discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations.
- B2: Understand the interconnectedness of the human experience with a posture of humility while celebrating difference.
- B3: Interrogate one's internal and external views and values for greater self-awareness.
- C2: Analyze quantitative data, published writing, or observable phenomena to draw informed conclusions.

Describe how the course meets the A2 outcome (100 words or less).

We consider rhetorical claims in almost every class session. A typical class session: For 25-30 minutes we jump into a present controversy (usually with the prompt of a class poll), and the remainder we apply principles from the readings from that week to the discussion experience. We especially engage Jacobs' *How to Think*. Key concepts from the book are confirmation bias and media literacy. Students respond well to the chapter "Open and Shut," in which he argues that we should not *always* have an open mind, such as about whether the earth is round, or about the morality of Nazis.

Describe how the course meets the C2 outcome (100 words or less).

For their final project, students work in teams in collaboration with a student group on campus, and conduct observation and interviews with student leaders to determine what specific challenges to healthy discourse are present, either within the group, or within the university context for the group. For example, in Fall 2021, a group worked with members of ACU for Life (a Pro-Life student group) to analyze their messaging. Based on insights from Brene Brown's *Braving the Wilderness* (required text), the students made specific suggestions for how to reduce polarizing language.

Describe how the course meets at least one or more of the following outcomes: B1, B2, B3 (200 words or less).

A required text for the course is Brene Brown's *Braving the Wilderness*, in which she argues for a robust understanding of the spiritual interconnectness of all people. The first few weeks focus on Christian virtues of humility, tenacity, and courage. Weeks later, we focus on Christian practices of hospitality, testimony (truth-telling), forgiveness, and discernment. Meanwhile, we engage tough conversations about abortion, climate change, sexuality, wealth distribution, etc. By listening to opposing viewpoints in the context of these virtues and practices, students see that things may be more complicated than they once thought even if their mind isn't necessarily changed. This realization has been reported in student evaluations, and reflects the Arts & Humanities menu description that students interrogate their own personal worldviews. The course integrates class guests that present from a variety of perspectives and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We also view a film about South Africa's history of Apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an in-class case study for applying concepts from the readings, and Arlene Kesselman (who lived in South Africa during Apartheid) has spoken to the class on more than one occasion about her experience.

Outcomes assessment should occur within one or two exams/assignments. Please indicate which exams or assignments will be used for each outcome. Provide assignment prompts if available.

Area to Be Assessed	Assessment Artifact
Outcome A2	Final exam (open book). Students apply concepts from <i>How to Think</i> to a current controversy, and make informed recommendations.
Outcome C2	Final Project. Students gather qualitative data from a student group and make recommendations to improve that group's civil discourse.
Outcome B1, B2, or B3 *note which of the 3 outcomes will be assessed	B2 – Virtues Journaling Exercise. For a period of one week, students keep a journal in which they record their progress in reflecting humility and other virtues necessary for engaging a diverse student population on a university campus.

Please use the following rubric to perform assessment each year.

Student Learning Outcome A2

Students will be able to:	Shortcomings	Meets Expectations	Points of Excellence
Evaluate rhetorical claims	Fails to demonstrate understanding or recognition of rhetorical claims.	Demonstrates effective understanding of and ability to critique rhetorical claims.	Demonstrates keen analytical abilities and attention to detail in understanding and evaluating rhetorical claims.

Student Learning Outcome C2

Students will be able to:	Shortcomings	Meets Expectations	Points of Excellence
Analyze data to draw conclusions	Lacks sufficient analysis of data or published writing.	Analyzes data and/or published writing in an effective manner.	Analyzes data and/or published writing in an exemplary manner.

Student Learning Outcome B (evaluate the one or more selected above)

Students will be able to:	Shortcomings	Meets Expectations	Points of Excellence
Demonstrate competent discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations (B1)	Little to no engagement in discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations.	Effectively presents the capacity to engage in discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations.	Excellently presents the capacity to engage in discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations.
Understand the interconnectedness of the human experience with a posture of humility while celebrating difference (B2)	Little to no demonstration of understanding or humility in relation to the human experience and diversity.	Effective demonstration of understanding or humility in relation to the human experience and diversity.	Exemplary demonstration of understanding or humility in relation to the human experience and diversity.
Interrogate one's internal and external views and values for greater self-awareness (B3)	Little to no interrogation of personal views and little to no movement toward self-awareness.	Effective interrogation of personal views with some attention to self-awareness.	Exemplary interrogation of personal views with an eye toward self-awareness.

Disciplines to Consider

Proposed courses should fit commonly accepted practices across disciplines. As an external indicator of what constitutes Humanities disciplines, we have consulted the American Academy of Arts and Sciences definition, which lists the following disciplines as humanities:

- Art and music history, musicology, and the academic study of drama and cinema
- American Studies and Area Studies (e.g., Latin American Studies, Africana Studies, etc.)
- Archeology
- Communication, including media studies, but not professionalization-oriented coursework
- Cultural, Ethnic, & Gender Studies: Programs studying from an interdisciplinary perspective race, ethnic, gender, or cultural groups, such as Black studies, Hispanic studies, women's studies, gender studies.
- English Language and Literature: English, American, and Anglophone literature; general literature programs; creative writing; speech and rhetoric (does not include technical and business writing programs).
- History
- Languages & Literatures Other than English: Modern languages and literature; linguistics; classics and ancient languages; comparative literature.
- Jurisprudence: Includes philosophy of law.
- Philosophy
- Religion: Programs in the comparative, nonsectarian study of religion; studies of particular religions; history of religion; does not include programs in theology or ministry.
- Selected Interdisciplinary Studies: General humanities programs; programs in the study of a particular historical period (e.g., medieval and Renaissance studies, classical and ancient studies, holocaust studies, etc.).

The criteria team anticipates some overlap with other menus, particularly cultural literacy.

In ACU's specific institutional context, the council recognizes religion as a humanities discipline but will not consider Bible courses for the Arts and Humanities menu because of the number of hours reserved in the Bible and Theology menu for these courses in the general education requirements.

Resources:

- [American Academy of Arts & Sciences — Scope of the Humanities](#)
- [4Humanities — Five Definitions of the Humanities](#)
- [Cambridge University Press — What Are the Humanities For?](#)

Civil Discourse

COMM 310.01—(3 hours)
Department of Communication & Sociology
College of Arts and Sciences
Abilene Christian University
T/R, 8-9:20; Sherrod Building, Room 216

A course taught by
Dr. Jon Camp
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Faculty Member in the Communication & Sociology Department

Office: Sherrod Building (SHB) 127, 325-674-2209

E-mail: Jonathan.Camp@acu.edu

Cell: 325-232-5861

Office Hours: Monday 9-11; Wednesday 9-11; Thursday 9:30-11. Other times by appointment.

ACU MISSION STATEMENT: To educate students for Christian leadership and service throughout the world.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MISSION: To engage students with humanity's greatest ideas to create understanding, apply insights, and serve the world as Christian thinkers and problem solvers.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION & SOCIOLOGY MISSION: To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world by developing communication skills through analyzing, managing, changing, and advocating ideas, people, organizations, and cultures.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE: This class will focus on the need for civil conversations about difficult topics, the inner dispositions necessary for meaningful engagement across cultures, and the practical skills that make productive dialogue possible.

Student Learning Outcomes:

The successful student will be able to engage peacefully and productively in public and private conversations over difficult topics. Specifically, the student will be able to:

1. Identify virtues displayed in local instances of civil discourse.
2. Identify cognitive errors and their associated communication practices that hinder civil discourse.
3. Identify cultural bias and develop strategies to overcome the effect of cultural bias on the Christian practice of hospitality.
4. Improve media literacy by recognizing fallacies in popular media.

5. Produce a strategy for improved civil discourse in a specific student community on campus

COURSE MATERIALS:

- Brown, Brené (2017). *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*, Random House
- Jacobs, Alan (2017). *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds*. Currency.
- Electronic course readings as uploaded into Canvas

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Description	Points	Aligns with SLO #
Class Participation	Students will be expected to engage in a class discussion face-to-face and online (in Canvas).	100	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Virtue and Christian Practices journaling	Students will keep a week-long journal in which they reflect on a cultural bias that they have inherited, and how they are working to develop a virtue and practice to overcome that cultural bias.	100	1, 3
Reading quizzes	Fifteen 5-10 question quiz will be administered on select readings, each worth 10 points.	150	2, 3, 4
Exams	Three exams will be given in this course. The first two exams will each be worth 100 points. The final exam will be worth 200 points and will be cumulative and open book.	400	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Final Project	You will work in groups to study a special interest student group on campus and make recommendations for how that group can incorporate civil discourse insights to better achieve that group's mission. Phase 1 – Form groups and conceptualize your project. Phase 2 – Clarifying your project. Who, what, when, where, why, how. Phase 3 – Gather data. Conduct interviews and attend meetings. Phase 4 – Analyze your data for key themes. Phase 5 – Report your findings and make recommendations. Paper and group presentation in class.	250	5
		Total: 1000	

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This course is designed to facilitate your communication knowledge and skills through reading, writing, lectures, discussions, activities, and speeches. As a highly interactive, participatory class, daily *engagement* is critical to success. Non-participation or disruption is grounds for dismissal.

If you are *disengaged and/or absent for **more than 20% of class activities*** during the semester, you should withdraw from the course. If you are still enrolled in the course at the end of the semester, you will be assigned an “F” regardless of your performance in the course.

Respect for the thoughts, ideas, and work of your peers is essential in a Civil Discourse course. Expressing your ideas in front of a group can be stressful, and it’s our goal to create the most collaborative and supportive classroom environment possible so that each student feels comfortable speaking in both discussions and formal presentations. To that end, we take your engagement in our work together seriously.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A zero-tolerance policy is in force regarding academic dishonesty. Please see the **academic integrity policy** in Canvas for details.

LATE WORK POLICY

Late work will receive an automatic 50% reduction. After one week, late work will not be accepted. Make-up quizzes will not be given for unexcused absences.

ACU ADA STATEMENT

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Alpha Scholars Program, and you must complete a specific request for each class in which you need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call the Alpha Scholars Program office directly at 325-674-2667.

Fall 2022 COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Required Reading and Assignments
WEEK 1 – Introductions to each other and the course		
08/30	Introductions. The need for better conversations. The baggage of “civility.”	
09/01	Trigger warnings and hyper-sensitivity. Defining productive conversations.	Read “The Coddling of the American Mind” (Canvas)
WEEK 2 – Cultivating the virtues for civil discourse		
09/06	Intellectual humility and the Kenosis of Christ. Cultural bias	Read: “Radical Humility in Everyday Politics” (Canvas)
09/08	The Ignatian Presupposition. Virtues of Tenacity and Courage	“A Spirituality of Citizenship” (Canvas)
WEEK 3 – Connecting to Christian Practices, Part I		
09/13	Cultural bias and Hospitality	“Hospitality” (Canvas)
09/15	Testimony	“Testimony” (Canvas)
WEEK 4 – Introducing <i>How to Think</i>		
09/20	<i>Open discussion</i>	
09/22	Introducing <i>How to Think</i>	Read H2T. Introduction & ch 1 Virtue Journal #1 due
WEEK 5 -- Engaging <i>How to Think</i>		
09/27	Attractions	Read H2T ch 2
09/29	Repulsions	Read H2T ch 3
WEEK 6 – Engaging <i>How to Think</i>		
10/04	The Money of Fools, The Age of Lumping	Read H2T ch 4-5
10/06	Open and Shut	Read H2T ch. 6
WEEK 7 – Engaging <i>How to Think</i> and Exam		
10/11	Wrapping up <i>How to Think</i> ; review	Read H2T ch 7 – conclusion
10/13	Exam 1	
WEEK 8 – Historical Foundations for Civil Discourse		
10/18	Classical Origins of Civil Discourse	Aristotle videos (Canvas)
10/20	Civil Discourse in early American Society	Tocqueville, videos and reading (Canvas) “What to the Slave is the 4 th of July” (Canvas)
WEEK 9 – Civil Discourse and Media Literacy		
10/25	What is media literacy	“Beyond Misinformation” (Canvas)
10/27	Keeping it civil on social media	Selected videos (Canvas)
WEEK 10 – Connecting to Christian Practices, Part II		
11/01	Discernment	“Discernment” (Canvas) Richard Beck articles on Conspiracy Theories

11/03	Forgiveness and Healing	“Forgiveness” (Canvas) “But I Forgive You?” (Canvas)
WEEK 11 – Cont’d		
11/08	Truth and Reconciliation	Selected reading (Canvas) Christian Practices journal due
11/10	EXAM 2	
WEEK 12 – Braving the Wilderness		
11/15	Introducing BTW	Read BTW chs 1-2
11/17	High Lonesome; People are hard to hate close up.	Read BTW ch. 3-4
WEEK 13 – Braving the Wilderness		
11/22	Speak Truth; Hold hands with strangers	Read BTW ch. 5-6
11/24	No class. Thanksgiving Break	
WEEK 14 – Exam 3		
11/29	Strong Back, Soft Front	Read BTW ch. 7
12/01	Review Day. Open Topic Discussion	
WEEK 15 – Class Presentations		
12/06	Presentations	Final Project Due
12/08	Presentations	
WEEK 16 – The Final Exam		
12/14	Final Exam at 8:00 – 9:45 am	