

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

POLICY STATEMENT

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FILE: General  
Education

Academic Senate Office

SUBJECT: CRITERIA FOR GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

The following policy statement, recommended by the Academic Senate at its meeting of May 3, 1979, and approved by the President on June 20, 1979, is as follows:

GENERAL UNIVERSITY CRITERIA

1. As a breadth requirement, General Education courses must serve to acquaint students with both the subject matter and the methodologies of the various discipline categories.

Except as noted below, courses in each category should explicitly demonstrate what sorts of questions are studied by those disciplines, what kinds of evidence are sought, and how evidence is interpreted and used.

Faculty teaching courses approved for General Education credit should be demonstrably qualified not only to present the subject matter of the course but also to demonstrate the methodologies and viewpoints of the discipline category.

2. All courses should incorporate learning exercises/experiences designed to develop to some degree the basic intellectual skills and qualities of mind set forth in the rationale for General Education published in the University Bulletin:

- the ability to analyze ideas and data, to relate these to other materials, to develop arguments at once logical and cogent, to reach conclusions, and to present the results of this process with clarity
- a respect for data and unpleasant facts; an appreciation for the arts; tolerance, commitment, a taste for learning; perpetual curiosity, and a sensitivity to ethical considerations.

3. Courses should be designed to permit instructors to show students why those who work in the field find the subject matter interesting and valuable, how the subject matter is related to other fields and, why the subject has relevance for the student's life and education objectives. Faculty assigned to teach General Education courses should develop this aspect of the course and should strive to engender interest and enthusiasm in students for the subject matter and the analytical processes inherent in the subject matter.

4. General Education courses may be lower division or upper division, but they must be courses suitable for students who have had little or no college level study in the subject. The following rules regarding prerequisites shall apply:
  - a. General Education courses may have as prerequisites material normally taught in the secondary schools. (This may include courses taught at CSULB either as remedial courses or for students who did not elect to study the subject in high school.)
  - b. Course sequences are acceptable (that is, both semesters of a year course).
  - c. A course having as a prerequisite a basic, introductory course is acceptable.
  - d. In the basic skills area of Category IV, students should be encouraged to enter a sequence at whatever level they are prepared for. Therefore, composition, foreign language, and mathematics, statistics and computer science courses having several prerequisites are acceptable.
  - e. Courses which have prerequisites other than those listed above, or which even without specific prerequisites require in-depth knowledge of the field, will not be acceptable for General Education.

#### CRITERIA FOR EACH CATEGORY

##### I. Natural Science:

- A. Courses in the natural science category aim at developing in the student a general understanding of and appreciation for a part of the body of knowledge accumulated by the natural sciences. They seek to acquaint the student with the scientific method, and to foster an understanding of the principles which provide the material basis of natural phenomena.
- B. Students in courses in the natural sciences should develop the ability to think analytically, to reason critically, and to synthesize information from varied sources through the application of qualitative and quantitative problem solving methods. These courses should enable the student to follow new developments in the natural sciences in intelligent laymen's terms, and should consequently enable the student to think in an informed manner about human issues which involve natural phenomena.

- C. Courses which may be used to satisfy the natural science laboratory requirement should provide the student with first-hand experience in the use of the scientific method, the gathering of facts through experiments and observations, the organization of data, and the analysis and interpretation of this information. the student should gain some acquaintance with the methods and techniques used by practicing scientists.

Natural science courses which are aimed at training the student in a specific limited set of applied skills rather than acquainting the student with the principles of natural phenomena may not be used for General Education credit.

## II. Social Science:

- A. Courses included in Category II provide students with a broad introduction to a discipline in the social or behavioral sciences. These courses will emphasize the variety of individual and social experience as seen from a cultural, economic, environmental, historical, political, psychological, or sociological perspective. They will assist students to understand how individual behavior, institutions, societies, or cultures develop, interact, and influence value systems.
- B. Courses included in Category II are intended to introduce students to methods of thinking analytically about human behavior based upon knowledge from systematic observations of individuals, groups and institutions in various societies. Such courses should enhance the students' sensitivity to behavior, societies, or cultures which may be different from their own.
- C. Courses primarily devoted to statistics, measurement, and computer skills are not included in this category.

## III. Humanities:

### Literature and Philosophy:

- A. Courses in the first subdivision of Category III provide students with a realization and appreciation of the cultural heritage of man in what are normally recognized as the Humanities. These courses emphasize the exploration and development of social, ethical, spiritual, or intellectual values.
- B. The courses in this category encourage students to develop the spirit of scholarly inquiry, including critical thought, sensitivity to languages, and creativity.

Fine Arts:

- A. Courses in the second subdivision of Category III give students a knowledge of, and experience with various conceptual and physical approaches to the creation of a work of fine art, combined with theory and relevant historical examples.
- B. The courses focus on developing the student's capacity for understanding and appreciating the visual and performing arts.
- C. Performance and activity courses that are oriented to developing specialized skills are not included in this category.

IV. Basic Communications:

- A. Courses in Category IV are intended to develop those personal communication skills which facilitate the student's acquisition and utilization of knowledge in the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences and the Humanities.
- B. Students in these courses should develop their verbal or quantitative ability to learn and communicate by:
  - 1. speaking and/or writing clearly and effectively in English or a foreign language, or;
  - 2. using a quantitative symbolic language in the form of mathematics, statistics, logic, or computer programming.

Effective: Immediately

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