

University Studies 2013-14 Catalogue Recommendations

Context

University Studies (US), approved by the Senate in 2009, is an outcomes-based curriculum whose coherence derives from its explicit alignment to UNCW's Learning Goals (LGs). Our LGs map neatly to those the AAC&U recommends. (see *College Learning for the New Global Century*, published by LEAP, pg 3.)

foundational
knowledge
inquiry
information
 literacy
critical thinking
thoughtful
 expression
foreign language
diversity
global citizenship

US's goal-orientation propels UNCW's gen ed program into the 21st c. and reflects the most current curricular developments in higher ed.*

Further, US has incorporated many of the AAC&U's high-impact practices, including integrative learning, overarching competencies, and experiential learning.

*Both the Am. Historical Assoc. and the Am. Philosophical Assoc. recognize this paradigm shift toward goal-oriented gen ed and highlight HST's and PHL's cross-disciplinary affinities with depts that similarly emphasize skills and abilities, such as critical thinking and analysis of information. Further, these prof organizations advise HST and PHL depts to place courses across the components of such curricula. See appendix 1.

As the 2009 Senate-approved US Report makes clear, the integration of these Learning Goals into US takes place across both disciplinary borders, as several components show, and the whole of undergraduate study, as reqs in the major demonstrate.

In its curricular review process, the University Studies Advisory Committee, a standing committee of the Senate, strives to be inclusive, assessing all proposals in terms of how well they meet a component's Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

This inclusivity lends flexibility to the curriculum.

In turn, flexibility helps promote students' intentional learning by providing what the AAC&U refers to as 'purposeful pathways': "plans that provide students with multiple opportunities to put specific knowledge and skills to use; each such opportunity relates to and builds on the previous ones." (*Purposeful Pathways: Helping Studies Achieves Key Learning Outcomes*, an AAC&U pub, p. 5; please see appendix 2 for the US curricular map, which illustrates possible 'purposeful paths.')

US is not just Basic Studies in new clothes.
Rather, US is a new way to conceptualize and
teach general education.

US thus embodies the definition of 'liberal education' formulated by the AAC&U's LEAP Initiative (Liberal Education and America's Promise):

“liberal education [is] not [defined] in terms of specific disciplines studied, but rather as a coherent framework of learning that intentionally fosters, across multiple fields of study, wide-ranging knowledge of science, cultures, and society; high-level intellectual and practical skills; an active commitment to personal and social responsibility; and the demonstrated ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges”

(College Learning for the New Global Century, p.45)

USAC Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in Historical and Philosophical Perspectives (HPA)*:

ANT 207: Archaeology

ENG 210: Mythology**

*Please see appendix 3 for HPA's SLOs.

**ENG 210 is cross-listed with CLA 210, a course that was approved by the Senate in 2010. As cross-listed courses, they need to be identical. ENG 210's inclusion in our recommendations at this point is a dotted 'i.'

HST & PAR Objections

1. 'liberal education'
2. approaches
3. coherence
4. integrity

'liberal education'

OBJ: The document submitted by PAR expresses concern over the loss of humanistic studies and “the very idea of ‘university education.’”

RESPONSE: As mentioned above, US puts into practice the AAC&U’s definition of ‘liberal education.’

US is premised on the conviction that the appropriate curriculum for our students emerges from an organization of course offerings that introduce and reinforce from distinct disciplinary emphases any number of the LGs, thereby illustrating to students time and again how the habits of mind characteristic of an engaged citizenry operate both in specific situations and across subject matter.

In the Approaches and Perspectives (A&P) components, US values the variety of disciplinary perspectives and does not mandate requirements by discipline.

approaches

OBJ: “How many distinct disciplinary approaches can any one course really provide?” [HST]

RESPONSE: With a change of wording, the USAC recognizes and shares this concern. The change is significant, though; our question: “How many SLOs can any one course really address?”

Every dept on campus faces this issue, as each has at least one course that fits into more than one component.

The resolution of this concern will be an ongoing project, informed by assessment data and each dept’s sense of what their faculty can actually accomplish.

ANT 207 & ENG/CLA 210 are the only courses that go across two of the first four components of A&P. Their inclusion in both components reflects practices at other schools, where the line btw the social sciences and the humanities is permeable.

approaches, cont.

OBJ: “History is both a discipline (an ‘approach’) and a subject.” [HST]

RESPONSE: The USAC understands that “History is both a discipline (an ‘approach’) and a subject.” In the context of US, however, we see a conflation of ‘discipline’ and ‘approach’ occurring in this statement.

US’s use of the word ‘approaches’ (in the plural, actually) signals the USAC’s interest in how courses address the SLOs assoc. with the Historical and Philosophical Approaches (HPA) component. The USAC, thus, separates ‘approaches’ from ‘disciplines.’ Consequently, while courses with HST and PAR prefixes likely meet these SLOs, courses with different prefixes might as well.

More specifically, the inclusion of ANT 207 and ENG/CLA 210 in HPA is not aberrant. Other UNC institutions with gen ed programs similar to ours (goals + distribution) also cross disciplinary boundaries in exactly these ways (see appendix 2).

approaches, cont.

OBJ: “We believe that disciplinary perspectives must be maintained, not obliterated, in the first four components of Approaches and Perspectives....Indeed, the very first goal of US is that students ‘acquire foundational knowledge, theories and perspectives in a variety of disciplines.’” [HST]

“[U]nless there is some strict division acc. to depts and the ‘professional methods of knowing’ relevant to those depts...the very principle behind the univ studies structure that was created will be destroyed.” [PAR]

RESPONSE: The stated desire to maintain the strict division of disciplines confuses the purpose of the distributive aspects of US.

As stated above, US’s distribution reqs provide students with ‘purposeful pathways.’

Further, the USAC values the flexibility greater inclusiveness enables, esp. in light of transfer articulation.

In the A&P components, US doesn’t mandate specific course prefixes and doesn’t endorse the reification of disciplinary boundaries. (see appendix 2 for a list of our peer institutions’ reqs; only 4 of them specifically require a HST or a PHL or a REL course.)

coherence

OBJ: “If UNCW populates every US category with many different disciplines, it will build a curriculum in which a student can move through multiple categories and layers of US by always picking courses from the same discipline: ENG, or ANT, or whatever....Would such a curriculum offer ‘a coherent program of gen ed’?” [HST]

RESPONSE: National studies on gen ed assert repeatedly that coherence is a primary but elusive goal.

Nonetheless, this literature contends that goal-oriented curricula provide students, faculty, and other stakeholders with a better sense of shared purpose than does a “‘two of everything’ program that students ‘got out of the way’ rather than regarded as a meaningful learning experience.”

(Changing General Education Curriculum: New Directions for Higher Education, p. 105)

coherence, cont.

RESPONSE: The USAC is mindful of SACS requirements, which state that “credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics” (2.7.3).

If faculty feel that stays are necessary, the Senate could approve a restriction on the # of hours from one discipline/dept in all of A&P: “Students may apply no more than 10 credit hours from any single prefix toward the reqs in A&P.”

integrity

OBJ: “[A] student can now cover their ‘Philosophy’ req by taking two ‘History’ courses—one about America, the other about music, or if mythology is accepted, they can get credit for ‘Philosophy’ and for ‘History’ by taking a course about music, and another about literature or (if the ANT class is accepted) another social science, i.e. they wouldn’t really take a philosophy or history course at all.” [PAR]

Similarly, the document submitted by HST holds that US’s recommendations, i.e. incl. ANT 207 and ENG/CLA 210 in HPA, represent “a big step in the wrong direction as we move through the important work of building an appropriate curriculum for our students.”

RESPONSE: For US, a component’s integrity emerges from how well the included courses address the component’s SLOs.

The depts themselves determine their courses’ fitness and disciplinary integrity. The USAC trusts dept chairs and faculty to be the authoritative arbiters of their own courses’ integrity.

No dept with courses in any of the A&P components—i.e. HPA, AILP, SANW, UHIB (leaving off LGS and LDN)—is guaranteed hours, as US does not mandate courses in A&P by discipline.

suggestions

Restrict the # of hours students can take from a single prefix in A&P.

Revise course descriptions to reflect more accurately the student learning that takes place.

Elect members to USAC by division, and direct members to promote US's philosophy through disciplinary sensibilities broadly defined.

appendix 1: AHA & APA

Am Historical Assoc

“History and other liberal arts teach how to think, problem solve, weigh varieties of evidence, and detect bias, prejudice, motive and point of view.”

“Historians must become directly involved [in gen ed] by understanding the goals and objectives of the core curriculum at their college and participating fully in the debates and discussions about the kinds of courses necessary. [They] should be willing to adapt existing courses or create new ones that will better accommodate institutional requirements.”

from “Liberal Learning and the History Major” (2007), by Michael J. Galgano, available on the AHA’s website.

<<http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/LiberalLearning.htm>>

appendix 1, cont.: AHA & APA

Am Philosophical Assoc

The APA recognizes that philosophy courses fit well into goal-oriented curricula due to their emphases on “critical thinking or logical reasoning, sensitivity to values, and awareness of global issues.”

Further, the APA identifies cross-disciplinary affinities in helping students achieve these goals, as philosophy works with the fine arts, the humanities, the social sciences, and professional programs on subjects including aesthetics, quantitative literacy, philosophies of education, ethics, and the law.

From “The Role of Philosophy Programs in Higher Education” (rev. 2007-8), published by the APA’s Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession.
<http://www.apaonline.org/APAOnline/APAOnline/Publications/Informational_Booklets_Pamphlets_HomePage/The_Role_of_Philosophy_Programs_in_Higher_Education.aspx>

Appendix 3: HPA

HPA rationale and SLOs:

This component of the University Studies program includes disciplines that promote student understanding and analysis of the historical and philosophical bases of local and worldwide political, social, and cultural realities and the ethical perspectives that motivate individuals and populations. The study of history allows students to analyze change over time and to employ analytical skills in using data and other evidence to explain and interpret such change. Likewise, investigating texts outlining a variety of philosophical and religious positions prompts student to reflect and critically assess the implications of adhering to particular perspectives, cultivates openness to the positions of others, and assists them to develop a self-reflective ethical foundation that informs their relationships and conduct. Courses in the Historical and Philosophical Approaches component will introduce students to the major interpretative methodologies used in the study of history, philosophy, or religion; prompt students to read with insight and detachment, and represent the positions of others accurately in speech and/or writing; and foster students' abilities to critically analyze theories about religious phenomena, philosophical traditions, and/or historical events, including those of the non-Western or non-canonical authors.

HPA 1. Describe and explain various historical, philosophical, or religious facts, themes, and issues of global human experience of the past and/or present.

HPA 2. Analyze and interpret evidence on historical, philosophical or religious events or positions critically and systematically, including causal relationships.

HPA 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical, philosophical, or religious construction of differences and similarities over time, within or between groups, regions, or traditions.

HPA 4. Draw on global historical, philosophical, or religious perspectives to demonstrate an understanding of human values, challenges, priorities, and problems over time.

appendix 4: UNC System

With a goals + distribution model like ours, **Chapel Hill**, for instance, recognizes courses from Anthropology, Classics, English, Philosophy, Religion and 34 other prefixes—in addition to HST—as providing students with practice in **‘Historical Analysis.’** Their **‘Philosophical and/or Moral Reasoning’** component lists Religion and Philosophy with Anthropology, Communications, Political Science, Economics, and 16 other prefixes.

Similarly, **UNCG** lists Classics and Musicology alongside Philosophy and Religion as choices in their **‘Philosophical/Religious/Ethical Perspectives’** component. UNCG’s **‘Historical Perspectives’** component allows students to choose one course from Classics (incl. archaeology), History, Music, Philosophy, Religion, or 6 other prefixes.

NC State has more traditional categories, e.g. Humanities and Social Sciences, but their example shows the permeability of disciplinary boundaries. Under the Humanities heading, for instance, students choose btw Anthropology, Classics, English, History, Philosophy, Religion, and 12 other prefixes.

Western Carolina, like State, uses traditional categories but renders boundaries within categories permeable. Their Social Sciences category lists PAR alongside ANT and 16 other prefixes. While Western reqs 3 hours in History, students choose between HIS, MATH, and PAR to fulfill this req.

appendix 4, cont.: Peers

Schools with definite reqs:

Cal Poly SLO: 1 PHL

Cal State Chico: 1 HST

Truman State: 1 HST or 1 PAR

UT Dallas: 2 HST (US and Texas history)

Schools where HST, PHL, REL (or PAR) are options, if req'd at all:

College of Charleston

TCNJ

William and Mary

Binghamton

University of Maine

University of N Iowa

Western Washington

JMU

Murray State

Rowan

Towson

University of Maryland BC

University of Wisconsin EC