

Certification Criteria for GE courses

I. Common Contexts.

A. Biblical and Theological Canons

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 10/07/2010)

Students will

1. Know the content of the Old and New Testaments (e.g., books, genres, literary structures, themes, stories, chronology, major characters, histories, and theologies).
2. Be able to apply interpretive approaches to both testaments in order to recover original meaning and subsequent significance of the biblical texts (for church, Kingdom, and wider world), taking into account historical backgrounds and critical issues.
3. Be able to identify the central doctrines of Christian faith and the forces shaping the history of global Christianity (e.g., major events, texts, and debates).
4. Have basic skills of careful reading and analysis with respect to Scripture and other theological sources.

B. Introduction to the Christian Liberal Arts

2. Philosophical Reflections on Truth and Value

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 04/22/2010)

Students will be able to

1. Recognize and articulate foundational questions of philosophy – especially foundational questions of particular interest to Christians – though the emphasis among knowing, being, and value will vary by course.
2. Articulate some of the main components of a Christian liberal arts education and the interrelation of philosophy and other areas of academic study in the liberal arts, both in terms of content and the development and application of transferable skills.
3. Articulate the relationship between philosophical commitments/academic life and their beliefs, feelings, commitments, and practices as components of an integrated life, considered as a whole.

3. World History in Christian Perspective

Certification Criteria (Provisionally Approved by the GE Committee 04/22/2010)

Students will be able to

1. Identify important locations, events, people and ideas in world history from 1500 to the present.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with main narratives in the field of world history (e. g. modernity, interdependence, globalization).
3. Appreciate religious and cultural differences within and between world areas (including their own) and recognize how these change over time.
4. Express the distinctive characteristics of a Liberal Arts education and explain why this is fitting for a Christian.

5. Articulate relationships between historical issues and their personal commitments and/or vocational choices.

II. Common Inquiries

A. Reading Imaginative Literature

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 10/19/2010)

Students will be able to:

1. Analyze imaginative literature to indicate an understanding of language beyond its literal level.
2. Articulate an empathetic response to the varieties of human experience represented in literature.

B. Exploring the Physical Sciences

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 04/22/2010)

Students will be able to

1. Identify the basic properties and principles of matter.
2. Identify the creative and systematic aspects of scientific method and give examples of the power of theory and prediction within the framework of empirical/experimental modes of inquiry.
3. Articulate a model of the relationship between faith and science both historically and in the current culture.
4. Demonstrate sufficient comprehension of science to read intelligently about and express informed opinions on science-related issues that affect individuals and society.

C. Exploring the Life Sciences

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 11/16/2010)

Students will be able to

1. Describe investigative methods, phenomena and theories central to the subject domain of the course.
2. Identify and describe approaches to controversies arising from the interdisciplinary and theological implications of the subject domain of the course.

D. Reasoning Abstractly

Certification Criteria (Proposed)

Students will be able to

1. Identify instances of abstract deductive reasoning about abstract objects or concepts (in the form of arguments, explanations, proofs, analyses, modeling, or processes of problem solving) and can distinguish premises from conclusions (or their analogues).
2. Construct an instance of valid deductive reasoning about abstract objects or concepts (in the form of arguments, explanations, proofs, analyses, modeling, or processes of problem solving).

3. Distinguish valid forms of deductive reasoning about abstract objects or concepts (in the form of arguments, explanations, proofs, analyses, modeling, or processes of problem solving) from invalid and/or fallacious forms of reasoning.

E. Performing and Interpreting the Arts

Certification Criteria (Proposed)

In thinking, speaking, and writing students will use

1. Correct language and terminology for varying artistic types, forms, movements.
2. Appropriate methods and processes for analyzing, interpreting, and enjoying artistic production, including with respect to the Christian faith.

In their making and performing students will demonstrate competence in

1. Creative / interpretive methods for artistic production and expressiveness.
2. Physical processes and manifestations necessary for artistic realization and production.

Thinking Globally

Certification Criteria (Proposed)

Students will be able to

1. Describe differences between at least two cultures (one of which is non-western) and can offer explanations or historical contexts for those differences.
2. Recognize the value and significance of other cultures without romanticizing.
3. Identify ways in which cultures influence formulations of knowledge. They will identify ways in which they personally are affected.
4. Recognize global inequities, injustices, and/or inter-religious issues and commit themselves to thoughtful, concrete responses growing out of their Christian faith.
5. Recognize the limits of their global understanding.

Thinking Historically

Certification Criteria (Proposed)

Students will be able to

1. Read primary sources historically – asking and answering basic questions about historical sources (historical context, author, audience, genre); drawing historical conclusions from the sources and assessing their reliability and usefulness; and reflecting on how their own background shapes their interpretation.
2. Appreciate the contextuality of historical narrative and interpretation – understanding that the ways in which historians tell the story is shaped by their context (intellectual, social, etc.) and recognizing that interpretations of history are subject to change; they will understand the term “historiography” and its implications
3. Articulate with less naiveté how the past is relevant for the present – making connections between their historical study and their responsibilities within the larger world. Students will appreciate what separates us from the past and avoid presentism.

Understanding Society

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 09/21/2010)

In regard to the five basic societal structures (Family, Religion, Education, Government, Economy), students will be able to

1. Identify foundational theories of the discipline that offer explanations of social phenomena,
2. Articulate dimensions of individual, group and institutional dynamics in society, paying attention to issues of diversity and media where applicable
3. Explain the basic methods of inquiry of the discipline, and
4. Make personal and social application of various theories—informed by a biblical perspective.

III. Common Skills

Three Writing-Intensive or Speech-Intensive Courses

Certification Criteria for Writing-Intensive Courses (Approved by the GE Committee 04/19/2011)

1. The syllabus explicitly identifies the course as writing-intensive, and it clearly defines expectations for performance. Students are informed that their work will be evaluated for clarity and style * in addition to content.
2. The course requires sufficient writing: at least four papers totaling at least 16 pages. Writing is spread throughout the course in a sequence of related assignments rather than concentrated in a large paper at the end. These activities may include journal writing, article reviews, essays, research papers, scientific lab reports, business reports and plans, lab abstracts, paper revision and editing assignments, peer reviewing and editing, etc.
3. The course provides significant writing instruction or includes a substantive assignment in which students submit at least one draft for comments from the professor and then revise the draft to take account of these comments. Rewrites are typically treated as 1/3 of the original.

* Specifically, student should be graded on

- their ability to construct a clear central message that includes purposeful and inviting ideas, insightful arguments and reasons to accept these arguments, relevant and substantive supporting material, and various audience-centered appeals
- the organization of their messages, providing appropriately creative introductions, compelling and strategic structure, smooth transitions, and an effective conclusion
- their communication style, engaging their audiences with discipline-appropriate language use and artfully constructed sentences.

Certification Criteria for Speech-Intensive Courses (Approved by the GE Committee 04/19/2011)

1. The course is explicitly identified as speech-intensive, and it clearly defines expectations for performance. Students are informed that they are assessed for oral communication specifics* as well as for content.
2. The course requires that students make at least three oral presentations totaling at least 30 minutes.

*Oral communication specifics include good posture, varied and effective gestures, direct eye contact, engaging vocal variety, and professional appearance.

Quantitative and Analytical Reasoning

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 04/08/2010)

Students will be able to

1. Make use of mathematical models for physical or social systems
AND/OR
Compute and interpret numeric data, summative statistics and/or graphical representations.
2. Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of particular quantitative models or methods as tools in the natural and social sciences

Modern/Foreign Languages

Certification Criteria¹ (Approved by the GE Committee 03/25/2010)

Students will be able to

1. Understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between some of the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language by comparing the language they study and their own.
4. Use the language both within and beyond the classroom setting.
5. Articulate the importance of learning another language in order to engage people unlike them in terms that affirm others as persons created in God's image.

Physical Education

Certification Criteria (Proposed)

Fitness for Life requirement:

Students will be able to

1. Write and successfully implement an appropriate 9 week fitness program based on the training principles of frequency, intensity, and duration.
2. Discriminate between healthy and unhealthy lifestyle behaviors.

Physical activity courses:

Students will improve in

1. One or more of the five components of fitness, including cardiovascular, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and body composition.
AND/OR

¹ The first four learning objectives of the Foreign Language GE are based directly on the national criteria set by ACTFL (The American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

2. One or more cognitive, affective or skill-specific components related to successful participation in the sport or activity.

IV. **Competent and Compassionate Action**

Complete one of the following three options at an advanced level:

1. **Productions and Presentations**

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 01/21/2010)

Students will

1. Perform or create a substantial work, artistic or otherwise.
2. Demonstrate in their creative work an understanding of the theoretical principles of their field.
3. Present their work in an appropriate public venue.

2. **Research** (Approved by the GE Committee 11/16/2010)

Certification Criteria

Students will

1. Design and implement a research plan with care and competence.
2. Present their project findings in a format appropriate for their discipline.

3. **Integrating the Major Discipline**

Certification Criteria (Approved by the GE Committee 03/04/2010)

Students will show some competence in each of the following areas and strong facility in at least one area. Students will be able to

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the core issues in the history and methodology of their discipline and manifest an integrated perspective of its breadth and depth.
2. Articulate a sense of the relationship between their particular discipline and other disciplines in a liberal arts context.
3. Apply their faith to their academic discipline by evincing an understanding of how Christian values influence one's approach to the discipline, as well as how one's approach to the discipline shapes one's understanding of Christian institutions and values.

In addition to the above, all students also complete one of the following two options:

1. **Serving Society; Enacting Justice**

Certification Criteria (Approved by Academic Senate 11/04/2008)

Students will be able to

1. Identify theological motivations for service; the needs of the population being served; the effects and affects resulting from those needs; and the causes of those needs, such as involuntary circumstances, individual choices and structural injustices.
2. Articulate how they have been affected by their experience (for example, changes in beliefs, attitudes or values) and how their experiences might inform their calling to discipleship, citizenship and future service.

2. Communicating Cross-Culturally

Certification Criteria (Proposed)

Students will increase in their

1. Abilities to communicate cross-culturally and to adapt effectively to new cultural environments.
2. Capacities for building relationship of mutual respect across cultures.
3. Appreciation for the variety and richness of human cultures.
4. Awareness of their own culture.