

MINUTES
General Education Committee
September 3, 2019
2:00-3:30pm
VL 216

Members present: Steve Contakes (Chair and Professor of Chemistry), Paul Delaney (Professor of English), Michelle Hardley (Secretary and Registrar), Michelle Hughes (Professor of Education), Jana Mayfield Mullen (Information Literacy Librarian), Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness),

Others Present:

1. Tatiana opened the meeting in Prayer.
2. The committee minutes of April 8, 2019 were approved with minor editorial changes for clarity, which Michelle will make:
 - Under V. Best practices, line 1: Change “their” to “his”
 - Under VI. Round Table Proposal, paragraph 2 beginning “What is”, line 2: Insert “to” between “due” and “the money”
3. The committee ratified the last committee's approval of COM 128 for serving society credit (which was granted over the preceding summer) so that it may be included in these minutes.
3. Election of the Committee Chair: Stephen Contakes was elected chair; Michelle Hardley will continue to act as the standing committee secretary; Tatiana will continue to coordinate with the chair to set assessment-related agenda items and to post the committee agenda on the GE committee website
4. The committee discussed approval of RS 155-1 as an individual course for thinking historically and thinking globally GE credit. Substantive conclusions of the committee are
 - The committee commends Prof. Richter on the good job she has done in showing attentiveness to the GE criteria in this first submission to the committee.
 - Reading between the lines the course appears to fulfil the thinking globally GE criteria, although there was some concern over the degree to which this needed to be elucidated by reading between the lines of the syllabus and application.
 - Consequently, the committee recommends withholding approval for thinking globally and thinking historically GE credit until several substantive issues are addressed. These are outlined below to facilitate Prof. Richter’s efforts to revise the application in order to secure what we hope will be speedy approval:
 - There was concern that because the course was taught by a non-Westmont instructor unfamiliar with the ethos of our academic program it merited scrutiny that would not be given a course taught by Prof. Richter herself.
 - There was concern over whether the reading primary sources thinking historically certification criteria was being engaged with sufficient rigor, given that its assessment appears to rest on discussions and impression reports that are to be “read by the professor for interest but not for content.” There needs to be more explicit structure and analytical reasoning elements incorporated into the

assessment of discussions and assignments used to fulfil GE certification requirements.

- This concern extends to the use of discussion and impression reports to assess course learning outcome #4, which the committee views as integral to its ability to meet the Thinking Globally certification criteria
- Given the concerns over the weakness of the impression reports as a tool for assessing and developing students' ability to think historically the committee would like to see examples of exams used in a previous iteration of this program so that it might verify that these ask students to engage in the sort of cognitive tasks demanded by the thinking historically certification criteria.

Less substantive issues flagged include:

- There appears to be some confusion over the seemingly conflicting mention of 12 and 20 hours of mapwork in the syllabus.

5. The committee spend time reviewing the agenda items for the year. The initial list is not comprehensive, but is the beginning of the focus for the year. Committee members should suggest additional agenda items as they arise.

Reading Imaginative Literature Assessment: Paul will be coordinating the Reading Imaginative Literature assessment this year. Over the summer the faculty teaching in this area worked to revise the certification criteria, developed a shared assignment to embed within all of their fall courses based on the new criteria and created a standard rubric to evaluate the student's submissions. The General Education Committee reviewed and approved the proposed changes to the certification criteria.

In the fall the faculty teaching in this area will meet for a norming session to standardize their understanding of how to apply the rubric and will evaluate the students' submissions at the end of the term. The full GE committee will complete an analysis of the Reading Imaginative Literature syllabi for courses taught in the fall 2019 semester.

Interpretation of the OT/NT/CD Survey Results: Jana updated the committee on the current state of the Old Testament, New Testament and Christian Doctrine survey results. The committee met over the summer via Skype to discuss the results and to plan for the next steps.

GE Survey for Westmont Sophomores: In the original Senior Survey students wondered why we were not surveying students earlier in their time at Westmont as it is those students who tend to have a higher number of GE courses in their schedule. Student leaders will administer the GE Survey to Westmont Sophomores this year. One member of the committee wondered whether we need to assess the GE again when we just did so with the Senior version of the survey? Another member asked to get a copy of the Senior survey so that they would be familiar with that final report. Tatiana will send the final copy of the report to all of the committee members.

Supporting Westmont Students in GE Courses: Another topic to consider this year would be the ways the committee can work to better support Westmont first-year students in their GE courses. We had some discussions on this last year, and Tatiana will send the related documents on those discussions to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Hardley