

Alignment Between the University General Education Policy and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Goals and Objectives

C. Humanities Breadth Area

General Objectives for All Humanities Breadth Area Courses

The principal objectives of the Humanities courses are to expand students' understanding and appreciation of the arts, literature, and philosophical inquiry as well as to cultivate imagination and nurture empathy.

1. In addition, such courses should:
 - a. Exhibit a representative sample of the forms and subjects of art, expression, and thought within particular disciplines (while courses in the major often concentrate on one or two genres and/or topics, Humanities General Education courses must present a broader sampling of creative production and strive to balance breadth and substance);
 - b. Acquaint students with some of the standard techniques of analysis and appreciation in one or more disciplines of the Humanities, demonstrating that what people see is largely determined by how they see it;
 - c. Attempt to put the "text" in context by helping students to see that art and expression are productions of people in social and cultural settings, thereby providing insights into the contextual structure within which culture develops and thrives;
 - d. Introduce students to the complexity and relativity of Western culture by
 - i. attending to gender issues and/or the role of minority groups within various cultures, and/or
 - ii. taking a comparativist approach to Western and non-Western cultures in order to illustrate the ways in which cultural achievements are related to race, class, sex, region and epoch;
 - e. Encourage students both to differentiate and to integrate objective and subjective responses to art, philosophy, and expression, thus nurturing in students an appreciation of the varieties--and degrees--of "quality" and distinguishing between empathy and sentiment, genius and dexterity;
 - f. Nurture an openness to the new and unfamiliar, demonstrate the relationship of past achievements and present culture, and thereby

illustrate both the on-going processes of cultures and the lifelong relevance of the humanities;

- g. Help students to see the disciplines within the humanities as keys not just to academic knowledge--to abstract contexts, networks, and methodologies--but to self-knowledge as well. This end can be achieved through (a) readings, discussions, and written/oral assignments that compel students to examine the nature of their own empathy and their knowledge of others; and (b) a sequence of readings, discussions, and assignments that encourage students to assess, during the course of the term, not just what they have learned but also how this learning has affected their preconceptions and values; and
- h. Reinforce, where appropriate, the basic skills of composition, oral communication, and critical thinking.