

GER Category: Humanities

Rationale: The humanities and the social sciences comprise the subjects and disciplines that use various modes of rational inquiry to understand human nature and experience, organization and change in human societies, the nature of the world, and rational inquiry itself. An education in the humanities and social sciences requires reading significant works, gaining an exposure to a variety of methodologies, and learning to apply these in written exposition. An education in the basic humanistic disciplines is a necessary part of being truly educated -- of becoming a citizen with a broad knowledge of human cultures and with well-considered moral, philosophical, aesthetic, and intellectual convictions.

Each course in the general humanities category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of human culture and artifacts (this objective must be the central focus of each humanities course); and
2. become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the humanities; and
3. make academic arguments about the human experience using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the humanities.

In addition, each course appearing on one of the specific humanities lists meets the objectives for the specific category as detailed below:

Objectives for courses in the category of History:

Each course in the history category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of evidence from the past situated in geotemporal context (this objective must be the central focus of each history course); and
2. become aware of the act of historical interpretation itself, through which historians use varieties of evidence to offer perspectives on the meaning of the past; and
3. make academic arguments about history using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the field of study.

Sample GER Assessment Materials
Political Science 201

GER Category Objectives: Social Sciences

Each course in the social science category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that helps students to:

1) understand at least one of the following: human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes; and

Student learning outcome: By the end of this course, students should be able to explain how individual behaviors and political institutions interact to create political outcomes

Means of evaluation: Students will demonstrate their achievement of the outcome through (1) an exam question, such as: How has the recent changing emphasis of federalism affected how most Americans deal with their government? (2) an essay assignment, such as: Outline your personal political beliefs in major areas of government and public opinion. Are you liberal or conservative? Why? What aspects of the larger political environment as well as your own personal environment have helped you form these beliefs?

2) understand how social scientific methods may be applied to the study of human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes; and

Student learning outcome: By the end of this course, students should be able to properly use and critically evaluate political science data such as election returns and/or public opinion poll results

Means of evaluation: Students will demonstrate their achievement of the outcome through an exam question, such as: The following are the results of a result Gallup poll about President's Bush's job performance. What inferences can you make from these results and what conclusions should you not draw from these results? Why?

3) use theories or concepts of the social sciences to understand real-world problems, including the underlying origins of such problems.

Student learning outcome: By the end of this course, students should be able to analyze the actions of contemporary political actors (including ordinary citizens) using key course concepts

Means of evaluation: Students will demonstrate their achievement of the outcome through (1) an exam question, such as: How would you explain the reactions of the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress to President Bush's recent tax cut proposals? (2) an essay assignment such as: Choose any supreme court case that interests you. Describe the basic facts of the case and how the court decided. Why did the Justices decide the case as they did? Do you feel that the Court made a wise decision in this case? Why or why not?