Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Language, Philosophy and Culture

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Language, Philosophy and Culture. Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

The proposed course must contain all elements of the Foundational Component Area. How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

HIST 345/AFST 345 examines selected topics in the history of Africa since 1800. The principal aim of the course is to provide students with a historical foundation for understanding contemporary Africa. Much of what is reported in the popular media about events and trends in Africa today lacks historical context. In an effort to correct these misperceptions and to expand our knowledge of the people of this fascinating continent, we will examine Africa’s history during three crucial periods: the 19th century up to about 1880 (that is, the period prior to the European conquest and “partition” of Africa); the colonial period (roughly 1880 to 1960); and the post-colonial or “national” period (1960 to the present). Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on the great diversity of Africa’s historical experiences over the last two centuries.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

The proposed course is required to contain each element of the Core Objective.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

This course develops the core objective of critical thinking by asking students to interpret, discuss and connect course lecture and reading materials, including maps and material culture, and to craft written arguments on topics such as the social and economic diversity of the continent prior to European conquest and “partition” in the 1880s and the reworking of social and political structures during the period of European colonialism from 1880 through the 1960s. Student learning will be evaluated through a map quiz, mid-course essay exams, a short analytical essay and a final essay exam.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

This course develops the core objective of communication by asking students to evaluate and synthesize lecture and reading materials, to view material artifacts and paintings and discuss how they serve as primary sources, and to write responses to essay questions based on those discussions and other topics such as the PanAfrican movement, decolonization in Africa and post-colonial politics. Student learning will be evaluated through a map quiz, mid-course essay exams, a short analytical essay and a final essay exam, all of which draw on lecture, readings and discussion.
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Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

This course will address social responsibility by requiring students to identify the great diversity of Africa's historical experiences over the last two centuries through a study of its peoples’ nineteenth and twentieth-century economic, social and political history. It also addresses social responsibility by exposing students to various forms of African cultural expression- art, architecture, literature (oral and written), and ritual- and discussing how these have shaped and been shaped by European colonialism. Students learning will be evaluated through a map quiz, mid-course essay exams, a short analytical essay and a final essay exam.

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making):

This course will address personal responsibility by requiring students to recognize (in lectures and reading materials) and articulate (through quizzes and essay exams) how ethnocentric and racist American images of Africa and Africans developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and how they intertwined with and influenced current American conceptions of African history. Students will be asked to reflect on how these images influenced things like American policy toward African nations and how they might shape students own understandings of racial difference. Student learning will be evaluated through discussion, mid course essay exams, an analytical written essay and a final essay exam.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.