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?

ANTH 316, Introduction to Nautical Anthropology, is an existing course being proposed for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy and Culture area of the TAMU Core Curriculum. This course will give students a broad overview of how maritime cultures, seafaring history, ancient civilizations, laws, language and trade networks have shaped modern society.

This course will look at the history of ideas and how they develop, expand and in some cases, diminish over time. As economic pressures encourage expansion towards regional and long-distance trade networks, we will use archaeological data to see local adaptation of maritime resources and ship designs to accommodate an ever-growing global systems of values and beliefs in maritime trade. We will examine the role of vessels in commerce, war and long-distance trade. Through a broad range of topics including ships excavated in the Egyptian desert, horses walking on water and aspects of Viking-age expansion we will see how local necessities grow to become global in nature.

The course covers empirical and scientific methods where applicable. We will look at the relationship between seafaring and its affect on development of vessel types, local trade and eventual global expansion. We will see that symbolism used in early Egyptian society are still in use today. ANTH 316 gives students an opportunity to study the complex matrix of behaviors and interactions amongst individuals, groups, institutions and events, and further examines how these behaviors and interactions have impacted individuals, society, and culture. Lectures, presentations, readings and assignments are directly targeted at expanding our knowledge base of maritime history and topics and problems faced by anthropologists today.

Lectures, readings and special illustrations will be available through the TAMU Electronic Course Reserves.

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):

While ANTH 316 is a lecture course, archaeological date is rich in visual images. Students are required to study the ideas expressed as icons and ship designs painted in tombs and rock art as compared to archaeologically excavated watercraft. Each lecture outlines social and spiritual pressures that shape societies and the
Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

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

underpinnings of the need for watercraft in maritime societies. Every class will focus on interesting and often overlooked needs of social groups.

We will use empirical archaeological data to investigate changes in vessel types and adaptation of construction methods over time to better understand the mindset of ancient traders. Beyond thinking critically, students will have an opportunity to express ideas through a series of one page reaction papers. The intent of these papers is to encourage expressing different points of view and encourage critical evaluation of archaeological evidence.

Readings and reports assigned to specific classes will challenge students to look at the big picture of maritime history. Students will investigate the strengths and weaknesses of journal articles and make their own conclusions on topics ranging from Plato and the story of Atlantis and modern day piracy on the high seas.

Through assigned reports, readings and PowerPoint lectures, students will learn to effectively interpret, describe and express anthropological information using technical vocabulary appropriate to the topic. In-class quizzes, examinations and class discussions will be used to evaluate communication skills.

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

Long before the formalized use of language in many cultures, manking used iconography and graffiti to illustrate his lifeways. From the earliest maps drawn on clay tablets to funerary and effigy figures buried in Egyptian tombs, the archaeological record is rich with materials that are important to study. Through lectures, PowerPoint presentations, special-topic videos, lectures and occasional hand-out materials, students will examine how the visually-oriented archaeological data has supported diversity in seafaring technologies over the past 4,500 years. This in turn as supported rich diversity of global cultural traditions that exist today. The intent of classroom materials is to instill a sense of intercultural competency and sensitivity to other ways of life including maritime trade networks and more recently, multinational corporate structures. The ancient port of Rome, known as Portus, was home to multinational trade groups throughout most of modern history.

Through class discussions, one-page reaction papers and in-class pop quizzes and scheduled examinations, students learn how societies use anthropological ideas to create a sense of ethnic identity and nationalism. In this course, students will appreciate cultural sensitivity issues within other peoples and cultures.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

From a ‘hindsight is 20/20 perspective,’ students in ANTH 316 will have the opportunity to evaluate and better understand how cultural beliefs in a specific society change in scope over time, adapt to external influences such as supply and demand from long-distance trade partners, and even negative commercial pressures from other trade networks. These are real social pressures that affect the nature of maritime activities and designs of watercraft.

Students will study the historical underpinnings of European trade and expansion and learn from a case study of the Swedish Flagship Vasa, the consequence of competition in regional and global markets. In making

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making):
Texas A&M University
Core Curriculum
Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

The study of maritime history offers students an opportunity to correlate cause-and-effect situations in maritime cultures. A comparison between rich and powerful maritime traditions of in thirteenth-century Europe for instance, illustrates how exploitation of natural resources alone affected economic growth and social well being.

From examining the archaeological material culture of coastal ships, we will see that diversity in trade goods and the means to measure and quantify commodities was a key factor that some maritime traditions were prepared to embrace. Others were not. Examination of the archaeological record makes it possible to connecting choices and ethics actions.

In the late 1900’s, fishing practices around the world evolved in response to local needs and long-distance trade demands. The current economic state of many countries is the result of choices, actions and consequences set in motion long ago. Students in ANTH 316 will develop and broad understanding of societal difference and how these differences affect the development of watercraft. They also learn the need to develop decision-making skills and strong ethical foundations, from a business and personal perspective.

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