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?

The course (CLAS/HIST 429, The Roman Empire) is a survey of Roman History from the late 1st century BC to the end of the 6th century AD, with focus on the consolidation of autocratic rule under the principate, the administration of Roman imperial rule throughout the Mediterranean, the conflict between Christianity and the Roman state, and the eventual disintegration of the empire and creation of Germanic successor kingdoms in the west. Students learn about some of the most important political, military, social, legal, religious, and cultural developments in Classical Antiquity, as well as about the geography of the ancient world. Topics to be covered include principles and institutions of Roman government, society, law, religion, and warfare in contrast to those of other cultures (e.g., Germans, Dacians, Huns, Parthians/Persians) and religions (Jews, Christians) that interacted with or were part of the Roman world during this period. In tracing the transformation of the Roman empire into the world of medieval Europe and Byzantium, the course examines questions of political and cultural cooperation and conflict.

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 enhances critical thinking by requiring students to analyze, interpret, and synthesize materials from lectures, ancient historiographical and biographical sources (e.g., Suetonius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Eusebius), and modern scholarly literature dealing with the social, political, cultural, and military history of the period covered in this course. An important component of this course is introducing students to the methods of scholars who study the Classical Graeco-Roman world. Student development in this area is evaluated through class discussion, three written essay examinations, and a final exam that incorporates material from lectures and readings as well as visual images and maps.
Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

This course enhances communications skills by requiring students to summarize and explain the importance of assigned readings in class discussions and to investigate, defend, and critique Roman values, attitudes, and practices with regard to a variety of issues. The geography and iconography of the Roman world will be closely considered through visual images and maps, both on display during each lecture and made available to students as part of a course packet. Development of student interpretation and communication skills is evaluated through class discussion, three written essay examinations, and a final exam that incorporates material from lectures and readings as well as visual images and maps.

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

This course enhances social responsibility by requiring students to consider how historical experiences and cultural differences shaped the identity and self-expression of (the) Romans, with regard both to their interaction with others inside and beyond the empire (e.g., Germans, Dacians, Huns, Parthians/Persians) while maintaining world power and to the challenge posed to the Roman state by a fundamentally different form of religion such as Christianity. Students will examine Roman views on issues such as war, ethnicity, slavery, violence, gender, religion, and social welfare; consider how and why the belief systems of the ancient world differ from our own; and explain why some of these views are seen as foundational to our own while others have come to be considered abhorrent. Student development of this objective will be evaluated through class discussion, three written essay examinations, and a final exam that incorporates material from lectures and readings as well as visual images and maps.

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

This course offers students the opportunity to reflect on topics conducive to the promotion of personal responsibility, including but not limited to: how we form and defend ethical judgments, the degree to which freedom of religion serves the interests of society, how different cultures define in different ways the responsibilities of the individual to the community, and how the study of ancient cultures and their alien belief systems puts our own beliefs in sharper perspective, thereby prompting personal reflection and growth. Students’ active engagement with this objective will be evaluated through class discussion, three written essay examinations, and a final exam that incorporates material from lectures and readings as well as visual images and maps.

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