Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

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

Foundational Component Area: Creative Arts

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Creative Arts. Courses in this category focus on appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

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?

This course (ENGL 212) will examine the intellectual and cultural climate in which Shakespeare’s plays were written and performed and the dominant themes and motifs that characterize them. Although we will discuss a number of issues, we will focus particularly on representations of the theater and theatricality in Shakespeare’s works and on their relationship to debates about the role of acting and spectacle in early modern England. What pleasures, possibilities, and dangers were associated with playhouses in the period? What was the perceived relationship of “playing” to other forms of social theater (political spectacle, religious ritual, social role-playing etc.)? Finally, how do modern-day productions of Shakespeare reflect our own hopes and anxieties about the power of theater? Ultimately, students will not only be able to better understand the broader historical and cultural context in which Shakespeare’s work flourished, but they will also be given the opportunity through a creative group project to interpret and perform scenes from Shakespeare in front of an audience of their peers.

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):

The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of key ideas in the works of Shakespeare. The evaluation of critical thinking skills will be based on exams and class participation and may include written work. Exams will be designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and synthesize key ideas from the assigned reading. Class room discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of Shakespeare’s work from the early modern England to the present.

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

The course enhances communication skills through small and large group discussion of ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading. The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of Shakespeare’s work past and present that may involve guided writing assignments in which they will receive feedback, exams in which students will be expected to effectively convey key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and class room discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the subtleties of each text under examination.
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Teamwork (to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal):

The course will enhance students' ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Students will be expected to work on a group project in which they will have to negotiate a collective vision of how to perform a scene from a Shakespeare play based upon their mutually agreed upon interpretation and background research. Each group will be expected to turn in a short paper and facilitate a stimulating class discussion about their performance.

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

The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross cultural understanding of how history, region, and broader social forces have shaped the differing interpretations and performances of Shakespeare's work from the early modern England to the present. The evaluation of social responsibility will be based upon an end-of-the-semester short writing assignment in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped Shakespeare's body of work from early modern England to the present.

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