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.

How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

ENGL 330 Arthurian Literature: This course centers on the development of the Arthur story in poetry, fiction, and drama, from its inception in early medieval Britain through the twentieth and twenty-first century. Reading these texts in relation to specific historical, political, and cultural contexts, we will be discussing such topics as: Arthur as a model for rulers, the role of Arthurian narrative in shaping the ideals of “chivalry,” contemporary international human rights law, and professional rule of conduct in the modern world. This course will ultimately reveal how wider social forces shape the philosophical outlooks and aesthetic sensibilities of writers who use the Arthur story, and help students develop an appreciation for what the study of literature can teach us about ourselves and our shared humanity. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

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.

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

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of Arthurian literature. 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, analyze and evaluate the nuances and complexities of literature that uses the Arthurian theme to investigate a wide range of issues.

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

Communication Skills (CS): The course enhances communication skills through small and large group discussion, writing and visual texts of ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading. The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of Arthurian literature 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
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each text under examination. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual
representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

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

Social Responsibility (SR): The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross
cultural understanding of how history, region, and broader social forces have shaped the distinctive
literary traditions of Arthurian literature and how that literature expresses those various these and
forces. 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 literatures from
previous historical periods and cultures 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 the literary
traditions of Arthurian literature and how the story of Arthur can be variously applied to consider these
outlooks.

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

Personal Responsibility (PR): The course will enhance personal responsibility through engagement with
moral and thorny ethical issues that arise in class readings. The course material throughout the
semester will offer students an opportunity to reflect upon personal responsibility and consider their own
ethical stance through such topics as the chivalric roots of international human rights law, professional
code of conduct for the military, just war theory, rape as a war crime, treatment of prisoners and
civilians, personal loyalty and political allegiance, and relationships between men and women.

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