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?

**English 376:** This course is a survey of the American novel from 1900 to the present, with an emphasis on its rich variety. Our main focus will be on exploring the narrative and stylistic strategies through which each writer creates his or her unique fictional world, but we will also consider each text’s relation to broader literary, cultural and historical developments, and will pay particular attention to changing concepts of identity and subjectivity, as shaped, constrained and/or enabled by historical determinants, and as related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, family, community and social class. This course will ultimately reveal how wider social forces shape the philosophical outlooks and aesthetic sensibilities of American novelists of different racial, ethnic, gender, regional backgrounds, and sexual orientation, and ultimately, help students develop an appreciation for what the study of literature of groups that may be different from their own 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 the American novel from 1900 to the present. 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 the American novel from 1900 to the present.

**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 the American novel from 1900 to the 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,
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and classroom discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the
subtleties of 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 the American novel from 1900 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 literatures from previous historical periods and cultures 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 the literary traditions of the American novel
from 1900 to the present.

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 through such topics as the
legacy of American slavery and racism, tensions between desire for independence and duty to family,
personal fulfillment and broader societal obligations, and responsibilities of authorship and of reading.

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