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 (FSTC 300) provides principles and concepts that govern different religious and cultural foods. A focus will be factors associated with development of food preferences and requirements for foods for various religious and cultures. These include attitudes, beliefs, traditions, geographic area, etc. We will investigate the availability of religious and cultural foods in the market. During this course we will identify status or approval of food ingredients for specific cultural or religious groups. This course will explain the cultural and religious background of specific foods, process of certification for food products, according to requirements of specific religions and cultural groups. This course aims to encourage the understanding of production for specific religious/cultural groups. Assignments are designed to let students demonstrate their knowledge and application of key concept of religious and ethnic food to prepare their involvements in this important subject in their communities, personal and social lives.

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):

Students will be assigned a group project which consists of researching and developing a specific food product that meets all restrictions and requirements of the religion or culture as assigned. This exercise requires the students to think, observe, analyze, and comment on differences and similarities of different religious and ethnic foods. This course will also address the development of critical thinking skills by requiring students to work on an assignment for the market potential of religious and ethnic foods and its demand all over the world. Student’s understanding will be evaluated through class discussion, the midterm and final exams. Students will be given information, written and verbal to understand and critically think about the differences between culture, a religion and a way of life.

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

This course will provide an opportunity to every student to improve their verbal, written and visual communication skill by participating in a group project. Students will be assigned a project where they must communicate with other students, industry people, religious and ethnic groups to find appropriate information for their project. Then each group must present their project to the class and explain the details about their project by using effective visual aids. Team presentations will include PowerPoint slides with photos or other graphics of food availability, food restrictions (cultural or religious), examples of meals, etc. The new food product created in compliance with assigned religious and/or cultural requirements will be included. This exercise will improve their verbal, written, and visual communication as well as presentation skill. Students also will write a report for the international market and demands for the religious and ethnic food as well as report on one international activity. They are encouraged to participate in a question/answer session with guest speakers to grasp a better (first-hand) understanding of a culture or religion.
Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

By understanding different cultures, religions and tradition, people feel much more comfortable to interact and engage with each other in their local, regional, national and international communities. This course will address social responsibility by requiring students to understand the requirements of different religious and ethnic foods through class discussion, lectures and reading materials. How different cultures and foods interact with those of different traditions and world religions will be addressed. The course enhances students’ intercultural competence through learning of different religious and ethnic foods, tradition and cultural differences between different societies. Students thereby gain an understanding and respect of different religions and their dietary requirements. Understanding of different religious and ethnic foods prepares students to more effectively engage the regional, national and global communities. This will be evaluated by questions in exams and religious and cultural food projects.

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

This course will teach personal responsibility by enhancing students’ understanding about different religions’ requirements for food and respect their obligations regarding some of the dietary and cultural restrictions. Students will be required to identify the requirements for making religious foods as they adjust to surroundings of different cultures and religion. The knowledge and understanding about food relations and cultures will help them be effective with peoples from many other cultures and relations. The evaluation of personal responsibility will be based upon assignments and projects in which students will be expected to develop either a religious or cultural food.

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