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?

HIST/RELS 347: The Rise of Islam, 600-1258 is an introduction to Islamic civilization from the rise of Islam to the Mongol conquests of Baghdad. Through close reading and discussion of primary sources in translation and secondary literature, students examine topics such as pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur'an, early Islamic laws on prayer, the ethical conventions of jihad, the lives of Muslim women, and the relation of Islam to Christians and Jews.

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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 develops the core objective of critical thinking by asking students to interpret, discuss and connect course lecture and reading materials, including maps, and to craft written arguments on topics such as religious differences expressed in pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur’an, and early Islamic laws on prayer. Student learning will be evaluated through class discussion, weekly reflection papers, and multiple-choice and essay exams.

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

This course develops the core objective of communication by asking students to evaluate and synthesize lecture and reading materials (including maps), to discuss their relationships, to write weekly reflection papers and to respond to questions about topics such as the ethical conventions of jihad, the lives of Muslim women and the relation of Islam to Christianity and Judaism. Student learning will be evaluated through class discussion, weekly reflection papers, and multiple-choice and essay exams.

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

This course will address social responsibility by requiring students to develop a foundation for understanding the development of the early Islamic World through the study of its peoples’ and its varied economic, social and political history from 600-1258, the Mongol Invasion of Baghdad. It also will expose students to varied forms of cultural expression throughout the region, and in particular art, architecture, literature (oral and written) and
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ritual. Student learning will be evaluated through class discussion, weekly reflection papers, and multiple-choice and essay exams.

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

This course will address personal responsibility by requiring students to recognize (in lectures and reading materials) and articulate (in discussion and essays) how religious and cultural differences in Islamic World between 600 and 1258 laid the groundwork for future political, economic and social divisions throughout the Arabian peninsula and the Middle East. Students will be asked to reflect on how these differences shape current geo-political dynamics and how they inform their personal understandings of past and present followers of Islam. Student learning will be evaluated through class discussion, weekly reflection papers, and multiple-choice and essay exams.

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