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?

INTS 251 is a new course open to all majors that is being proposed for 2014-15. The course examines diverse aspects of the culture and society of the Middle East in order to provide students with a framework through which to comprehend critical contemporary issues. Through course readings, lecture, and discussion, students will gain an appreciation of the ideas, values, and beliefs of this region of the globe. This knowledge will facilitate analysis of different forms of cultural expression. Synthesis of the material will enable students to be participants in the ongoing dialogue concerning social and ethical issues among cultures in a rapidly globalizing world.

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 enhances critical thinking through students’ multi-faceted, active engagement with course materials, lectures, and group discussions. Each student in the class must prepare a class presentation at least once during the semester, discussing the readings of the day with powerpoint slides and/or handouts; classmates’ participation grade is in part determined through discussion Q&A. Examination questions on the midterm test students’ comprehension of the material and require analysis through comparative questions. Students develop critical thinking skills through the production of a research paper constructed in the form of an analytical essay in which students present a thesis and support that thesis through argumentation and specific citation. Analytical skills also play a role in class discussions of current news items through which students develop lines of inquiry on the relationship between the region’s cultural and social history and the present.

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

The course enhances students skills in written, oral, and visual communication, through in-class discussions and presentations, a research project, and written examinations. All students will create class presentations during the semester, which include oral delivery of the presentation and visual communication through the creation of powerpoint slides and/or a class handout to accompany the presentation. In the research paper, students will engage skills of written communication, with attention to synthesis of the material and the logic and persuasiveness of the argument.
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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 students' intercultural competence through sustained engagement with diverse materials from the cultures of the Middle East. A primary learning outcome of the course is the articulation of key concepts of Middle Eastern culture, history and politics. Synthesis of this material allows students to make comparisons between the cultures studied and their own, and will enable students to be participants in the ongoing dialogue concerning social and ethical issues among cultures in a rapidly globalizing world. Group/class discussions on course material and current events in the region, a research paper, written examination, and class presentations are used to assess students' development in these areas.

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

Students will be exposed to cultural and social developments in the evolution of the modern Middle East. This material raises questions of personal and national identity, complex issues surrounding the events and the consequences of the Arab Spring, and the role of personal choice as a function of being a global citizen. Class discussions are venues in which students will reflect actively on these topics. The research projects are an opportunity for students to pursue these types of questions in more depth.

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