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?

Every day humans the world over make decisions about how to dress. Humans use dress as a means of communication and personal expression. This course explores the social, psychological, and cultural aspects of dress and appearance, including the relationship of dress to physical and social environments, aesthetic and personal expression, and cultural ideals and values. Dress cannot be isolated from the political, economic and social surroundings of the time. We will explore sources of information of dress from a wide range of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, politics, economics, biology, chemistry, art history and history.

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):

Students use critical thinking skills when employing the scientific language of the classification system of dress, evaluating the strengths and weakness of sources of information about dress, analyzing how variations in human appearance affect choices in dress, and investigating the relationship between costume and the lighting, staging and content of the performance they are required to attend. This is applied in the assigned Production Response.

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

Effective written communication is critical to course assignments including the "Understanding Race" Response Paper and Production Response Paper. These written assignments are graded based on the following criteria: writing – organization, clear communication of ideas and meaning; mechanics – grammar and punctuation; correct use of course concepts and vocabulary; and citation of sources.

The Course Concept Collage assignment requires groups of students to translate knowledge of course concepts into images and communicate comprehension in a visual manner.

In-class discussions of reading assignments, as well as group assignments, such as Rules for Dress, require students to verbally express course concepts and relate those concepts to their own experiences.
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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):

Students are challenged to develop intercultural competence through the recognition that the meanings of dress vary from society to society, regionally, nationally, and globally. They explore the impact of the fashion industry and technology on humans, animals, and the environment and how the fashion industry is introducing sustainability. In conjunction with attendance at a performance of the Department of Performance Studies Theatre Arts production, class discussion covers appropriate audience behavior and etiquette in order to effectively engage in the performance. This assignment also aids in the discovery of dress as an art form and an integral part of visual, performing, and literary arts.

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

Students make connections between their personal choices in dress and the consequences for the global community through topics such as the second-hand clothing trade and technology and sustainability in dress and fashion. Reading and discussing "Helping or Hindering?" helps students see that donating unwanted clothing is actually a political act with economic ramifications in a global economy. Students discuss the costs (including natural resources, labor, and transport) to produce the clothing they wear and a variety of fashion designers embracing sustainability and green practices in "EcoFashion".

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