CORE COURSE CRITERIA

Criteria for USM Core Courses

For pre-Fall 2011 Core only. These requirements do not apply post Fall 2011.

English Composition (C)

The English Department provides College Writing students with three handouts in addition to the course syllabus. They are:

1. What to Expect from English 100 - College Writing
2. Criteria for Evaluating Student Essays.
3. Plagiarism.

Copies of these are available from the English Department.

Quantitative Decision Making Requirement (D)

Our present technological society requires daily use of such skills as estimating, problem solving, interpreting data, organizing data, measuring, predicting, and applying mathematics to everyday situations. Therefore, a quantitative decision making course should cover the following areas:

1. problem solving;
2. applying mathematics to everyday situations;
3. alertness to the reasonableness of results;
4. estimation and approximation;
5. appropriate computational skills;
6. geometry;
7. measurement;
8. reading, interpreting, and constructing tables, charts, and graphs;
9. using mathematics to predict;
10. computer literacy.

Skills of Analysis Requirement (E)

A course in skills of analysis should:

1. demonstrate the distinction between the dynamic process of analysis and the form of logical argument;
2. demonstrate and contrast analysis to other cognitive processes such as remembering, describing, and reconstructing;
3. establish that analysis is an idiosyncratic and creative process;
4. teach the principles and processes of analysis which include the definition of the problem, the discovery of acceptable premises, and the attainment of tentative conclusions;
5. present the study of deductive and inductive logic as the main support for good analysis;
6. help the student critique and argue; to distinguish between sound and unsound arguments; to identify non-arguments; and to analyze reasons, conclusions, and argument connectives;
7. differentiate between arguments based on value and arguments based on fact.

Fine Arts Requirement (F,G)

A course in the fine arts should:

1. identify the uniqueness of the specific art and should demonstrate the relationship of that art to the other arts and to history, philosophy, and society;
2. explore the basic theoretical principles needed to practice the art; identify the techniques appropriate to the art; and discuss vocabulary pertinent to the understanding of the techniques of the art;
3. discuss the art in a historical perspective with specific references to the works of art themselves and investigate the current state of threat form;
4. involve the student in the performance of art;
5. explore the value of art in society and discuss the meaning of an aesthetic experience;
6. develop in the student a rudimentary ability to criticize a work of art, giving specific reasons for the judgment;
7. introduce the student to the basic sources of information about the art, thus allowing the student to continue learning about the art.

Statements 2, 4, 5, and 6 should be directly addressed by performance-centered experience. Statements 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 should be directly addressed by a history-centered course, while statements 2 and 4 might be indirectly addressed by a history-centered course.

Literature Section of the Humanities Requirement (H)

A course in literature should:

1. acquaint students with the contribution of the written word to the shaping and defining of culture;
2. introduce students to the tools and vocabulary of literary criticism and expose them to the critical and aesthetic skills needed to interpret literature;
3. stimulate students’ own imagination by contact with the creative work of others;
4. sharpen the student’s ability to make disciplined and discriminating judgment about worth and value;
5. inform students about the methodology inherent in the humanities (e.g. understanding entails interpretation; certainty of interpretation is unattainable) and make students aware that knowledge in the humanities is not incremental or sequential, as it is in the sciences;
6. introduce students to the basic sources of information about a particular author or literary period, thus allowing them to pursue further study independently.

Note: Although every course should address all the above criteria to some degree, it is recognized that not every course will cover each of the items to the same degree.
Other Times/Other Cultures Section of the Humanities Requirement (I)

A course in other times/other cultures should:

1. broaden students' perspectives by revealing the diversity of life, institutions and thought in their own and other cultures;
2. introduce students to the methodology and techniques of historical analysis, or alternatively, to those of cultural anthropology;
3. show students how institutions and ideas have originated and evolved in different cultures;
4. assist students to assess their own values by comparison and contrast with the values of earlier times or other cultures;
5. make students aware that dependence upon historical records, translation from one language to another, and personal observations of other cultures entail an inevitable element of subjectivity;
6. introduce students to basic sources of information about a particular historical period or culture, thus allowing them to pursue further study independently.

Note: Although every course should address each of these criteria to some degree, it is recognized that not all courses will address individual criteria to the same extent.

Social Science Requirement (J)

A course in the social sciences should:

1. explain how human beings relate to themselves, to each other, to their institutions, and to their environment under a variety of conditions;
2. introduce students to the scientific method as practiced in the social sciences making them aware that learning in the social sciences takes place by (1) observations which lead to theories and then to testable hypotheses, by (2) the gathering of data and statistical manipulation of that data to test hypotheses, and by (3) revisions and reformulations of the original theories in the light of research findings;
3. expose students to the breadth and complexity of social, economic, and political life and describe the myriad forms and patterns humans have devised to interact with each other over the ages and across cultures;
4. acquaint the student with the language and key terms, the basic research findings, and the major theoretical approaches of the particular discipline;
5. indicate some of the problems faced by the researcher in the social sciences, e.g., the difficulty of performing pure, replicable experiments; the complexity of measurement problems; and the ethical issues which arise when undertaking experimental research on human beings;
6. encourage the student to think intelligently and creatively about the social, economic, and political world allowing students to acquire an enhanced understanding of their backgrounds, motives, and ability to play active roles in all arenas of social life.

Note: Although every course should address all the above criteria to some degree, it is recognized that not every course will cover each of the items to the same degree.

Natural Science Requirement (K)

A course in the natural sciences:

1. should articulate the boundaries of the specific science, explain how it differs from other sciences both in content and methodology, and identify how it interacts with them;
2. should introduce the student to the scientific method, in part by testing of hypotheses through laboratory experiments and observations, and should stress the role of models in the development of scientific theories;
3. should help the student understand how scientific proposals become accepted theories; e.g., weight of evidence, stature of experimenter, and theoretical necessity;
4. should explore the historical background and provide perspective on the science and its important theories;
5. should enable the student to understand the basic vocabulary and concepts of the science so that current ideas can be understood, intelligently discussed, and independently explored in the literature;
6. should clarify for the student both the achievements and the limitations of the science and indicate boundaries of our knowledge;
7. should point out ethical issues involved in experimentation and interpretation of data.

Note: Although every course should address all the above criteria twosome degree, it is recognized that not every course will cover each of the criteria to the same extent.

Writing Intensive Requirement (W)

1. The course takes improvement in student writing as one of its central goals and communicates this focus to students in the syllabus.
2. The course is conspicuously writing-intensive. It may use a variety of types of writing (e.g. journals, class writing, reaction papers, etc., in addition to or in place of more conventional formal papers). The course should use these writing tasks in a variety of roles in the course and writing should be a frequent mode of interaction between students as well as between students and faculty.
3. The course curriculum includes explicit discussion of writing issues, whether this relates to matters of form and style or matters of grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation.
4. The course effectively promotes the habit of revision, as well as the skills needed to make this effort productive.
5. The course acquaints students with the writing-related resources that are available to them at USM.