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Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education
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References: Title 5 Sections 55061 55063; Accreditation Standard II.A.3.

A. Criteria for determining General Education courses

1. Courses appropriate for general education will include the following criteria:

1. Course Integrity and Breadth

The course exposes the student to a wide spectrum of principles, theories, beliefs, and knowledge within individual academic disciplines and is not primarily a part of a sequence of courses.

2. Critical Thinking

The course requires the student to critically analyze principles, theories, beliefs, and knowledge included in the course.

2. In addition, courses will also include at least four of the following criteria:

a. Individual Perspectives

The course uses the methods of each discipline to develop the student's ability to examine, evaluate, and express individual perspectives.

b. Integration of Knowledge

The course aims at integrating the major concepts of the course with knowledge from other general education areas.

c. Culture and Heritage

The course examines culture and heritage and their role in understanding and shaping society.

d. Application of Knowledge

The course prepares the student to apply the principles and content of a particular discipline to understand, analyze, and evaluate information to solve problems.

e. Communication of Knowledge

The course prepares the student to communicate information in a variety of ways.

f. Discipline Exploration

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The course provides a foundation of knowledge and technique from which the student can continue learning in the general discipline area.

B. Students receiving an associate degree shall complete a minimum of 24 semester units of general education coursework which includes a minimum of three semester units in each of the areas specified in paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) and the same minimum in each part of paragraph (1). Criteria for judging courses as appropriate for the required general education areas include:

1. Language and Rationality

Courses in language and rationality are those which develop the principles and applications of language toward logical thought, clear and precise expression and critical evaluation of communication in whatever symbol system the student uses.

- a. Courses fulfilling the English composition requirement shall be designed to include both expository and argumentative writing. Courses offered in fulfillment of this requirement shall be at the level typically known as Freshman Composition.
- b. Courses fulfilling the mathematics requirement shall be at the level typically known as Intermediate Algebra, (either intermediate algebra or another mathematics course at the same level, with the same rigor and with Intermediate Algebra as a prerequisite). This requirement may also be met by a mathematics course taught in or on behalf of other departments and which, as determined by the local governing board, require entrance skills at a level equivalent to those necessary for Intermediate Algebra. Mathematics courses with a prerequisite of Intermediate Algebra may also be used to satisfy this requirement.
- c. Courses fulfilling the oral communication requirement will develop knowledge and understanding of the form, content, context and effectiveness of communication. Students will develop proficiency in oral communication, examining communication from the rhetorical perspective and practicing reasoning and advocacy, organization and accuracy. Coursework must include active participation and practice in oral communication in the physical presence of faculty and other listeners.

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2. Natural Sciences

- a. Courses in the natural sciences are those which examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. This category would include introductory or integrative courses in astronomy, biology, chemistry, general physical science, geology, meteorology, oceanography, physical geography, physical anthropology, physics and other scientific disciplines.
- b. To satisfy the General Education Requirement in natural sciences, a course shall be designed to help the student develop an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method, and encourage an understanding of the relationships between science and other human activities.

3. Humanities

- a. Courses in the humanities are those which study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. Such courses could include introductory or integrative courses in the arts, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, and religion.
- b. To satisfy the general education requirement in the humanities, a course shall be designed to help the student develop an awareness of the ways in which people throughout the ages and in different cultures have responded to themselves and the world around them in artistic and cultural creation and help the student develop aesthetic understanding and ability to make value judgments.

4. American Institutions

Courses fulfilling the American Institutions requirement focus study in three areas: the historical development of American institutions and ideals, the Constitution of the United States and the operation of representative democratic government under the Constitution, and the process of California State and local government.

- a. Courses in American History will cover significant events from U.S. history, as follows: cover a minimum time span of approximately one hundred years occurring in the entire area now included in the United States of America including the relationships of regions within that area and with external regions and powers, the role of major ethnic and social groups, the "continuity of the American experience" (i.e., not a string of isolated events) and its derivation from others cultures, including study of politics, economics, social movements, and/or geography (at least three of the four).

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- b. Courses examining the U.S. Constitution will include the political philosophies of the framers of the Constitution, the operation of United States political process and institutions under the U.S. Constitution, and the rights and obligations of individual citizens in the political system established under the Constitution.
- c. Courses in the area of California state and local government will address the Constitution of the State of California and the nature and processes of California state and local government.
- d. Courses accepted in satisfaction of this requirement must have been approved for satisfaction of the CSU "American Institutions: U.S. History, Constitution, and American Ideals" requirement. See CSU Executive Order 405 for further clarification. It is unlikely that a single course would include sufficient breadth and depth to rigorously satisfy all of the above requirements.

5.—Social and Behavioral Sciences

- a. Courses in the social and behavioral sciences are those which focus on people as members of society. This category would include introductory or integrative survey courses in cultural anthropology, cultural geography, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and related disciplines.
- b. To satisfy the general education requirement in social and behavioral sciences, a course shall be designed to develop an awareness of the methods of inquiry used by the social and behavioral sciences. It shall be designed to stimulate critical thinking about the ways people act and have acted in response to their societies and should promote appreciation of how societies and social subgroups operate.

6. Awareness of Self and Society

- a. Courses which contain a breadth of subject matter essential for awareness of self and society.
- b. This category should reflect the needs of a dynamic society; therefore, courses may be added, deleted, or changed as the future needs of society may dictate.

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C. Ethnic Studies

1. Designated Ethnic Studies courses will be offered in at least one of the areas outlined in Section B above.
2. Ethnic Studies courses must focus on one or more ethnic groups in the U. S.
3. Courses approved for Ethnic Studies designation will satisfy CSU General Education Breadth Area D-3.