

## HOW TO PROPOSE A COURSE FOR GE CLAS CORE STATUS IN SUSTAINABILITY

### Deadlines and Other Essential Information

During the fall semester, GE CLAS Core proposals are due by September 3. Spring proposals are due by January 16.

Please submit proposals to [jennifer-eimers@uiowa.edu](mailto:jennifer-eimers@uiowa.edu) as one PDF file with continuous pagination, including the appendix.

Successful proposals show an understanding of the GE goals, the GE comprehensive student learning outcomes, the GE area learning outcomes related to the proposal, and the required GE course attributes. Please review this information carefully: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/goals-and-course-attributes>.

The General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) reviews submitted proposals; approved proposals are moved to the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (UEPCC) for a discussion. If approved, CLAS asks the Registrar to add the GE status to the course.

There are four required sections to the proposal, plus a cover letter and an appendix. Proposals usually will be around five pages in length, excluding the cover letter and the appendix. Guidelines for the length of each section are included below.

### Cover Letter

Please include a brief cover letter of no more than three paragraphs addressed to the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) with the following information:

- The number, title, and short description of the course proposed for GE status, with the typical class size, the first semester to be offered if approved with GE status, and the course's expected rotation by semester/sessions. (GE courses must be taught at least once every two years to maintain their GE status.)
- The GE CLAS Core areas requested (such as Sustainability with Social Sciences or Sustainability with Quantitative or Formal Reasoning).
- Any course prerequisites and if the course is required or will be for a major, minor, or certificate.
- Any plans to add, renumber, or retitle the course if approved for GE status.
- Your contact information.

The DEO should approve the proposal, with the DEO signing the cover letter (an electronic signature is acceptable). The letter should also be signed by the person proposing GE status for the course and by the chair of the departmental curriculum committee or by the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS).

## PROPOSAL SECTION ONE: A SYSTEMS-THINKING APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

### Background Information for Section One

An overall goal of the GE CLAS Core is for students to acquire “interdisciplinary perspectives that allow students to make connections across areas of specialization and to approach problem-solving from multiple perspectives.” The GE area in Sustainability is a model for this integrative thinking since it requires examining how different systems, often not studied simultaneously, affect each other over time and by place and, in turn, affect people and their ability to meet sustainability goals.

Students taking a Sustainability GE CLAS Core course will have completed both the GE requirement in Sustainability AND in a selected GE companion area. Please choose this GE companion area from this list of GE areas: (1) Natural Sciences with or without Lab, (2) Quantitative or Formal Reasoning, (3) Social Sciences, (4) Values and Culture, (5) Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts, (6) Historical Perspectives, and (7) International and Global Issues. Learning outcomes are listed here by GE area:

<https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/area-outcomes>.

NOTE: Diversity and Inclusion; Rhetoric; Interpretation of Literature; and World Languages may **not** be selected as a GE companion area with Sustainability because of complexities related to these courses.

### **Content for Section One of the Proposal**

Section One should discuss how the course provides opportunities for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the two integrated GE areas (Sustainability and the selected GE companion area):

- Discuss the general content of the proposed course, including its topic in sustainability and the relation of this content to the content of the second GE companion area.
- Discuss the integration of these two areas and how this will help students to make connections across disciplines and to solve problems using multiple perspectives.
- Include examples of opportunities students will have to achieve the key learning outcomes of the Sustainability GE area and the chosen GE Companion area. (Learning outcomes are listed here by GE area: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/area-outcomes>.)

The proposal also must show an awareness of the Sustainability outcomes and the outcomes of the GE companion area. The committee hopes to see integration of related content and learning outcomes, with neither the Sustainability nor the companion GE area appearing as if an afterthought or of less importance.

Section One should be no more than one and a half pages, single-spaced.

### **PROPOSAL SECTION TWO: STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING**

#### **Background Information**

An additional goal of the GE CLAS Core is for students to experience learning as a conscious and transformative process that requires practice, critical thinking, and skill-building. These GE outcomes are discussed here: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/comprehensive-student-learning-outcomes-ge-clas-core>.

That is, learning requires reflection and an evaluation of one's progress, an analysis of the strengths and weakness of one's learning strategies, and a willingness to experiment with new strategies as needed. Some undergraduates are unaware of learning as a process or how to improve it since they are developing related critical thinking skills.

#### **Content for Section Two of the Proposal**

This section of the proposal should discuss three or four examples of how and when students in the class will have opportunities to reflect on, analyze, and evaluate their learning process, improving their own learning and critical thinking strategies while using the methods and modes of inquiry associated with the course's area of study.

This section should be no more than one page in length, single spaced.

## **PROPOSAL SECTION THREE: PRACTICE WITH ESSENTIAL TOOLS**

### **Background Information**

The GE CLAS Core is also designed to help students master essential tools needed for learning, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, also expressed by the GE Comprehensive learning outcomes.

### **Content for Section Three of the Proposal**

Describe how you might define reading, writing, speaking/listening in the context of this course, giving examples of how you will help students to better use these tools.

The committee expects to see a range of definitions and approaches related to helping students to better read, write, speak and/or listen with these related to the course content, its theoretical approaches, and its disciplinary foundation. For example, writing might be creating formulas or code; reading could be the interpretation of non-textual artifacts; and listening might involve a study of sounds other than human language, with the instructor explaining why and how these are essential tools for learning.

This section should be no more than one page in length, single spaced.

## **SECTION FOUR: COURSE ATTRIBUTES**

### **Background Information**

GE courses take special care to meet students at their own level of while allowing students to practice using tools and strategies that encourage a growing knowledge of the learning process and course content. GE courses use the following best practices in course design and pedagogy.

- The course syllabus is updated, easy for a first-semester student to understand, and has all the UI and CLAS required components, with special attention paid to explaining grades.
- The syllabus has a calendar of due dates and activities, using headings to highlight the focus of learning and activities for that week; the required attributes of the course are woven into this calendar so students can see the importance of attending class.
- A first day anonymous survey of students is given in order ascertain student's academic interest and needs; this activity is included on the syllabus calendar.
- The course structure assumes no prior student knowledge in the course content.
- The course builds from simple and/or informal assignments to more complex and/or formal ones, giving the student the opportunity to develop and master skills that are needed for achieving academic excellence and success in the course.
- Opportunities for engaged student learning are integrated into lectures (if lectures are used), with hints of these activities included in the syllabus and calendar, in part to encourage attendance.
- Engaged and structured student activities are given in discussion sections that support content and GE course learning goals.
- The students reflect and evaluate their own learning during the class, trying new learning strategies when needed, with this built into the syllabus.
- The instructor provides early and frequent evaluation of student work, helping to motivate students to achieve academic success, with grades entered in the ICON gradebook as soon as possible and before a new assignment, quiz, or exam is given.

- The course provides models and/or rubrics to define academic expectations so that students understand the standards of the course and the student's own performance in relation to these standards. The class discusses these and shares ideas about them.
- The instructor uses a variety of teaching and assessment strategies, such as a midterm anonymous assessment to gauge the class progress throughout the semester.
- The students are encouraged to learn from each other whenever possible, particularly through large and small group discussions, student organized study groups, and by using peer mentors, supplemental instruction, writing fellows, and creative activities that engage students.

#### **Content for Section Four of the Proposal**

In this section of the proposal, please select three or four of the above course attributes used in your course and discuss their relation to students achieving the GE comprehensive goals and outcomes and/or the specific GE companion area outcomes. These may be found on this page:

<https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/comprehensive-student-learning-outcomes-ge-clas-core> and at <https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/area-outcomes>

This section should be no more than one page, single spaced.

#### **APPENDIX: ESSENTIAL MATERIALS**

Please use continuous pagination for the entire proposal including the appendix; all materials for the proposal must be submitted as one file.

The appendix may be of any length; however, the faculty committee appreciates a thoughtful selection that best supports the proposal.

Include these materials in the appendix:

1. A course syllabus with a calendar of course topics and due dates for readings, exams, activities, and any other items. The syllabus must use the actual dates from the semester when the course will first be taught (if approved), showing breaks such as for Thanksgiving or Spring Break.
2. Sample assignments, exams, activities, and quizzes and any other related materials relevant to the proposal's content.

Thank you for your work and for participating in the GE CLAS Core!