FAO REPORT: WRITING PROGRAM, WITH GENERAL EDUCATION
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FAO REPORT: WRITING PROGRAM, WITH GENERAL EDUCATION

APRIL 2009

SECTION I: Program description

The Center for Studies in Higher Education's report *General Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Report of the University of California Commission on General Education* (2007) cautions campuses against creating an unwieldy list of unassociated general education courses. It advocates, instead, a thematic or interdisciplinary bundle of courses. Ideally these courses cultivate critical thinking skills, focus on contemporary social issues, and foster advanced literacy, particularly in areas like quantitative reasoning and writing (20). UC Merced's Writing Program's Core 1 and Core 100 equivalent courses routinely attend to these recommendations.

The Writing Program's involvement in General Education at UC Merced is particularly appropriate in light of the extensive overlap between the Program's stated outcomes and the eight guiding principles of general education at UC Merced. For instance, seven of UCM's Eight Guiding Principles of General Education[1] align well with the Writing Program's five Learning Outcomes,[2] leaving just scientific literacy in general education as a potential mismatch with WP courses. Yet specific courses for writing in the disciplines (WRI 101, 116, 117, 118, and 119) include scientific literacy as a specialized learning outcome, providing a foundation for the Writing Program to fulfill all eight principles of general education.

This curricular relationship between the Writing Program and the university in general is manifested in Core 1, our freshman general education course. Through lecture and discussion, Core 1 is an interdisciplinary, integrated course that introduces students to UC Merced's faculty, our research, and the academic fields in which we work. It explores ways in which experts from what have been called "the two cultures" (humanist and scientist) view the world and analyze information by putting them in dialogue and amalgamating insights gained from different—even seemingly disparate—approaches. The Writing Program helps tie such material together by teaching writing intensive Core 1 discussion sections, which are designed to facilitate more intimate learning communities so as to process and advance ideas introduced in lectures. Among the questions pursued in Core 1 discussion sections are: What is a university, and what role do we have in shaping it? What counts as knowledge? How is knowledge produced and assembled? In what ways do academic disciplines intersect? In what ways do they differ? The answers to such questions provide the basis for holistic, interactive inquiry that puts students at the forefront of current scholarly debates.

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[1] General Education Guiding Principles include scientific literacy, decision making, communication, ethics and responsibility, leadership and teamwork, aesthetic understanding, development of personal potential, and an understanding of self and society.

[2] The Writing Program's Learning Outcomes include the expectations that students analyze and apply academic and professional communication, engage with the processes of reading and writing, collaborate successfully in an academic community, apply ethical standards to academic research and public discourse, and craft language that reveals aesthetic awareness

Whereas Core 1 satisfies lower division general education requirements, the Writing Program's writing in the disciplines offerings meet the university's upper division general education requirement (also referred to as Core 100) by facilitating application of interdisciplinary perspectives initially explored in Core 1. Though our primary focus is on language studies, our curriculum also reflects academic fields and professions specific to our campus, including management, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering. The upper-division courses we offer in these areas potentially serve not only our writing minor but also general education as a Core 100 equivalent.

In many respects similar to the general education curriculum, the Minor in Writing is designed to enhance students' understanding of the theoretical, interdisciplinary and professional aspects of writing, helping them develop the vocabulary, syntax, style and voice appropriate to the practice of composition in diverse fields. By using the writing process to strengthen their ideas, students develop strategies for participating in research, policy-making, professional advancement, and creative expression. Also consistent with many of the principles of general education, the writing minor fosters respect for language, for the contributions of peers, and for the value of effective communication.

Key to the writing minor are courses in Writing Across the Curriculum / Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID), including WRI 101 (Writing for Psychology), WRI 116 (Writing for the Natural Sciences), WRI 117 (Writing for Social Sciences and Humanities), WRI 118 (Business Communication), and WRI 119 (Writing for Engineering). As previously noted, each of these courses satisfies all eight guiding principles of general education at UC Merced, including intensive attention to scientific/information literacy (both qualitative and quantitative) and recursive practice to refine writing as a professional craft and as an intellectual tool.

Given that our Core 1 / 100 courses map onto dual sets of learning outcomes (GE and WP), our assessment plan includes associated outcomes for annual review. The following chart summarizes our focus on assessing general education outcomes, which currently function as our institution-wide learning principles.

PLO	Scientific Literacy	Decision-making	Communication	Self & Society	Ethics	Teamwork	Aesthetics	Personal Potential
1		X	X			X		X
2	X	X	X				X	
3			X	X		X		
4		X	X	X	X			
5			X	X			X	

Appendix: Writing Program PLOs

(1) Demonstrate engagement with the iterative processes of reading, writing and speaking
(2) Analyze and apply the basic written styles, structures, and standards of academic and professional communication
(3) Collaborate successfully as members of an academic discourse community
(4) Apply ethical standards to the practice of academic research and public discourse
(5) Craft language that reveals aesthetic awareness

SECTION II: Assessment Plan – Writing Program, with General Education

(A) Timeline and Goals

(1) Overview of the Writing Program's Syllabus Alignment Project

During the fall 2008 semester, all forty-five members of the Writing Program served on a "committee of the whole" for Curriculum. In this capacity, faculty were collectively responsible for contributing towards the syllabus alignment process. During this time, the Writing Program had hired fourteen new faculty, so this committee process served as a way of including new faculty into our program and introducing them to our teaching practices. During September 2008, Creative Writing and Professional Writing faculty met separately to establish student learning outcomes for each track, and then during October met as a full committee to refine and align outcomes foundational to the Writing Minor. With these course outcomes established, all syllabi now reflect these shared expectations. Course evaluations were also modified to evaluate these outcomes (for an example of how these drafts evolved, see Appendix Item A with developments highlighted in blue font).

During October and November, other faculty met on a bi-weekly basis to discuss and review outcomes for WRI 1: Academic Writing and WRI 10: Reading and Composition. Student learning outcomes had been established for these courses during AY 2005 as a syllabus template, so these meetings were opportunities to revisit these outcomes based on what we have learned about our students since then based on program-wide diagnostics (e.g., student responses on mid-term and final-courses evaluations, pre- and post timed essays, calibration sessions for grading), portfolio reviews, and shared experiences teaching WRI 1. These syllabus templates were updated with refined weekly objectives and outcomes, and a chart was developed to map the course outcomes to aligned assignments.

By December 2008, all WP syllabi templates and individual course syllabi included course outcomes. This became the basis for considering Program Learning Outcomes, which were drafted by a committee representing key faculty from these sub-committees (Creative Writing, Professional Writing, WRI 1, WRI 10). During our December WP meeting, this draft was circulated for discussion with a vote between two optional phrasings for each category of outcome. The final draft of PLOs was circulated to faculty to add to syllabi and posted on our program website <writingprogram.ucmerced.edu>. Listed in order of annual review, the Writing Program PLOs are expectations that students will, upon completion of the Minor Program:

(1) Demonstrate engagement with the iterative processes of reading, writing and speaking
(2) Analyze and apply the basic written styles, structures, and standards of academic and professional communication
(3) Collaborate successfully as members of an academic discourse community
(4) Apply ethical standards to the practice of academic research and public discourse
(5) Craft language that reveals aesthetic awareness

Our main expectation is that by promoting faculty discussions focused on examining skill development, we will gain a stronger understanding of how to develop more tailored and

responsive curriculum. All who teach these GE courses will be involved in the assessment of student learning outcomes, via respective Curriculum Committees, which involve a majority of our faculty.

(2) Core 1 Syllabus Alignment Project

Against this backdrop of developing program outcomes with respect to courses that students take while also taking Core 1, we developed objectives and outcomes for its curriculum. Despite the course's wide curricular reach, it enjoys a reflexive structure on which to hang its respective parts. That structure is derived from the eight guiding principles of general education at UC Merced, and is expressed in the following modules that organize the course:

Module 1 – Origins of the Universe
Module 2 – Origins of Life
Module 3 – Origins of Societies and Cultures
Module 4 – Language and Communication
Module 5 – Individuals and Societies
Module 6 – Conflict
Module 7 – The Future

During November 2008 in four meetings, faculty derived objectives and outcomes for each of the above modules (see Appendix Item G), and from those, as a larger group, developed eight course learning outcomes (which essentially define the eight guiding principles more specifically to Core 1 itself). Listed in order of review, these outcomes include the expectations that Core 1 students:

(1) **Communication, Self and Society:** (a) Critique diverse perspectives from scientific, historical, artistic, and personal standpoints; (b) Craft written arguments that draw connections between the arts and sciences
(2) **Scientific Literacy:** (a) Manage and assess information by refining study skills and cultivating scholarly habits; (b) Apply appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods in analyzing information
(3) **Decision Making, Ethics and Responsibility:** (a) Demonstrate scholarly processes characteristic of creative/critical problem-solving; (b) Appreciate ethical considerations and decision-making in local and global contexts
(4) **Leadership and Teamwork:** Collaborate in sharing expertise, making connections, and assembling knowledge
(5) **Development of Personal Potential; Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity:** Elaborate an enhanced sense of educational purpose in a broader intellectual context

These updated Core 1 outcomes will be posted on UC Merced's College One website, <https://collegeone.ucmerced.edu/>, and occur prominently on the Core 1 syllabus.

We plan to investigate each of the PLOs outlined below over the course of five years, one PLO per year as embodied in holistic student achievement/work (portfolios, pre- and post-test essays, and coordinated assignments). Simultaneously, in regular faculty meetings we will assess each

of the PLOs in discussion of representative student work to calibrate grading for common assignments.

(3) Core 100 (Equivalent) Syllabus Alignment Project

Throughout AY 2008-2009, Core 100 equivalent writing instructors met on a monthly basis to design shared curricula and discuss related student learning outcomes. All Core 100 equivalent syllabi address the eight guiding principles for general education (see WRI 117 syllabus sample, Appendix Item H). During Spring 2009, WRI 116: Writing in the Natural Sciences and WRI 119: Writing in Engineering faculty created a mid-semester aligned workshop project based on a 2-3 page Watson & Crick article. The aim was to assess scientific literacy, specifically in reading practices and rhetorical analysis skills. Faculty met during April 2009 to discuss criteria for scientific literacy, based on the resulting student work from this Watson & Crick workshop. This rubric project will be the basis for ongoing assessment of other Core 100-specific WP courses (See Appendix Item B).

Our goals in assessing upper-division GE-related WP courses could be very generally summarized as providing faculty development and improving student learning in discipline-specific upper-division writing courses. For faculty development, this assessment plan provides opportunities to establish shared expectations, criteria and standards, all of which are communicated to students through various means outlined more specifically in our assessment plan.

(B, C, D, E) Outline of Program Learning Outcomes, including Evidence, Process and Participants

** Please note that a synopsis of the Core 1 and 100 assessment plan is provided in chart form on page 12.*

<u>For Core 1</u>

(1) AY 2009-2010

Core 1 PLO: Critique diverse perspectives from scientific, historical, artistic, and personal standpoints

Core 1 PLO: Craft written arguments that draw connections between the arts and sciences

[Corresponding GE outcomes: <u>Communication</u> -- To convey information to, communicate with, and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other forms of communication; <u>Self and Society</u> -- To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethically and culturally rich setting]

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During the Summer/Fall of 2009, the Core 1 curriculum committee will meet to review High-Middle-Low samples of Spring 2009 cumulative essays, the capstone assignment for the course which asks students to explore their experience of the course by identifying and elaborating connections among six course foci (see Appendix Item C). Since this sample of student work is cumulative in nature, faculty will discuss the differences within a range of samples to refine criteria for assessing information literacy, presentation, and analysis, in particular the extent to which students are able to identify, incorporate, and evaluate uses of evidence to corroborate scientific, historical, artistic, and personal critiques of course material.

(B. Evidence and Results): The resulting data from this multi-perspectival exercise should also reveal the extent to which students can draw connections between the arts and sciences. This review will help us develop a shared rubric for assessing such student work. Cumulative essays in fall 2009 will include a standard self-assessment form paired with the assignment, which will be included in the review of samples. This will help us refine our current grading rubric, which we include in all syllabi (see Appendix Item F). With greater consensus on standards and criteria, faculty will be better able to communicate to students the benchmarks for success. Through workshop activities at the beginning of a semester students will be encouraged to apply this rubric to sample projects, gaining familiarity with evaluation standards.

(2) AY 2010-2011

Core 1 PLO: Manage and assess information by refining study skills and cultivating scholarly habits

Core 1 PLO: Apply appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods in analyzing information

[Corresponding GE outcome: Scientific Literacy -- To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools]

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During Summer/Fall 2010, the Core 1 curriculum committee plans to evaluate a range-finder and random samples for an assignment such as Core 1 Quantitative Assignment #1 (for assignment sheet, see Appendix Item D) to assess quantitative aspects of study skills, information management, and scientific literacy.

(B. Evidence and Results): Assessment of sample quantitative assignments will allow us to better coordinate the teaching of qualitative and quantitative reasoning, in particular with respect to the philosophy of science and the logic of classification. We anticipate that instructors will gain (and thus be better able to communicate with students) a holistic perspective of quantitative literacy. Through increased faculty attention to quantitative literacy criteria, students will work with clearer expectations as to how to effectively apply narrative to calculations. Learning outcome results will be paired or triangulated with course evaluation feedback, which include specific questions about students' perceived skill levels in quantitative reasoning and scientific literacy.

(3) AY 2011-2012

Core 1 PLO: Demonstrate scholarly processes characteristic of creative/critical problem-solving

Core 1 PLO: Appreciate ethical considerations and decision-making in local and global contexts

[Corresponding GE outcomes: Decision-Making -- To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem-solving; Ethics and Responsibility -- To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility]

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During Summer/Fall 2011, the Core 1 curriculum committee plans to evaluate a range-finder and random samples for an assignment such as Core 1 Quantitative Assignment #3 (for assignment sheet, see Appendix Item E) to assess problem-solving skills associated with information management and ethical decision-making.

(B. Evidence and Results): This specific assignment merges statistical analysis with ethical considerations. Evaluating these samples of quantitative and narrative explanations will allow us to better understand students' ability to synthesize a social perspective with quantitative information. Potential outcomes of this assessment activity could include refinement of the shared assignment itself and/or a course-wide rubric specifying standards for this kind of synthesis.

(4) AY 2012-2013

Core 1 PLO: Collaborate in sharing expertise, making connections, and assembling knowledge

[Corresponding General Education outcome: Leadership and Teamwork -- To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others]

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During Summer/Fall 2012, the Core 1 WP faculty committee plans to evaluate student collaboration in shared assignments requiring group interaction. These may include a collaborative assignment yet to be determined, and/or group work (such as peer review, class presentations, student questionnaires regarding knowledge, or role-playing scenarios with respect to decision making).

(B. Evidence and Results): Like the Core 100 assessment focus, we aim to gain consensus about key learning challenges with group work and develop an effective shared assignment. Course evaluation data specific to rating the value of peer review work and confidence ratings in group work skills will also be considered.

(5) AY 2013-2014

Core 1 PLO: Elaborate an enhanced sense of educational purpose in a broader intellectual context

[Corresponding General Education outcomes: Development of Personal Potential -- To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being; Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity -- To appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression including literature and the arts]

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): To assess the extent to which Core 1 helps students articulate a graduated sense of scholarly identity that can be applied to study in other disciplines.

(B. Evidence and Results): Likely evidence will include assessment of reflection papers and revisiting the cumulative essay (as indicators of integrated learning and application).

<u>For Core 100 (Equivalent)</u>

(1) AY 2009-2010

WP PLO: Demonstrate engagement with the iterative processes of reading, writing and speaking

GE PLO (Self and Society): To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethically and culturally rich setting

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During April 2009, all WRI 116 faculty met to review High-Middle-Low samples of our Watson & Crick aligned assignment (for assignment sheet, see Appendix Item B). From discussing the differences within a range of samples, we were able to determine criteria for scientific literacy, in particular the extent to which students are able to identify and evaluate uses of evidence (for sample rubric, see Appendix Item H). This assessment work creates the foundation for further investigation of the scientific literacy GE outcome in Year 2. Our WP PLO was also incorporated into discussion, in particular the ways that students are able to analyze the written style and structure of the Watson & Crick sample. To investigate the iterative processes of writing, portfolios best feature the drafting process and associated reflection process. Core 100 faculty will meet during October 2009 to review High, Middle, Low portfolio samples from the previous academic year. Special attention will be paid to evidence of a student's ability to value diverse perspectives and understand cultural diversity. In this process, faculty will share examples of successful curriculum to pilot across sections.

(B. Evidence and Results): By building and sharing a rubric with students, we aim to familiarize them with our shared criteria and standards. The mid-semester diagnostic serves to give faculty perspective on attainment at scientific literacy. As this is formative assessment, faculty will have opportunities to employ tailored strategies to improve understanding. Similarly, students will have opportunity to apply the rubric to peer work to gain a stronger understanding of expectations. Portfolio review will serve as a means for grading calibration for faculty, which will be particularly useful as a means for introducing new faculty to the standards of these courses. Discussing and archiving successful assignments focused cultural understanding will have a similar benefit, allowing faculty to pilot new materials. Student learning outcome results will be paired or triangulated with course evaluation feedback, which include specific questions about students' perceived skill levels in quantitative reasoning and scientific literacy. Some of this indirect evidence can be formative assessment, as the WP also administers mid-course evaluations on skill levels.

(2) AY 2010-2011

WP PLO: Analyze and apply the basic written styles, structures, and standards of academic and professional communication

GE PLO (Scientific Literacy): To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During fall 2010, WRI 100, and WRI 116-119 faculty will administer a mid-semester scientific literacy diagnostic from among possible prompts, with an emphasis on scientific literacy. The scientific literacy rubric developed during spring 2009 will be applied and revised (as needed). The broader framework of the review will be on the WP PLO with attention to academic style and structure.

(B. Evidence and Results): The Core 100 curriculum committee will evaluate upper-division electronic portfolios demonstrating stages of writing, including self-assessment cover letter. Special attention will be paid to literature reviews which tend to feature a students' ability to evaluate and interpret representative scholarly articles about a given subject. Instructor-specific rubrics for these assignments will be shared and discussed to improve alignment of criteria, with the goal of building course-specific rubrics representative of shared expectations. Indirect evidence will include the portfolio cover letter, which will address perceived skill levels and proficiency within stages of writing.

(3) AY 2011-2012

WP PLO: Collaborate successfully as members of an academic discourse community

GE PLO (Leadership and Teamwork): To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): As writing classrooms tend to be workshop-oriented, group work is a fundamental skill in our program. Working in groups is not intuitive to many students (or faculty), so our aim is to gain consensus about some basic practices and structures that are recommendable across courses. Some examples might be assigning roles, including self and group assessment, and providing instructor feedback on peer review feedback.

(B. Evidence and Results): The Core 100 curriculum committee will evaluate peer review workshop materials, group work activities, and collaborative grant proposals (WRI 116, WRI 119). Gain consensus about key learning challenges associated with collaboration and group work to build an archive of successful assignments and activities to share with current and future faculty. By promoting effective and creative approaches to the challenge of teaching group work, we will implement a stronger set of aligned activities to build teamwork skills. Course evaluation data specific to rating the value of peer review work and confidence ratings in group work skills will also be considered.

(4) AY 2012-2013

WP PLO: Apply ethical standards to the practice of academic research and public discourse

GE PLO (Ethics and Responsibility): To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): Our approach to this PLO is to work with ethics from an information literacy standpoint. Literature reviews very effectively illustrate a student's ability to summarize and analyze major research around a given topic. The extent to which students adhere to principles of academic honesty, like accurate citation use, is part of what we will measure as well.

(B. Evidence and Results): Evaluate literature reviews for uses of scholarly evidence. First and final drafts of annotated bibliographies will be reviewed with attention to the development of summary and analysis skills. Faculty will collaborate with librarians to improve information literacy activities and reference guides.

(5) AY 2013-2014

WP PLO: Craft language that reveals aesthetic awareness

GE PLO (Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity): To appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and arts

(A. PLO Overview and Assessment Process): During fall 2009, WRI 117 course development will benefit from a UC Humanities Institute grant, focused on implementing a digital media component. Four speakers, who are digital media theorists or artists at Research I institutions, will provide workshops to WRI 117 students in the rigors of aesthetic understanding. UCM WP faculty will also partner with these visiting scholars to publish their findings and classroom innovations in a peer-reviewed collection. Hopefully, this grant initiative will provide an ongoing investigation as to how to foster and define aesthetic awareness. More grant details are available as Appendix Item I.

(B. Evidence and Results): Review digital media initiative in WRI 117 via electronic portfolio evidence. Partner science writing with creative writing faculty to discuss how creativity can be assessed and evaluated. Students and faculty will gain a more holistic perspective on how creativity and aesthetic understanding can be evaluated.

Assessment Plan, Program Learning Outcome Chart

Timeline	Program Learning Outcome	Evidence	Analysis & Results
AY 2009-2010	(GE: Self & Society) To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethically and culturally rich setting (WP) Demonstrate engagement with the iterative processes of reading, writing and speaking	Core 1: Cumulative essays (H, M, L samples) WRI 116: Watson & Crick reading assignment (H, M, L) WRI 100/116-119: mid-semester scientific literacy diagnostic	Core 1: refine criteria for assessing information literacy, presentation and analysis, develop shared rubric for cumulative essay, refine Core 1 grading rubric Core 100: develop and apply scientific literacy rubric, review portfolios with attention to understanding societal values
AY 2010-2011	(GE: Scientific Literacy): To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools (WP) Analyze and apply the basic written styles, structures, and standards of academic and professional communication	Core 1: Quantitative assignment Core 100: Electronic portfolios w/ attention to literature reviews	Core 1: evaluate a range-finder set of sample student work, attention to study skills, information management and scientific literacy Core 100: evaluate scientific literacy diagnostic and refine AY 2009-2010 rubric
AY 2011-2012	(GE: Ethics & Responsibility) To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility (GE: Decision-making) To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem-solving (WP) Apply ethical standards to the practice of academic research and public discourse	Core 1: Quantitative assignment Core 100: peer review workshop materials, group work activities, collaborative grant proposals	Core 1: evaluate a range-finder set of sample student work, attention to problem-solving skills Core 100: focus on summary / analysis skills, collaborate with librarians on information literacy skills
AY 2012-2013	(GE: Leadership & Teamwork) To work effectively in both leadership and team roles capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others (WP) Collaborate successfully as members of an academic discourse community	Core 1: group work, collaborative writing assignment, peer review materials Core 100: literature reviews, annotated bibliographies	Core 1: develop collaborative writing assignment and evaluate in terms of group work Core 100: gain consensus about key learning challenges with group work, archive successful curricula
AY 2013-2014	(GE: Aesthetics) To appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and arts (WP) Craft language that reveals aesthetic awareness	Core 1: reflection papers, cumulative essay Core 100: electronic portfolio, comparable essay assignments in arts and sciences	Core 1: discussion of evidence of integrated learning and application Core 100: discussion of how creativity is assessed and evaluated, rubric development

SECTION III: Alignment of Institutional and Program Goals/Outcomes

A. Program and Institutional Goals / Outcomes

Our Core 1 and Core 100 curriculum supports our campus-wide mission of a student-centered research university, as these courses prepare students to write and communicate in their elective and professional fields. Our general education curriculum is writing-intensive, which by definition includes a small classroom environment (no more than 20 students) and 5000 words (or 20 pages) of final text. A writing-intensive approach to general education supports a students' ability to synthesize knowledge. This is of particular importance in an interdisciplinary context here at Merced, as students are asked to connect the "two cultures" within the sciences and arts. Students also blend quantitative and traditional literacy, as Core 1 quantitative assignments and Core 100 workshop assignments require narrative to explain data. Beyond written assignments, Core 100 courses also include oral presentations, in which students gain skills in presenting complex ideas to multiple audiences through poster sessions and traditional speeches. In sum, our writing-intensive approach to general education promotes a rigorous approach to critical thinking and communication.

Additionally, nearly all of these general education courses have a portfolio outcome, which provides students will opportunities to reflect on the iterative process of writing and critical thinking. Increasingly, these portfolio projects have been developed on our course management system, SAKAI, giving students opportunities to share these projects with graduate school admission committees and future employers.

The following chart summarizes our focus on assessing general education outcomes, which currently function as our institution-wide learning principles.

PLO	Scientific Literacy	Decision-making	Communication	Self & Society	Ethics	Teamwork	Aesthetics	Personal Potential
1		X	X			X		X
2	X	X	X				X	
3			X	X		X		
4		X	X	X	X			
5			X	X			X	

Appendix: Writing Program PLOs

(6) Demonstrate engagement with the iterative processes of reading, writing and speaking
(7) Analyze and apply the basic written styles, structures, and standards of academic and professional communication
(8) Collaborate successfully as members of an academic discourse community
(9) Apply ethical standards to the practice of academic research and public discourse
(10) C raft language that reveals aesthetic awareness

Part C. How does your curriculum support your Program Learning Outcomes?

General Education Curriculum Map

The following chart summarizes a student's mastery of an institutional-level guiding principle outcome, upon completing a given course. Note that I = Introductory and A = Advanced.

	Scientific Literacy	Decision-making	Communication	Self & Society	Ethics	Teamwork	Aesthetics	Personal Potential
Core 1	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
WRI 100: Advanced Composition	I	A	A	A	I	I	A	I
WRI 101: Psychology	A	A	A	A	A	I	I	A
WRI 116: Natural Sciences	A	A	A	A	A	A	I	A
WRI 117: Social Sciences	A	A	A	A	I	I	A	A
WRI 118: Management	I	A	A	I	I	A	I	A
WRI 119: Engineering	A	A	A	A	A	A	I	A

APPENDIX ITEM A

WRI 30: Introduction to Professional Writing
Mid-Semester Course Evaluation (Spring 2008)

Instructions: Please take about 15 minutes to respond to this evaluation. Your comments are considered essential to the development and improvement of this course. Writing Program course evaluations are intended to improve student experiences in our courses, regardless of the instructor of record.

Q1 Self-Assessment

	Not at all	*Rarely*	*Occasionally*	*Sometimes*	*Frequently*	*Always*
I complete the assigned readings and homework on schedule.	q	q	q	q	q	q
I participate actively in class discussions and activities.	q	q	q	q	q	q
I have made use of the instructor's office hours to get assistance with my writing.	q	q	q	q	q	q

Q2 Overall Satisfaction

	Unsatisfactory	*Very low*	*Low*	*Moderate*	*High*	*Very high*
How interested were you in taking this course at the beginning of the semester?	q	q	q	q	q	q
Now that you are mid-way through the course, how would you rate your level of improvement as a writer?	q	q	q	q	q	q

Please describe your progression as a writer: _____

Q3 This course is designed to help me improve as a writer

Not at all ..... q
Strongly disagree ..... q
Disagree ..... q
Uncertain ..... q
Agree ..... q
Strongly agree ..... q

Please describe: _____

Q4 This course has provided information and support in developing the following skills:

	Not at all	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Uncertain*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
Analyzing readings	q	q	q	q	q	q
Thinking creatively	q	q	q	q	q	q
Developing a topic	q	q	q	q	q	q
Understanding disciplinary conventions	q	q	q	q	q	q
Composing an argument	q	q	q	q	q	q
Crafting an essay (writing process)	q	q	q	q	q	q
Writing in my profession (strategies)	q	q	q	q	q	q
Integrating evidence	q	q	q	q	q	q

Q5 The following activities have been useful to me:

	Strongly disagree	*Disagree*	*Uncertain*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
Peer review	q	q	q	q	q
Assessing my own writing	q	q	q	q	q
Class discussions	q	q	q	q	q
Feedback from instructor	q	q	q	q	q
Formal paper drafting	q	q	q	q	q
In-class activities	q	q	q	q	q

WRI 30: Introduction to Professional Writing, Final Course Evaluation (Fall 2008)

Instructions: Please take about 15 minutes to respond to this evaluation. Your comments are considered essential to the development and improvement of this course.

Q1 Self-Assessment

	Not at all	*Rarely*	*Occasionally*	*Sometimes*	*Frequently*	*Always*
I complete the assigned readings and homework on schedule.	q	q	q	q	q	q
I participate actively in class discussions and activities.	q	q	q	q	q	q
I have made use of the instructor's office hours to get assistance with my writing.	q	q	q	q	q	q

Q2 Overall Satisfaction

	Unsatisfactory	*Very low*	*Low*	*Moderate*	*High*	*Very high*
How interested were you in taking this course at the beginning of the semester?	q	q	q	q	q	q
Now that you have nearly completed the course, how would you rate your level of improvement as a writer?	q	q	q	q	q	q

Please describe your progression as a writer:

Q3 How clear are instructions for:

	Not at all	*Rarely*	*Occasionally*	*Sometimes*	*Frequently*	*Always*
Formal papers	q	q	q	q	q	q
In-class activities	q	q	q	q	q	q

Q4 My instructor discusses writing in ways that help me to improve:

Not at all ..... q
Strongly disagree ..... q
Disagree ..... q
Uncertain ..... q
Agree ..... q
Strongly agree ..... q

Please explain:

Q5 My instructor seems:

	Not at all	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Uncertain*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
Available to answer questions	q	q	q	q	q	q
Enthusiastic in teaching writing	q	q	q	q	q	q
Organized	q	q	q	q	q	q
Knowledgeable about writing	q	q	q	q	q	q
Respectful	q	q	q	q	q	q
Fair	q	q	q	q	q	q

Q6 This course has provided information and support in developing the following skills:

	Not at all	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Uncertain*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
Defining and understanding audience	q	q	q	q	q	q
Identifying and developing clear objectives for written projects	q	q	q	q	q	q
Distinguishing between correct usage alternatives	q	q	q	q	q	q
Editing according to standard style	q	q	q	q	q	q
Assessing peer writing and providing constructive feedback	q	q	q	q	q	q
Demonstrating an ability to evaluate feedback	q	q	q	q	q	q
Demonstrating an ability to self-evaluate and reflect	q	q	q	q	q	q

APPENDIX ITEM B

The Embedded Assignment:
Exploring Scaffolding, Learning Outcomes, and Scientific Literacy

Authored by Nuno Sena and Paul Gibbons (April 2009)

Issues at Hand

Although there is no true consensus of what constitutes scientific literacy, many authorities in the field, whether in the disciplines of Education, Science or Math cite the ***National Science Education Standards*** (1996). Thus, definitions typically emphasize science and math content areas without detailed discussion of scientific literacy in terms of writing, writing in the disciplines (WID) or professions. Exploring the literacy aspect of scientific literacy, that is in the context of competencies in writing, reading, speaking, and listening within a communication perspective is warranted.

Scientific Literacy According to the National Science Education Standards

The passage in the NSES text has been reduced.

Description: Scientific literacy is the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity. It also includes specific types of abilities …

Scientific literacy means that a person can ask, find, or determine answers to questions derived from curiosity about everyday experiences. It means that a person has the ability to describe, explain, and predict natural phenomena.

Scientific literacy entails being able to read with understanding articles about science in the popular press and to engage in social conversation about the validity of the conclusions.

Scientific literacy implies that a person can identify scientific issues underlying national and local decisions and express positions that are scientifically and technologically informed. A literate citizen should be able to evaluate the quality of scientific information on the basis of its source and the methods used to generate it.

Scientific literacy also implies the capacity to pose and evaluate arguments based on evidence and to apply conclusions from such arguments

(p. 22)

Source http://www.literacynet.org/science/scientificliteracy.html

Embedded Assignment

The embedded assignment and the practice of scaffolding learning of competencies by chaining assignments give us the opportunity to both build scientific literacy of students while developing a model to explore learning outcomes both in the short- and long-term.

The assignment of the short article by Watson and Crick is useful because it is short, emphasizing argument while making claims when using evidence sparsely. An article on DNA later published in a chain of works by the same takes up the argument, the proposed model, and provides a wealth of evidence to support major claims. In chaining these two readings, it is possible to build on scientific literacy while preparing students for looking at argument, claims,

evidence, perspectives, and eventually building on critical thinking abilities so that they may do reviews of literature or research papers.

The selection of examples is taken from a pool of responses from the Writing 116 classes taught by Paul Gibbons. Three levels are represented, high, medium, and low, although there is no intention to prescribe a grade on an in-class assignment as this one. The breakdown of the criteria applied in rating the students' work will be discussed in the WRI 116 meeting. Questions four (4) and five (5) are of greatest interest to us because they focus more on critical and rhetorical concerns while the other questions are more informational. The prompt and student examples are given below.

Example Prompt

Respond to the following questions that address the article, "A structure for Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid."

(1) According to the article, what are the different models for the structure of nucleic acid that have been proposed?
(2) How does the model proposed by Watson and Crick differ?
(3) With respect to their own model, what shortcomings or limitations do Watson and Crick indicate?
(4) Find and highlight all the language that suggests that the Watson and Crick model should be favored and that the other model should not be favored. Using the language you've highlighted as quoted evidence, state how Watson and Crick build their argument that their model is the correct one and that the others are not.
(5) Aside from your answer to #4, what other ways have Watson and Crick created favor for their model within their article?

WRI 116: Writing in the Natural Sciences
Scientific Literacy Rubric
April 2009
Authors: Paul Gibbons, Nuno Sena & Anne Zanzucchi

	Interpretation	**Analysis**	**Technical Writing Skills w/in Context**	**Scientific discourse**	**Synthesis** [3]
High	correct identification of main ideas, demonstrates rich and complete understanding of original text	all claims are supported by direct or paraphrased evidence, able to explain the significance of detail and main ideas	mixture of simple and complex sentence structures, virtually error free punctuation, spelling and format	strong vocabulary with deliberate and specific word choice, reflects strong audience-awareness	
Middle	basic argument is identified though may not distinguish significant categories or topics within argument	includes supporting evidence or paraphrased detail though not for all claims, may generalize, generally interprets major argumentative patterns	occasional usage errors, repetitive syntax, contains several common punctuation, spelling and format issues	occasionally inconsistent diction and tone, includes some professional vocabulary but may lack precision	
Low	may misunderstand basic claims in text or attends to ancillary details rather than main guiding ideas	evidence is not embedded in interpretation, lacks full perspective on implications, tends to generalize	minimal sentence variety, non-specific verbs, frequent grammatical errors that impede meaning	inappropriate diction, weak command of professional vocabulary. inaccurate uses of passive or active voice	

[3] Watson Crick workshop assignment does not include a synthesis step. In Fall 2009, WRI 116 instructors will evaluate literature reviews to develop synthesis criteria.

APPENDIX ITEM C

Core 1: The World at Home Cumulative Essay Assignment

To guarantee it's your own work, don't forget to submit your work to turnitin.com.

The Cumulative Writing Assignment is an integrative "capstone" essay in which you'll address a common theme (or thread) in the course and trace it through examples from across term. **The cumulative essay should be about 1800 words (roughly 6-8 pages), with at least 2/3 of a page devoted to each example/focus. It must *examine SIX examples/foci from at least FOUR different modules*, must be guided by *a thesis paragraph* that elaborates your theme/thread and gives an overview of your essay, and must *conclude gracefully* (with a well-elaborated parting comment).**

Specify a thread that you see running through the course. This could reflect a combination of a few lectures and readings, or a common idea that appears in each module. (A topic might be, for example, "the unintended consequences of innovation," or the extent to which a series of lectures/readings relate to a specific place, time, item, artwork, etc.) Because of the distinct challenge of such an assignment—in a sense, your job is to connect human history from its origins to its uncertain future—you are encouraged to start looking for and developing threads as soon as possible. The following are some suggestions for how you might brainstorm a thread to explore in your essay:

- Browse through your reflection papers: Are there any interesting patterns of thought, connections between materials, and/or implicit themes between entries?
- Check out the Core 1 syllabus and the "Topics Synopses" document on CROPS for brief descriptions of the modules and lectures (see Resources Folder). What recurring themes do you see?
- Look over your weekly assignments. Which ideas or assignments interested you the most? Is there a way to expand a smaller project into a larger one? Do any of the projects fit together in some way?

Note: As long as it is germane to your theme, you may draw upon (and/or integrate material from) your previous writings in CoreOne.

Support your thesis/theme with specific discussions of documented examples. Avoid making blanket statements; use the body of the essay to elaborate particular foci in depth—using quotes, data, and concepts that are fluidly explained.

Please come to class with drafts of your cumulative essay to workshop in late April and early May.

APPENDIX ITEM D

Core 1: The World at Home Quantitative Assignment 1

[Note: In addition to performing these calculations correctly, you'll be graded on how well you present and explain the processes you perform, step-by-step, in terms of their respective purposes.]

Quantitative assignment 1a:

The newly demoted dwarf planet Pluto has 3 moons: Charon, Nix and Hydra. Using Newton's laws one can derive the mass of Pluto from observations of the orbit of one these moons.

Assuming a circular orbit, Newton's law of gravitation ($F = GMm/r^2$) and Newton's second law of motion ($F = ma = mv^2/r$) can be used to calculate the mass (M) of a massive object if the velocity (v) at a radius (r) is known for another, much lighter body that is in orbit. By combining the two laws stated above, we obtain the formula

$$M = v^2 r / G$$

The velocity (v) along a circular orbit is determined by the circumference ($2\pi r$) divided by the time it takes to complete one full circle (the period, P), i.e. $v = 2\pi r / P$. Using this expression for v, one can rewrite the above formula for the mass M as

$$M = (4\pi^2 r^3) / (G P^2)$$

which is also known as Kepler's Third Law (for circular planetary motions).

Use this law to calculate the mass of Pluto from the orbit of its moon Hydra with r = 64,780 km and P = 38.2 days, and knowing that the Gravitational constant $G = 6.673 \times 10^{-11}\ m^3\ kg^{-1}\ s^{-2}$.

Express the answer in units of Earth Mass M_{Earth}, knowing that $M_{Earth} = 5.980 \times 10^{24}$ kg.

(Hint: first express r and P in standard units: meters and seconds.)

Note: This is for a circular orbit; for more accurate estimates one must use the observed elliptical orbit (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kepler%27s_Law#Kepler.27s_third_law).

Quantitative assignment 1b: In a brief essay of 250 words, examine the significance of this calculation with respect to the current debate over Pluto's planetary status. Cite details and arguments from course readings to support your points.

APPENDIX ITEM E

Core 1: The World at Home Quantitative Assignment #3 & Skills Assignment #3

Minimum length = 600 words Due Date: Week of 4/13

To guarantee it's your own work, don't forget to submit your work to turnitin.com.

It was another lovely autumn day in Livermore, CA, with clouds scudding through a hazy blue sky, dogs barking at the mail carriers, and sunlight glinting off the glass and stucco surfaces of the Department of Homeland Security's new bio-defense facility. Unfortunately for America, however, none of the security officers on duty that day bothered to stop and search the black sedan as it glided past their checkpoints, and not until several days later did a research team report that several vials of the deadly Influenza virus strain of subtype H5N1, also known as Avian Flu, had in fact disappeared from their laboratory. Though H5N1, in some strain or other, periodically appears in North America, having been unintentionally carried here by people or poultry, the variety that was stolen in this case was being studied in the event of terroristic deployment—which, in fact, may be about to occur in this instance.

Intelligence services report that an extranational group has obtained the virus and is plotting to release it in order to infect as many Americans as possible. Where it will be released remains unknown, but intelligence agencies generally agree that the group plans to begin its attack within days. It is also recognized that once an outbreak of H5N1 appears in one area, it will have already moved on, owing to the virus's wide-ranging incubation period from 2 to 28 days and the easy availability of car and air travel.

As a prominent researcher who also serves as the head of a presidential commission on infectious diseases, you must recommend a policy for distributing the available supplies of H5N1 vaccine to the American people. In addition to the news of the virus theft and the plot detailed above, you have recently heard more bad news from scientists on your team: the herd immunity level for the U.S. population in this situation is 83.6% (see course readings for more about herd immunity). Companies capable of manufacturing the H5N1 vaccine have dedicated themselves to producing as much as possible, but the best-case scenario only has them producing enough vaccine to immunize 71% of Americans against the virus. Also worth noting: There is no natural immunity to H5N1, and, in the catastrophic outbreak in 1918 of the related strain H1N1, or Spanish Flu, the virus killed many otherwise healthy people, and not just the very young or very old. Moreover, this present strain of Avian Flu is particularly virulent: it has mutated, and is capable of being transmitted from one human to another.

The White House has asked for a proposal of not less than 600 words (including medical, geographical, demographic, etc., statistics—the more of which you purposefully incorporate the better your plan will be) in which you outline in detail a series of steps that the government should take to protect the U.S. population.

You will first need to find and cite a recent total population figure for the U.S. (and will want to think about which groups within our country that are likely to have been passed over by that particular figure). From that figure, determine the number of people who will

not be able to receive the H5N1 vaccine. Then begin deciding which segments of society and geographic regions you will vaccinate in order of priority, and which will not receive any vaccine at all. What are the possible positive and negative consequences of your plan? Explain your decisions and the logic behind them carefully. Use more specific demographic figures from a dependable source to be sure your numbers add up.

Many factors, demographic and otherwise, could play into this decision-making process: age, class, region, profession, gender, etc. Describe what additional measures you will take to slow the spread of the virus. Will you quarantine those who are infected? Will you close schools, factories, and/or some kinds of businesses? Are there services and industries you think will be essential during this crisis and that you will insist remain open? The White House, needless to say, is not merely interested in snap decisions on these matters. It expects you to consider in detail the social and economic ramifications of the policies you advocate, and also to provide sound ethical justification wherever it is appropriate.

NOTE: In order to convince the President that you know what you're talking about, you must cite three sources in your proposal.

If you need help, don't go it alone. Go to: http://ucmercedlibrary.info/criteval.html and/or http://ucmercedlibrary.info/contact/index.html

APPENDIX ITEM F

Evaluation of Core 1 Assignments

Those of us who lead discussion sections of Core 1 are often asked about how we grade assignments for Core 1. Having established point systems and criteria to govern our evaluations of these assignments, we've decided to present them to you here in hopes of demystifying, at least slightly, what some might consider a "mysterious" process.

With respect to quantitative assignments, a correct answer must be supplied in order for the assignment to receive full credit. However, we believe that process is a fundamental component of both quantitative and qualitative reasoning. Therefore, any quantitative exercise that clearly (and creatively) describes its process (and the significance thereof), uses the tools provided by the assignment, and shows evidence of sincere engagement can still receive a high grade, even if an incorrect answer is provided at the end.

Essay assignments are slightly different in nature. Essays very rarely have a "correct answer," after all. Nevertheless, we will only give top marks to essays that:

- present information accurately and make logically sound arguments;
- develop ideas fully and in an organized fashion;
- display complexity of thought and appreciation of various perspectives;
- approach issues and problems from creative angles;
- are noteworthy for their overarching focus and coherence; and
- engage course readings and/or lectures in sufficient depth.

Essays do not have to receive perfect scores in all of these areas to receive full points, but coming up short in one criterion or another will likely affect your grade.

We hope that this clarifies what we look for when evaluating these assignments. If you have any questions while working on either a qualitative or a quantitative assignment, you are of course advised to contact your section leader promptly so as to stay on the right track.

APPENDIX ITEM G

CORE 1 Module Synopses, with Associated Objectives and Outcomes

CORE 1: The World at Home covers a lot of ground—billions of years, in fact. As you read the module summaries, note that the course is structured with a very broad chronology, moving from the very beginnings of the universe to the problems of our current civilization, now and in the near future. Beyond this basic structure, the challenge of this course is for each of us to find ways our history can be linked together, to examine how the past influences the future, and to study how thought and innovation have developed over the millennia, and so on.

Background, "Points of Engagement"

During the first week of the course, you will be introduced to some of the broad themes of the course, such as the productive interplay that occurs between disciplines and the challenges of the modern university. Some of the questions we'll start out with include: What counts as knowledge? How is knowledge produced and assembled? In what ways do academic disciplines intersect? In what ways do they differ?

Objectives (instructors will):

• Provide overview of subjects, modules, lectures, discussion sections, and assignments
• Survey strategies of acquiring and managing information
• Review critical reading skills (pre-writing, annotation, finding patterns, journaling, etc.)
• Cultivate statistical savvy and quantitative awareness

Outcomes (students will be able to):

• Summarize major themes and protocols of the course
• Use course materials reflexively
• Annotate and critique short reading
• Take effective lecture notes

Module 1, "Origins of the Universe"

In developing myriad "origin myths," humankind has had to balance accounts of the natural world in terms of faith (spiritual knowledge) and reason (testable hypotheses). The conflict between these two approaches may be seen, for example, in the life of Galileo, and in debates that continue today, in rival explanations of our place in the Universe. The scope of this first module literally covers billions of years—from "scientific cosmology" and its Big Bang theory (of the formation of galaxies, stars and planets) to "functional cosmology" (which attempts to explain our personal connection to the universe)—to explore that most fundamental of questions: *How did we get here?*

Objectives (instructors will):
• Survey scientific and mythological models of the universe
• Introduce problems of classification inherent in constructions of knowledge
• Review formative moments in intellectual history
• Explore socio-historical issues that accompany the scientific imagination

Outcomes (students will be able to):
• Explain ways in which different cultures imagine the universe
• Identify cultural values embedded in the history of astronomy
• Reflect on significance of intellectual history for contemporary notions of knowledge
• Assess the idea of scientific classification (by arguing for and against Pluto's planetary status)

Module 2, "Origins of Life"

This module will extend the earlier theme of faith versus reason to today's ongoing debate over life's origins, specifically the debate between evolution and creation. To better understand what is at stake in this debate, we will consider competing theories proposed by scientists and ethicists, and their answers to the key questions: "What constitutes life?" and "What life is sacred?" Just as the life of Galileo focuses the discussion in Module 1, the life and work of Charles Darwin will do the same in this module. We will closely examine the origins and value of the scientific method, the geologic history of Earth, the genetics of natural selection, and from the opposite side, the philosophy of religion and intelligent design.

Objectives (instructors will):
• Explore earth's origins in the context of the universe's history
• Survey history of and challenges to evolutionary thinking
• Survey and critique scientific systems of classification
• Introduce biological concepts of natural selection and speciation

Outcomes (students will be able to):
• Synthesize arguments about origins of universe with those about origins of life
• Evaluate limits of scientific classification
• Explain and apply concepts of natural selection and speciation
• Analyze texts such as *Origin of Species* to assess evolutionism in historical context

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Module 3, "Origins of Societies and Cultures"

Societies tend to coalesce for pragmatic reasons—food production, shelter, companionship, and defense—evolving distinct cultures in the process. Whereas all societies eventually face the same basic challenges—resource depletion, crime, epidemics, and environmental despoliation, among them—the creative contributions of their diverse cultures, in the sciences and arts, often remain unique. In this module (perhaps the most

protean of all the modules), we will examine a wide range of topics, each a way of understanding how and why people form into groups, cities, and cultures, and the potential positive and negative consequences of such activities. Some of the challenging questions we will consider are: "What is 'culture'?" "What is art and why do we have it?" "What obligations do we have to the environment, to each other, to our successors?"

Objectives (instructors will):
• Examine history and theories of social formations and movements
• Survey aspects of intercultural communication
• Illustrate dynamics of stereotyping in psychology and media
• Explore art as a means of understanding culture

Outcomes (students will be able to):
• Critique previous course themes and foci in terms of social movements and societal change
• Articulate extents to which common classification schemes lend themselves to stereotyping
• Analyze artworks by attending to formal characteristics of painting, music, literature, etc.
• Assess parallels between artistic creation and scientific or scholarly investigation

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Module 4, "Language and Communication"

Societies, like individuals, depend upon communication—to express needs and wants, to warn of danger, and to persuade others to join their cause. This module will look at the various ways that we have learned to communicate and persuade: through words, symbols, music, and even unconscious gestures. We will examine how we acquire and develop language skills, and then progress into the use of metaphor and purely symbolic languages such as mathematics. Through the study of the languages of mathematics and music, we will cultivate an understanding of what we mean by "language."

Objectives (instructors will):
• Explore socio-historical aspects of communication
• Elaborate theories of language acquisition and communicative practice
• Survey communicational logic of—and affinities among—forms of expression (language, music, film, mathematics, etc.)
• Examine the nature of knowledge with respect to cross-disciplinary communication

Outcomes (students will be able to):
• Summarize and apply theories of language acquisition and use
• Analyze cultural values embedded in language and alternative forms of expression (literature, music, film, mathematics, etc.)
• Elaborate commonalities among forms of expression
• Explain the bases of mathematical logic

Module 5, "Needs of Individuals and Societies"

Unlike societies, individuals have unique needs and desires, many of which cannot (or should not) be met by the society at large. Unique to each individual are the ethical choices that each of us makes in fulfilling these needs. Alternately, society often makes demands on individuals—sometimes with his or her consent, sometimes without—that challenge codes of ethics we may consider implicit and universal (such as restricting the pursuit of happiness, or freedom from pain). In the absence of a truly homogenous society, we learn to manage the tension between the one and the many as best we can. In this module, we will explore this tension by looking at case studies of social experimentation, economic issues, public health crises, and theories of ethical decision-making (such as utilitarianism).

Objectives (instructors will):
• Introduce ethics as source of scholarly focus
• Examine ethical tensions between individuals and societies
• Survey ethical considerations in public health and history
• Present ethical issues in methods of scientific research

Outcomes (students will be able to):
• Apply schools of ethical thought to contemporary concerns
• Elaborate ethics implicit in common public health and historical issues
• Assess ethical considerations in scientific research designs
• Analyze statistical data from ethical standpoints

Module 6, "Conflict"

Conflict is common not only between but within societies. It comes in many forms, not just violence and war, but everyday conflicts of interest, ideology, and belief. As such, conflict may be necessary for civilization to evolve and progress. This module will consider the full spectrum of conflict—from global war to terrorism and debates over protection of the environment—to explore how and why conflicts occur, how they might be avoided or managed, and how, traditionally, they have been resolved.

Objectives (instructors will):
• Present historical and ethical contexts for contemporary conflicts
• Explore local and global implications of political issues
• Suggest means of managing or ameliorating current conflicts
• Examine science behind historical developments

Outcomes (students will be able to):
• Apply ethical frameworks to modern conflicts
• Summarize and critique a current political conflict
• Elaborate historical, ethical and scientific contexts for contemporary conflicts
• Assess primary and secondary sources for characterizations of contemporary conflicts

Module 7, "The Future"

The final module will revisit the major themes of the course, from the perspective of how they might be affected by changes already underway, or predicted in the foreseeable future. Both threats and prospects will be examined, from the possibility of a global pandemic to the implications of genetic engineering and nanotechnology. The course will conclude with reflection on what we've learned over the semester and addresses our ongoing hopes and fears for the future, speculating on what we can do with this knowledge.

Objectives (instructors will):

• Survey costs and benefits of scientific and/or technological innovation
• Examine ethical considerations in contemporary scientific research
• Identify problems of and solutions to current scientific debates
• Explore implications of technological innovation for personal identity

Outcomes (students will be able to):

• Apply concepts of evolution and ethics to current scientific debates
• Elaborate unforeseen consequences of innovation
• Assess role of technology in everyday life
• Synthesize course material by applying it to future concerns

APPENDIX ITEM H

WRI 117: Writing in the Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts syllabus template selection

COURSE GOALS (This course is intended to help you…)	**LEARNING OUTCOMES** (Upon completion of course, students should be able to…)
Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of the field of social sciences and/or humanities, and to know how to effectively interpret and apply relevant information in the field.	• Read, understand, and accurately interpret scientific texts in various social sciences and humanities disciplines • Understand how arguments are constructed and what counts as evidence in various social sciences and humanities disciplines • Design and conduct a generative research project that adheres to discipline-specific conventions
Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem-solving.	• Understand the various and diverse factors bearing on the complex process of research and the know-how to differentiate information effectively for problem solving • Understand how to evaluate various types of primary and secondary evidence and employ them to make an effective argument
Communication: To convey information to, communicate with, and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other forms of communication.	• Tailor written, oral, and other modes of communication for multiple audiences • Examine instructor's and peers' comments for written work and implement relevant feedback in the revision process • Effectively engage and reflect on the different stages of research and writing process through keeping a research journal
Self and Society: To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting.	• Work effectively with group members from ethnically, culturally, and/or socially diverse backgrounds • Understand the global-local connection in research projects and other course materials
Ethics and Responsibility: To follow ethical practices as observed in the professional field and scholarly communities.	• Understand and adhere to the ethics and social responsibilities involved in doing academic research and using people as sources of data • Understand and adhere to the ethics of academic integrity, especially proper citation, accurate reporting of sources, and full disclosures of methodological practices
Leadership and Teamwork: To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others.	• Facilitate and foster discussion among classmates on assigned readings or topic • Collaborate with and support classmates on group tasks and research projects • Provide helpful and relevant feedback on classmates' work
Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity: To appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression as seen in the fields of social sciences and humanities.	• When appropriate, apply creative expressions in course assignments • Design and create an aesthetically nuanced learning eportfolio • Employ creative strategies to make the group oral presentation interesting and engaging
Development of Personal Potential: To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being.	• Learn various educational technology and use them effectively in the course • Demonstrate professional behaviors vis-à-vis academic honesty and respect for others • Use the learning eportfolio as a platform for life-long learning, preparations for graduate school, and/or career development

APPENDIX ITEM I

Center for Research in the Humanities & Arts Grant Proposal for: "Writing the Posthuman"

Writing Program Faculty: Frederick Young, Ph.D., Derek Merrill, Ph.D., Tom Hothem, Ph.D., Nick Valdez, Ph.D. Philosophy Faculty: Jeff Yoshimi, Ph.D. (Submitted: March 30, 2009)

Overview:

UC Merced--the first "completely wired" campus of the 21st century--is a distinct position to respond to the digital transformation of culture that is currently underway. We believe the relevance of the humanities hinges on its unique ability to both conceptualize the digital and partake in its transformation. This puts the humanities in an excellent position to critically assess the way technological advances transform our sense of self and our communities.

Under the auspices of the Writing Program's newly formed Critical Theory Reading Group, we propose to invite a group of internationally known scholars and digital arts practitioners to UC Merced to present their research, to hold workshops with our students, and to discuss how our new UC campus can participate in the transformations associated with digital culture. Critical theory—the examination and critique of society and social activities—unveils what appears as natural to our everyday experiences. It provides tools for asking what we are doing when we use digital technology. The scholars and digital artist practitioners we plan to invite all work on the notion of the posthuman (the self in digital culture), as a way of categorizing the transformations of self underway, by posing questions concerning the digital technology of self, what it means to be a human subject, what digitalization of culture means for ethnic, racial and gender identity, and how these questions themselves are being transformed both nationally and globally through the digital.

We see these transformations underway in such practices as social networking (e.g. Facebook), multiplayer online role-playing game like *World of Warcraft*, and modern television and internet media broadly. In his seminal work, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord states that the *image* has now become the fabric of social relations and the productions of self. Interrogating these practices through the lens of critical theory gives us the tools to re-evaluate how traditional notions of identity, space, time, gender, race, and nationality are transformed by digital culture. We are interested in thinking though ways in which these types of technologies influence the writing practice in the classroom, and how to both create and use our existing technological resources both for pedagogy and scholarship.

We see the digital as an apparatus that by its very nature facilitates interdisciplinary activities in the university, and we see the humanities as having a unique ability to conceptualize and create writing practices for the university.

Organization:

We propose inviting four speakers (two media scholars, two media artist practitioners) to UC Merced during the 2009-10 academic year. Each speaker would give a talk open to students, faculty, and the public about their research, and would also participate in faculty and student workshops and classroom visits, allowing for greater student/faculty interactions. The speakers' work will serve to introduce the campus community to intersections between critical theory, digital media, philosophy, culture, writing, and pedagogy. We see this lecture series as a foundation for further exploration of digital culture and the humanities at UC Merced, and for facilitating and energizing interdisciplinary collaborations across disciplines and schools.

Outcomes:

We anticipate a collective "special issue" publication (assembling writings by invited speakers and UC faculty) addressing the process of developing writing courses intersecting critical theory and digital media. Possible publication venues include: *College Literature, New Directions for Higher Education*, or *Composition Studies*. In addition to disseminating the results of our collaborations, this will also assist us in curriculum development for Writing 117 (Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences) and development of the Writing Major. We also plan to submit a symposium proposal for the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication to discuss the ways we have developed and instituted curriculum in the fields of writing, critical theory, and digital media at UC Merced.

Speakers:

Charlie Blake: Director of Media Studies, Liverpool University Hope. Dr. Blake serves on many international Digital Media and Critical Theory journal boards, and has published extensively in the field of Media Studies, Continental Philosophy and Critical Theory. Among his forthcoming publications includes a two volume special issue of the journal "Angelaki: Theoretical Journal of the Humanities," dedicated to work of French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze.

Ricardo Dominguez addresses Chicano culture and explores resolving conflict through the digital. He is a co-founder of The Electronic Disturbance Theater (EDT), a group who developed Virtual-Sit-In technologies in 1998 in solidarity with the Zapatista communities in Chiapas, Mexico. He was co-Director Ricardo's performances have been presented in museums, galleries, theater festivals, hacker meetings, tactical media events and as direct actions on the streets and around the world. He is an associate professor of Visual Art at University of California San Diego.

Rita Raley researches and teaches in the areas of new media (art, literature, theory) and 20-21C literature in an "international" or "global" context. Her book, *Tactical Media*, a study of new media art in relation to neoliberal globalization, is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press. She also continues work on *Global English and the Academy*, excerpts of which have been published in *The Yale Journal of Criticism* and *Diaspora*.

Eugene Thacker examines the impact biotechnology has had on the concept of the human. He is the author of *Biomedia* (University of Minnesota, 2004), *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture* (MIT, 2005), and co-author with Alexander Galloway of *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (University of Minnesota, 2007). Thacker is Associate Professor in the

School of Literature, Communication, & Culture at the Georgia Institute of Technology.