

### **Intellectual Inquiry: General Preamble**

The courses in the area of Intellectual Inquiry are designed in accordance with the University Senate's recommendation that "We should intentionally set knowing how to learn and think as an essential goal of a general education program. At its best, general education establishes a foundation for critical and thoughtful approaches to solving problems and promotes intellectual development. In the context of disciplinary learning, one intended outcome of general education is the development of evidence-based thinkers: students capable of understanding what critical argument demands and what it offers as a way of understanding ourselves, others, and the world around us." The Senate issued the following guidelines regarding the core elements of the General Education curriculum:

- "ask students to explore the nature of intellectual inquiry within the established, broad knowledge areas;"
- "bring students in contact with faculty, advanced graduate students and others who are engaged in the core activities of a research university;"
- "establish a foundation for critical and thoughtful approaches to solving problems and promote intellectual development."

Thus, the Intellectual Inquiry division of the General Education curriculum is designed around four broad knowledge areas: Humanities, Natural/Physical/Mathematical Sciences, Social Sciences, and Creativity & the Arts. Courses that fulfill these requirements must address all of the learning outcomes within the corresponding curricular template.

However, the organization of these four broad knowledge areas is not intended to discourage multi-disciplinary approaches to critical thinking and problem-solving. Indeed, a multi-disciplinary approach will enrich the curriculum, bring students in contact with current modes of scholarly inquiry, and equip our graduates to draw conclusions and make decisions based on multi-faceted frames of reference.

With that in mind, the following faculty guidelines should be kept in mind:

- 1) While the listed learning outcomes must form part of the course, other learning outcomes may be added, related to the mastery of particular content or of multi-disciplinary approaches to the topics of discussion.
- 2) A single course may be proposed to fulfill the requirements of two (or more) areas, provided that the course addresses the learning outcomes of each of the areas for which it is proposed. This provision invites faculty to span traditional disciplinary boundaries, in designing and delivering the course. However, in such cases, the student may not apply such a course towards more than one General Education requirement; rather, the student will determine which of the requirements to fulfill with that particular course. Thus, in the end, students will still take four courses within the category of Intellectual Inquiry.