

FULFILLING DIVERSITY LINES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM: COURSE GUIDELINES

I. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The goal of this requirement is to promote an awareness that different cultural perspectives exist within our own society and around the world. Courses can address a variety of educational goals. For example, students can:

- ❑ Acquire knowledge about different cultural and social perspectives and traditions
- ❑ Study coherence as well as variations within a culture, group, or knowledge tradition
- ❑ Gain respect and appreciation for a range of values, norms, behaviors, and attitudes
- ❑ Develop an understanding of the dynamics of values formation and change
- ❑ Expand their appreciation of accomplishments and contributions of different groups through the study of a range of cultural expressions
- ❑ Identify their own cultural heritages and knowledge traditions and compare them with others
- ❑ Assess the sources of their assumptions about alternative groups and examine the impact of such assumptions on the valuing of others
- ❑ Increase their ability to cross cultural and social boundaries and interact effectively with multiple groups
- ❑ Increase their facility with “perspective-taking,” seeing events and situations from diverse points of view
- ❑ Broaden, challenge, and complicate their worldviews

Ultimately, these courses should give students critical tools for assessing values within a cultural context. Viewing our own values in the larger comparative context should facilitate the kind of introspection that allows students to question values and arrive at informed commitments.

II. ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

“A course which creates an awareness and understanding of diversity in the United States, directly addressing issues such as ethnicity, gender, disability, racism, or poverty.”

To accomplish the above, courses should include three components:

- 1) The study of minority/majority relations with a focus on how underrepresented or minority perspectives differ from mainstream or majority perspectives,
- 2) Attention to the positive contributions of alternative groups, whose voices are heard through inclusion of materials generated by those groups,
- 3) A unit relating course issues to the situation in the United States.

III. CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

“A course that enhances cross-cultural understandings through examination of other cultures. This requirement may be satisfied in one of three ways: i) a course focusing on the culture of non-Euro-American societies, ii) a 201 or higher-level course in a language used to satisfy the admission requirement or 8 credits in a language not previously studied, or iii) participation in an approved semester-long study abroad program.”

Rationale for the three options: Option one focuses on a non-Euro-American culture to expose students to a very different culture. Option two requires a more intimate examination of the different culture by the study of the culture through its language. Option three requires the student to experience a different culture.

To accomplish these goals, courses should include two components:

- 1) An element that relates the focal aspects of the course to the larger cultural context
- 2) An element that raises awareness of cultural differences.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recommend that, wherever appropriate, readings and source materials include material coming from or giving “voice” to the groups considered. Also, in keeping with the innovative spirit of this requirement, we encourage instructors to incorporate pedagogical innovations in Perspectives on Diversity courses.

The course must treat the perspectives and experiences of the selected group primarily as the subject of the course and not primarily as objects of analysis. In other words, a course about Asian-American culture as revealed in film is appropriate but a course about film using examples from Asian-American films may not have the emphasis that we are seeking. Similarly, courses focusing on methods, techniques, and approaches may not have the balance that we are seeking.

V. PROCEDURE

Courses that are proposed for the Perspectives on Diversity lines should be submitted to the Educational Policies Committee.

When an approved course is offered in sections with different material, each section must be reviewed by the committee. Normal up-dating of an approved course does not need to be reviewed by the committee. The committee should be informed of substantial revisions.

The application for course approval must include a completed EPC course approval form, with a clear rationale for the requested Perspectives on Diversity line provided. This rationale should be part of the overall course rationale, and should address the specific components of these courses as identified in the Perspectives on Diversity Checklist. Supporting materials must also be provided and typically include syllabus and reading list. EPC may seek outside expert counsel from the Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences when rendering judgements on Diversity requests.

We recognize that there will be different objectives, different approaches to objectives and components, and different emphasis on the components between disciplines and even within disciplines. Courses that can fulfill the requirements of the Diversity lines are welcomed and encouraged from all parts of campus.

As revised and adopted by the PLU Faculty Assembly on December 10, 1994. Procedures further revised to reflect the role of EPC in approving requests for Diversity in the Core designations following the dissolution of the Diversity in the Core Ad Hoc Committee. All curricular requirements remain unchanged and are written as approved, December 10, 1994. [March 12, 2007].