

University Curriculum Components and Associated Student Learning Outcomes

All Components

(February 20, 2013, supersedes earlier documents)

Foundations

Discernment and Discourse

In the foundational Discernment and Discourse sequence, undergraduates develop competency in expository, analytical, and persuasive writing in response to texts of escalating complexity.

During this sequence students are also introduced to techniques for effective oral communication (assessed later in their academic careers through the SLOs associated with the Oral Communication proficiency) and principles of academic research (assessed later in their academic careers through SLOs associated with the Information Literacy proficiency).

The D&D sequence comprises three course levels. Students' initial D&D placement is based on standardized test scores and prior academic work. For most students this is a two-course sequence: DISC 1312/1313 or 2305/2306 (Honors). Developmental students begin in DISC 1311, followed by 1312/1313. Students with prior credit (advanced placement, transfer or concurrent) take DISC 1313. Hilltop Scholars students take DISC 1315.

Students' attainment of the student learning outcomes associated with the Discernment and Discourse Competency is assessed in the terminal course: DISC 1313, 1315, or 2306.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will state and defend a thesis with adequate attention to analysis and evidence.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of essay and paragraph development and organization.
3. Students will craft sentences with attention to audience, purpose, and tone, as well as sentence variety and diction.
4. Students will demonstrate proper use of grammatically and mechanically correct English.
5. Students will incorporate and document sources correctly and appropriately.

NOTE: Instructors of this course are encouraged to consider adding one or more experience or proficiency tags other than the Writing tag.

Quantitative Foundation **(Previously Quantitative Reasoning – Foundations)**

Quantitative reasoning refers to the ability to understand, evaluate, and use quantitative information. Quantitative information takes many forms, and quantitative reasoning skills span a vast spectrum from basic numerical manipulations to advanced statistics and mathematics. The University Curriculum recognizes the foundational nature of quantitative reasoning, and also the many fields that employ different areas of quantitative reasoning. Thus, the University Curriculum includes both a Quantitative Reasoning Foundation component and a more advanced or focused Quantitative Reasoning Proficiency.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to solve problems using algebraic, geometric, calculus, statistical and/or computational methods.
2. Students will be able to interpret and/or draw inferences from mathematical models, data, graphs or formulas.

Ways of Knowing
(previously Nature of Scholarship)

Taken in the first or second year, Ways of Knowing is devoted to research approaches to important questions and how we address them across academic disciplines, including the ethical considerations involved. It will be taught collaboratively by faculty members from different disciplines. Organized around a major topic or “big question,” Ways of Knowing courses will develop students’ understanding of the multiple approaches whereby different disciplines acquire and create knowledge. Faculty members will, of course, propose topics that reflect their own particular interests and expertise. Examples of topics that have been discussed as possibilities for Ways of Knowing courses are aging, global climate change, immigration, literacy, evolution, world hunger, and sustainability of resources. Ways of Knowing courses, then, will cut across disciplines, exploring how natural scientists, social scientists, humanists, artists, engineers, and professionals in business and education go about addressing important issues.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate a knowledge of more than one disciplinary practice.
2. Students will be able to explain how bringing more than one practice to an examination of the course topic contributes to knowing about that topic.

Personal Responsibility and Wellness
(previously Personal Responsibility and Stewardship)

PRW I: Choices

Taken the first year, PRW I introduces the student to the University and explores three sets of issues related to well-being in college and later life: (1) The role of personal responsibility in coping with college and life's other transitional periods; (2) challenges and opportunities at SMU—including managing time and stress, benefiting from diversity and autonomy, dealing with pitfalls related to alcohol and drugs, and exploring resources and activities on campus; and (3) personal finance to enable students to make informed decisions about managing their money, using credit cards, and making major purchases, whether during their time at SMU or later in life. During this course, students will work on their e-portfolio. The aim of the portfolio is to encourage students to record and reflect upon their activities.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to identify principles of effective personal financial management.
2. Students will be able to identify their stressors and effective stress reduction methods.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between lifestyle choices and wellness.
4. Students will be able to identify the value and significance of integrity.
5. Students will be able to identify academic and personal support services on campus.

PRW II: Physical Fitness

Extensive research supports that regular physical activity is essential for health and vitality. Students at SMU will take PRW II: Physical Fitness: A variety of individual and group fitness courses will be available to students with each course containing central core objectives and student learning outcomes based on health-related fitness components. In both cases, students work with instructors to establish personal goals and a fitness plan for the semester. Topics and activities tentatively include the following: Weeks 1-2: Comprehensive physical fitness assessments; Week 3: Cardio-respiratory workshops; Week 4: Resistance exercise workshops; Weeks 5-12: Individual goals and individual or group training under the auspices and leadership of a qualified instructor; Weeks 13-14: Post-training assessments, counseling, final exam. Letter grades will be given based on attendance, understanding of training/health principles and satisfactory improvement towards the goals that students have set for themselves. Apart from the immediate fitness benefits, the aim is to help each student inculcate positive lifelong fitness habits.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to identify and explain the five components of health-related fitness.
2. Students will be able to develop and implement their personal plan to promote and maintain health-related fitness

Pillars

Pure and Applied Sciences

To be active, engaged citizens in a global society, graduates of SMU will be able to engage in scholarly discourse in science and engineering and to understand the implications of these disciplines. Students should be aware of the meaning and methods of science and engineering, and of the ways that both disciplines have shaped and continue to shape the world around us. To achieve this goal, students must take two courses, with lab experiences, in the Pure and Applied Science Pillar. Due to the constraints of lab courses, these courses may both be introductory.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Level 1-

1. Students will be able to demonstrate basic facility with the methods and approaches of scientific inquiry and problem solving.
2. Students will be able to explain how the concepts and findings of science or technology in general, or of particular sciences or technologies, shape our world. (Level 1 and 2)

Level 2-

1. Students will be able to explain how the concepts and findings of science or technology in general, or of particular sciences or technologies, shape our world. (Level 1 and 2)
2. Students will be able to select and apply appropriate techniques, skills, and modern tools to science or technology activities.

NOTE: The Pure and Applied Science requirement can be met with either two introductory courses each with a lab or one introductory with a lab and a more advanced course that may then not have a lab.

Individuals, Institutions and Cultures (previously Institutions and Cultures)

To understand complex social systems, graduates of SMU will explore contemporary efforts to document and analyze the interaction of individuals, cultures, and institutions that shape economic, political, and social experiences. To this end, students take two courses from the Institutions and Cultures Pillar.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Level 1-

1. Students will be able to identify the types of interactions and influences that arise between or among individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences.
2. Students will be able to summarize basic empirical phenomena in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences.

Level 2-

1. Students will be able to analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences.
2. Students will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes and theoretical applications in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences.

Historical Contexts

To understand societies in the contemporary world and the forces that have shaped them, graduates of SMU will be able to identify and analyze problems, events, and documents or artifacts from the past and know how to situate them in their appropriate social, political, economic, and cultural contexts. To this end, students take two courses from the Historical Contexts Pillar.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Level 1-

1. Students will be able to identify the main events, actors, and evidence involved in a defined historical period.
2. Students will be able to summarize in their own prose the major changes that took place over time in a defined historical period.

Level 2-

1. Students will be able to analyze both secondary and primary historical evidence.
2. Students will be able to develop and support extended historical discussions in their own prose, based both on critical understanding of specific historical problems and on evaluation of secondary and primary evidence.

Creativity and Aesthetics

To develop an understanding of and appreciation for the creative impulse in a variety of artistic, cultural and historical contexts, graduates of SMU will be able to identify, explore and explain concepts fundamental to the visual, literary, and performing arts through critical analysis, performance or the act of personal creation. This Pillar also seeks to expose students to the fundamental role that creativity plays in maintaining a robust, adaptive, and prosperous society. To this end, students take two courses from the Creativity and Aesthetics Pillar.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Level 1-

1. Students will be able to identify methods, techniques, or languages of a particular art form, creative endeavor or craft(s) and explain how those inform the creation, performance or analysis of creative work.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of concepts fundamental to the creative impulse through analysis, performance, or creation.

Level 2-

1. Students will be able to analyze and construct clear and well-supported interpretations of creative works.
2. Pick one from below that best fits the context of the class:
 - a. Students will be able to evaluate sources and analyze the role and value of creative works to the cultures (context) that create and adopt them.
 - b. Students will be able to articulate and discuss the ways in which creative works reflect values and modes of thought (or ways of knowing) of individuals and cultures.
 - c. Students will be able to articulate and discuss the ways in which creative works provide opportunities to transform cultures and individuals, including themselves."

Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics

To explore the human condition, graduates of SMU will engage in probing inquiry of philosophical, religious, or ethical issues and questions. This inquiry also serves as the basis for thoughtful choice and action. To this end, students take two courses from the Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics Pillar.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Level 1-

1. Students will be able to describe and explain some of the general features and principal theoretical methods of one of the fields of philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.

Level 2-

1. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on or apply the theoretical methods of, one of the fields of philosophy, religious studies, or ethics via a focus on a specific area or set of issues.

Proficiencies and Experiences

Writing

Students will be able to write thesis-driven texts that analyze, evaluate or synthesize information and concepts presented in the course.

The University Curriculum requires writing-intensive courses beyond the Foundation. All students will complete two courses with a “W” designation or satisfy two “W” proficiencies. “W” courses will require students to compose coherent, well-supported, and carefully edited essays and reports suitable for a range of different audiences and purposes. “W” courses must provide multiple opportunities for students to improve their writing. Students in “W” courses will continue to develop and refine the Discernment and Discourse Student Learning Outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will state and defend a thesis with adequate attention to analysis and evidence.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of essay and paragraph development and organization.
3. Students will craft sentences with attention to audience, purpose, and tone, as well as sentence variety and diction.
4. Students will demonstrate proper use of grammatically and mechanically correct English (or the language in which the course is taught)

NOTE: Writing Proficiencies must provide multiple opportunities for students to improve their writing. Just assigning written work is not sufficient.

Quantitative Reasoning

“Q” courses may be entirely devoted to quantitative reasoning, such as offerings in mathematics and statistics. “Q” designations may also be attached to other courses in other disciplines that include major quantitative reasoning dimensions (such as courses in the sciences, engineering, music theory, logic, economics, and so on). One course, beyond the Quantitative Reasoning Foundation component, is required.

Student Learning Outcomes: (Choose at least 3 of the following)

1. Students will be able to develop quantitative models as related to the course subject matter.
2. Students will be able to assess the strengths and limitations of quantitative models and methods.
3. Students will be able to apply symbolic systems of representation.
4. Students will be able to collect, organize and analyze data from a variety of sources.
5. Students will be able to formulate structured and logical arguments.
6. Students will be able to test hypotheses and make recommendations or predictions based on results.
7. Students will be able to communicate and represent quantitative information or results numerically, symbolically, aurally, visually, verbally, or in writing.

Information Literacy

Students must develop and demonstrate information literacy. In many first year writing courses, as well as in Nature of Scholarship and numerous upper-level classes, students will encounter the challenges of effectively retrieving and applying pertinent information from exponentially increasing sources, not all of which are reliable. In addition to learning how to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of sources, students must understand how this material relates to the wider universe of potential information on a topic, and they must also learn to use this information ethically. To ensure the development of information literacy, students will take two courses designated as “I.”

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to select and use the appropriate research methods and search tools for needed information.
2. Students will be able to evaluate sources for quality of information for a given information need.

Oral Communication

Students will encounter courses or participate in activities that develop oral communication skills, such as effectively arguing a position, presenting spontaneous ideas, presenting reports and projects, and performing presentations and speeches fluently.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to select and use appropriate forms of evidence in a public presentation.
2. Students will be able to design verbal messages to suit particular audiences and purposes.
3. Students will be able to use visual cues (such as presentation software, staging, props, costumes, makeup, and gesture) to enhance a public presentation.

Community Engagement

Students will take courses with an experiential educational component in the community of Dallas/Fort Worth or elsewhere, or participate in an experience-based learning activity in the community. Such activities must include a reflective component.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate analytical and practical skills necessary for engaged, informed citizenship through addressing specific needs in a community.
2. Students will be able to apply academic learning to a community engagement activity.

Human Diversity

The Human Diversity proficiency requirement challenges students to explore in a reflective way basic issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world. This requirement may be satisfied by taking courses or participating in a global experience, community engagement experience, or personal or group on- or off-campus project which brings together aspects of human diversity in a creative and meaningful way.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. With respect to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

Global Engagement

Students will participate in activities or take courses that require both engagement with other societies and cultures and reflection about these experiences. Although it is likely that many of the offerings satisfying this requirement will take place outside the United States, some may involve working with international students, organizations, or businesses in the United States.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the material culture, underlying values, beliefs, or practices that are central to the culture(s) being visited or studied.

NOTE: While the intended preference for cultures visited or studied under Global Engagement is non-US cultures, it is understood that opportunities exist to engage global cultures within the borders of the United States, particularly those which have not yet been fully integrated.

Second Language

SMU students will be expected to improve their language proficiency by the equivalent of two-college level semesters.

Students can **place out** of this requirement in ONE of the following ways:

- Scoring a 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement (AP) language exam
- Scoring a 5, 6, or 7 on the Higher Level International Baccalaureate (IB) language exam
- Placing beyond 4th semester language on the SMU placement test (students will be contacted by the WLL Advisor for further testing)
- Native literacy in a language other than English
- Transferring in two sequential terms of a second language taken at any regionally accredited, post-secondary institution

Students can **meet** this requirement at SMU in one of the following ways:

- Take 2 terms of a brand-new language.
- Continue a language already studied.
- Take two sequential terms of a second language at any regionally accredited, post-secondary institution.

Student Learning Outcomes:

For ALL WLL languages except Latin

SECOND SEMESTER

1. Listening: Students will demonstrate ability to understand simple, sentence-length speech, one utterance at a time, using familiar vocabulary and structures.
2. Reading: Students will demonstrate ability to understand short, non-complex texts that convey basic information using familiar vocabulary and structures.
3. Speaking: Students will demonstrate ability to express themselves in uncomplicated communicative situations related to familiar topics by responding to direct questions or requests for information, with responses typically consisting of short statements and discrete sentences.
4. Writing: Students will demonstrate ability to write short, simple communications and requests for information in loosely connected texts framed in present time, with some references to other time frames.

THIRD SEMESTER

1. Listening: Students will demonstrate ability to understand simple sentence-length speech on familiar topics. They can understand the main facts of short non-complex narrative and descriptive speech using familiar vocabulary and structures.
2. Reading: Students will demonstrate ability to understand short, non-complex texts that convey basic information and deal with familiar topics. They can understand the main facts of short narrative and descriptive texts using familiar vocabulary and structures.
3. Speaking: Students will demonstrate ability to interact effectively in straightforward, concrete conversational situations, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information.
4. Writing: Students will demonstrate ability to communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely connected sentences on familiar topics, primarily in present time, with some references to other time frames.

FOURTH SEMESTER

1. Listening: Students will demonstrate ability to understand the main facts and some supporting details of short narrative and descriptive speech on familiar topics.
2. Reading: Students will demonstrate ability to understand the main facts and some supporting details of short narrative and descriptive texts on familiar topics.
3. Speaking: Students will demonstrate ability to converse effectively when dealing with familiar tasks and social situations. They can narrate and describe in a variety of time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length.
4. Writing: Students will demonstrate ability to narrate and describe in a variety of time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length.

Latin ONLY

SECOND SEMESTER

Reading:

1. Students will demonstrate ability to understand short passages of adapted Latin text with familiar vocabulary and sentence structure.
2. Students will demonstrate ability to identify basic noun usage and verb aspects in context of adapted Latin text.

Writing:

1. Students will demonstrate ability to write Latin forms and phrases as directed.

THIRD SEMESTER

Reading:

1. Students will demonstrate ability to understand short passages of adapted and authentic Latin text using familiar vocabulary and sentence structure.
2. Students will demonstrate ability to identify noun usage, verb aspects and syntax in context of adapted and authentic Latin text.

Writing

1. Students will demonstrate ability to write Latin words or phrases in response to simple Latin questions.

FOURTH SEMESTER

Reading:

1. Students will demonstrate ability to understand passages of authentic Latin text, both prose and poetry, with familiar vocabulary and sentence structure.
2. Students will demonstrate ability to identify noun usage, verb aspects and syntax in context of authentic Latin text.

Writing:

1. Students will demonstrate ability to write Latin words or phrases in response to Latin questions.

Capstone

Capstone

Nature of Scholarship introduces students, early in their academic careers, to the ways scholars contribute to the creation of new knowledge. Coming full circle, each student's undergraduate college career culminates in a capstone experience that requires each student to contribute to the "pool of knowledge" either by synthesizing and integrating a body of work within a chosen area of study or by taking an upper level course that emphasizes an inter- or multi-disciplinary way of knowing. Providing each student with an opportunity for reflection and sustained focus, this experience should involve the use of skills, knowledge and methodologies taught throughout the undergraduate career. The Capstone can take the form of a course, a departmental or honors thesis, a senior project, a senior performance, an interdisciplinary project, or an internship combined with a paper that requires students to analyze, report on, and reflect upon the experience. Many current Cultural Formations courses could provide students with an inter- or multi-disciplinary capstone experience. Capstones may also fulfill departmental or other program requirements, as determined by the degree-granting department or program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to apply a cumulative understanding of interdisciplinary/disciplinary practice.
2. Students will be able to produce a record or artifact showing some original achievement in research, synthesis, creative endeavor, exploration, or other production.