

Council on General Education Minutes

February 6, 2024

10:00-11:00 a.m., STV 140

Presiding: Gregory Ferrence

Present: Brian Aitken, Allison Antink Meyer, Gregory Braswell, Linda Clemmons, Gregory Ferrence, Amy Hurd, Josh Newport, Brian Rejack, Chris Worland, and Haiyan Xie

Guests:

Malinda Aiello, Program Director, Illinois Articulation Initiative
Dr. Christopher Horvath, Chair, Department of Philosophy

Ferrence called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Discussion Items:

1. PHI 202 Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality (course revision of existing HUM course)

The course was proposed by Dr. Christopher Horvath, Chair, Department of Philosophy.

Ferrence reminded Council members of the previous discussions regarding the proposal. He informed Horvath of the Council's concerns regarding the number of hours that needed to be completed as a prerequisite for a General Education course. Ferrence noted a similar issue with the PHI 214 proposal on today's agenda as well.

Horvath told Council members that PHI 202 was created over 20 years ago. He explained the intent of the 45 hours earned prerequisite was to preclude first year students from taking the course but allow students to enroll after their third semester. Prior to requesting an hours prerequisite, completion of COM 110 had been the prerequisite, but Horvath said he had been informed by the Registrar's Office during a training session that they could no longer use COM 110 as the prerequisite. The purpose of the prerequisite was to try and ensure that students had at least some exposure to conversations/discussions over controversial topics prior to enrolling in the course given the subject matter discussed. Horvath added that in his experience teaching the course, first year students do not do well in it given they are usually not prepared to handle the course workload.

Ferrence thanked Horvath for his explanation. He noted however that with changes in the FTIC population and the increase of incoming students who have dual credit, it is possible that first year students could meet the 45-hour prerequisite and enroll. He added that the number of credit hours earned by a student does not necessarily reflect upon their maturation level. Ferrence wondered if a lower number of hours could be used for the prerequisite and asked Aitken if it would be likely if students would need to use the course to fulfill the Humanities requirement. Aitken responded most students had completed their Humanities requirement in their first year so he did not feel many students would take this course for the purpose of completing the requirement. He added based on the skill set needed for the course, he understood and agreed with having COM 110 as the prerequisite.

Horvath responded both he and the instructor teaching the course would be happy to re-instate the Com 110 prerequisite and remove the suggested hours requirement. However, they were under the impression from the Registrar's Office that that was not an option. Hurd responded that she was at the

training session and that it was not the intent to remove ENG 101 and COM 110 as prerequisites from courses that had a legitimate justification for having them. The use of both courses as prerequisites was a hold over from the previous General Education program and the training was part of an effort by the University to review and remove unnecessary prerequisite blocks.

Aiello asked if it would be appropriate to add a statement in the course description outlining the nature of the discussed topics. Worland agreed a statement may help make it very clear to students, especially those with potential triggers, of the nature of the course and allow them to better self-select when choosing courses.

Horvath agreed to changing the prerequisite to COM 110 and adding a statement. The proposal will be sent back for revision, and he will make the changes and re-submit.

2. PHI 214 Introduction to the Philosophy of Race (existing course proposed for ICL designation)

The course was proposed by Dr. John Lawless, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy.

Ferrence noted the same prerequisite issue with the proposal as discussed with the PHI 202 proposal and added the course looked very interesting.

Horvath agreed to changing the prerequisite for the course to COM 110 instead of having the 45 hours completed requirement. The proposal will be sent back for revision, and he will ask Lawless to make the change and re-submit.

Action Items:

3. Approval of November 28, 2023 Minutes

Ferrence asked if there were any corrections to the minutes as submitted. There were no corrections. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

4. FCS 112 American Family: Change and Diversity (existing course revision of UST course)

The course was proposed by Dr. Micheal Rowley, Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS).

Ferrence noted the course was cross-listed and noted that if there were fundamental differences between the courses, they should not be cross-listed. Hurd explained she and Rivadeneyra had discussed the course with the chair and based on that discussion, had thought the department was going to split off from the other cross-listed courses. However, they must have decided to stay cross-listed with SOC 112 and HIS 112.

Aitken noted that this is one of the reasons that the University has started to move away from cross-listed courses as they cause confusion for students who wish to repeat the courses. The courses have also drifted apart over time, so they are like different courses all together. Antink Meyer asked if procedurally, cross listed courses should have the same description. Clemmons added if one of the courses received the IDEAS designation but the others it was cross listed with did not, that would be very confusing for students. Hurd responded the IDEAS review panel checks cross listed descriptions to verify they are the same as part of its review process.

The Council noticed a few editorial errors in the proposal, but none were substantiative.

A motion was made by Rejack to provisionally approve the proposal pending the department correcting the editorial errors. Antink Meyer seconded.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

5. TCH 104 Introduction to Education in the United States (existing course proposed for UST designation)

The course was proposed by Dr. Allison Antink Meyer, Professor, School of Teaching and Learning.

Ferrence reminded Council members the course was initially discussed in the fall semester but had been tabled and sent back to the school for review and possible revision. Antink Meyer explained the course was being proposed for the UST designation instead of the ICL designation as it was in fall. She told Council members based on the Council's feedback, the school decided to propose for the UST designation as it was a better fit for the course. Antink Meyer added the school currently did not have a general education course and would really like to be part of the program.

Rejack questioned if something would be lost by narrowing the focus point to just the United States but could see how the course would be beneficial in a lot of ways. He asked if the school had done a comparative analysis of the possible loss potential. Antink Meyer responded the school did not feel anything would be lost and that the course had already had an implicit focus on the United States.

A motion was made by Braswell to approve the course for the UST designation. Rejack seconded.

Nine approved, none opposed, one abstained.

The motion passed.

Aitken made a motion to adjourn. Worland seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons