

MEMORANDUM
September 23, 2010

FOR: Bobbi Owen, Sr. Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Arts & Sciences
Erika Lindemann, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Curricula, College of Arts & Sciences
Abigail Panter, Chair, Curriculum Review Steering Committee

FROM: Barbara Wildemuth, Chair, Connections Curriculum Review Subcommittee
Members of the Subcommittee: Olivia Blanchard, Drew Coleman, Bruce Fried, Kevin Guskiewicz, Li-Ling Hsiao, Cheryl Junk, Sally Mauriello, Lily Roberts, Randall Styers, Nick Sidentop (*ex officio*)

SUBJECT: Results of review of Connections requirements

Context: The Making Connections curriculum was established in order to provide students with “a sense of how to integrate foundational skills and disciplinary perspectives in ways that encourage linkages between discrete areas of knowledge, on the one hand, and differing geographic, social, conceptual, and practical contexts (local, national, global, academic, professional), on the other hand” (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/uc/06description.html>). Connections courses may be taken in one’s major or minor field, and they may double as Approaches courses or count as multiple Connections courses. This principle of “multiple counting” encourages disciplinary cross-fertilization and the purposeful enhancement of students’ in-depth areas of study. The requirements include foundational connections – Communication Intensive (CI) and Quantitative Intensive (QI) – and spatial and cultural connections – Experiential Education (EE), U.S. Diversity (US), The North Atlantic World (NA), Beyond the North Atlantic (BN), The World Before 1750 (WB), and Global Issues (GI). A summary of each of these requirements is included in Attachment A.

The Charge to the Subcommittee: In March 2010, the Subcommittee received a charge that asked several specific questions. Some of these were broad in scope, covering the Connections requirements in general. These included questions related to the number of requirements and how they satisfy the overall purpose of the Connections requirement, the overlap among the Connections requirements, the timing of completion of the requirements, and differences in implementation of the Connections requirements across the College and professional schools. Other questions were specific to particular requirements and included questions about the feasibility and desirability of implementing a Foreign Language Intensive requirement, the desirability of a disciplinary focus for the Communication Intensive requirement, the clarity of the Experiential Education requirement, and how well the courses offered match the goals of *each* of the requirements.

The Work of the Subcommittee: The Subcommittee held three meetings, on April 5, May 4, and September 13, 2010. During the first meeting, we reviewed the charge and determined which data were needed to respond to each of the questions. In addition, we considered whether there might be additional questions that should be addressed during the review. The second meeting focused on planning for the syllabus review. It included a discussion of the sample of syllabi to be reviewed. Details on the methods used for the syllabus review and other data collection by the Subcommittee are presented in Attachment B.

Findings: In this section, each of the questions asked in the charge is addressed. In addition, some additional questions/issues that came up during our studies are raised (marked with a + in the following list). Those findings related to the Making Connections curriculum as a whole are presented first, followed by findings related to specific requirements within the curriculum.

Is there an appropriate number of Connections requirements? Taken together, do they satisfy the overall purpose of the Making Connections curriculum?

Should the College of Arts and Sciences students be held to the same requirements as those in the professional schools, who are asked to complete five of the eight Connections requirements? If so, how might these courses be selected?

Is there too much overlap? Are all these courses necessary, even with the “0” additional hours possibility? Is there overlap between these courses and Approaches courses?

The first questions posed to the Subcommittee are closely related to each other, so will be discussed together. There are currently two foundational Connections requirements and six spatial/cultural Connections requirements. Thus, all the Connections requirements can be fulfilled in approximately 24 or less of the 120 hours required for graduation. While devoting 20% of a student’s program to fulfilling this requirement is too high a proportion, the ability to take a single course that fulfills multiple requirements minimizes this burden.¹ We conclude that the overall number of requirements is not excessive.

A small number of professional schools in the Health Affairs Division require that their students select among the Connections requirements, fulfilling at least 5 of the 8. This decrease in the number of Connections requirements is necessary because of the demands of those particular majors, but we conclude that there is no reason to expand this practice to additional schools or the College.

There is some concern about overlap of the general goals of the Global Issues (GL) and Beyond the North Atlantic (BN) requirements. The BN requirement focuses on regions of the world beyond North America and Western Europe; the GL requirement focuses on transnational or transregional issues. The BN requirement may be fulfilled by a course that focuses on a particular country; such a course would not satisfy the GL requirement. In the current course inventory, 70 (16%) of the 440 BN courses also fulfill the GL requirement; 70 (23%) of the 306 GL courses also fulfill the BN requirement. Thus, we conclude that the amount of overlap among the courses currently fulfilling these requirements is not large enough to warrant a change in either requirement.

There is also some concern that the requirement for a course focusing on The North Atlantic World is unnecessary, since so many courses at the University (currently 798 fulfill this requirement) focus on our own or similar cultures. On the other hand, we highly value the strength of our curriculum in this area and believe that all undergraduates should be exposed to ideas concerning the North Atlantic World. Thus, no change will be recommended, since we believe that it wouldn’t make any observable difference in the planning of students’ programs if this requirement were eliminated.

+Are there enough courses available to fulfill each requirement, so that students can enroll in courses of interest?

The capacity of the University to offer enough sections of courses that fulfill each requirement must be considered, particularly in these times of decreasing resources. Our review did not identify any significant needs for additional courses to fulfill any particular requirement. However, we did not have access to enrollment data; such data would be necessary to fully answer this question.

Are students taking these courses at an appropriate time in their undergraduate career?

Two particular issues were identified by the Subcommittee in relation to the timing of fulfilling Connections requirements, one related to First Year Seminars and one related to the Experiential Education requirement. Neither of these issues can be addressed fully without taking into account the timing of when students actually fulfill their Connections requirements; data on student enrollment were not available for our review.

¹ Of the 1952 courses that fulfill Connections requirements, 618 fulfill two or more of those requirements.

Some might argue that the Making Connections curriculum should build on the learning already established by fulfilling Foundations and Approaches requirements. From this perspective, it may be inappropriate to fulfill a Connections requirement with a First Year Seminar. However, there is nothing in the Curriculum Description (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/uc/06description.html>) that would imply that the foundations, Approaches, and Connections requirements should be fulfilled in that order. In addition, First Year Seminars are extremely valuable learning experiences and integrate knowledge across interdisciplinary boundaries in useful and unique ways. From this perspective, fulfilling a Connections requirement with a First Year Seminar is an appropriate curricular strategy. Currently, 237 First Year Seminars can fulfill a Connections requirement; looked at from another angle, 12% of the courses that can fulfill a Connections requirement are First Year Seminars. Because these Seminars play a useful role in fulfilling Connections requirements, we recommend no changes in the requirements.

The second timing issue relates to fulfilling the Experiential Education requirement. It could be argued that students should delay fulfilling this requirement until they had gained some background knowledge in a particular area. In this way, they could benefit more deeply during their experience off-campus. This argument applies primarily to the internship option for fulfilling this requirement. For other options, fulfilling the Experiential Education requirement can appropriately occur at any time in the student's career. Thus, we do not recommend any changes to the requirements; we do hope that students will be encouraged to work with their advisors to plan for the appropriate option and timing for their fulfillment of this requirement.

The Foreign Language Intensive requirement (a Foundational requirement) has not been implemented due to insufficient resources for appointing qualified instructors and providing classroom space. Should it be implemented or removed from the requirements?

There is no evidence that more resources are available now than when the implementation of this requirement was first delayed in 2006. We interviewed Dr. Larry King, Chair of Romance Languages, and he concurs with our recommendation that this requirement be removed from the curriculum.

Communication Intensive. Should these courses reside specifically in the major (or minor)?

The Subcommittee considered the desirability of fulfilling this requirement with a major/minor course, and then considered the feasibility of all departments offering a course that would fulfill this requirement. In particular, there was a concern that there may be too much enrollment pressure on a few courses, particularly in some departments. While it may be a worthwhile goal for a student to complete this requirement in his/her home discipline or a closely-related discipline, we do not recommend that the requirement be changed at this time.

Experiential Education. Should the criteria be clarified? How can the academic integrity and capacity questions for EE courses in various departments/curricula be addressed?

These questions will be addressed in more detail in connection with the syllabus review, reported below. In the sample of syllabi examined, there was some evidence that the criteria for fulfilling this requirement are unclear; this problem is discussed in more detail below. There was no evidence of a lack of academic integrity in the courses that fulfill this requirement; they all included academic responsibilities in addition to the experiential portion of the course. To maintain this level of academic integrity, especially in relation to internships, there needs to be direct faculty oversight. We could not fully address the capacity question with the available data. There are 215 EE courses available, plus the Study Abroad courses. There are EE courses offered in 57 different subjects. Thus, no capacity issues are evident. No changes are recommended.

Syllabus review. Are the goals met? Do they match the criteria? How should the criteria be distributed to maintain compliance?

A few questions arose during the syllabus review. These questions apply to criteria applied to all General Education requirements. Specifically, they are concerned with the requirement for a minimum of 10 pages of writing and the requirement for a final exam.

- The number of pages of required writing is unspecified on many syllabi. What is considered an equivalent level of intellectual work?
- When a final exam is given – during finals week or on the last day of class – is unspecified or unclear on many syllabi.
- In some cases, there may be overlap in these two requirements. Should essay-style or short-answer exams be included in the 10 pages of writing needed as a minimum?

Some of these questions can be addressed by encouraging faculty to include particular information (e.g., a session-by-session class schedule) in their syllabi. In other cases, the Administrative Board may want to reconsider the purpose of particular criteria and the way(s) in which they might be achieved.

The remainder of this section will briefly summarize the findings related to each Connections requirement, based on the syllabus review. Details of these findings are reported in Attachment C.

Communication Intensive (CI)

Syllabi from 9 courses were examined. The emphasis on writing and speaking in this sample of courses indicated that they were fulfilling both the spirit and letter of the CI criteria, with one exception. Few of the courses provided an opportunity for revision of writing or speaking assignments. Three of the courses had clear indications that drafts were due early in the semester and revised versions were due later in the semester; for the other 6 courses, there was no clear indication in the syllabi that revision was encouraged or required.

Quantitative Intensive (QI)

Syllabi from 10 courses were examined. There are a variety of ways that a course can meet the criteria for the QI requirement; each course needs to support at least one of these approaches; the majority of the courses reviewed supported two or more approaches. However, there were three courses that did not support any of these approaches. In addition, there was some ambiguity about whether these courses met the criterion of requiring 10 pages of writing or intellectual work of equivalent effort. There may need to be more clarity related to this criterion for the QI requirement.

Experiential Education (EE)

Syllabi from 9 courses were examined. A course may fulfill this requirement if it offers any of the following types of experiences: Undergraduate research, Approved service learning, Substantial field trip or fieldwork components, Internships or experiential independent studies, Direct and sustained engagement in a creative process, or Approved Study Abroad. The sample did not include any Study Abroad courses; we believe that, if a course is approved for Study Abroad, it will fulfill the criteria for this requirement. The sample also did not include any courses that focused on a creative process; however, there are a number of Art, Drama, and Music courses approved to fulfill this requirement, so we do not anticipate any capacity issues for this aspect of the requirement.

There were some issues of clarity that arose with specific approaches to this requirement. For service learning, the number of required service hours was often not specified, and whether/how the service met specified community needs was never described. For courses providing fieldwork, it was never clear that a wide range of subject matter was covered. For internships, the number of work hours and method of evaluation were not specified in some syllabi, and it was rarely clear that the student

would be working with a faculty supervisor as well as a site supervisor. The criteria for these approaches to this requirement should be clarified.

US Diversity (US)

Syllabi from 9 courses were examined. In general, these courses met the spirit and the letter of this requirement. The groups most often addressed in these courses were African Americans and Native Americans, but a variety of other groups were also included. At least two groups or subcultures were covered in all but one of the courses. The aspects of diversity (other than race/ethnicity) most often covered were gender, religion, region, and sexual orientation. We did have some difficulty in telling, from the syllabus, whether these courses met the criterion of being reasonably balanced and well integrated in its treatment of the groups/aspects of diversity studied; this criterion should be clarified and faculty should be encouraged to address it in their syllabi. These courses also failed to uniformly meet the criterion of requiring at least 10 pages of writing or equivalent intellectual effort.

The North Atlantic World (NA)

Syllabi from 13 courses were examined. With very few exceptions, they met the spirit and the letter of this requirement. The most common countries covered were the USA, England, Italy/Rome, and France/Paris.

Beyond the North Atlantic (BN)

Syllabi from 10 courses were reviewed. With the exception of one course, it was clear that the course content was focused on regions of the world outside the North Atlantic. For three of the courses, it was not clear that they met the criterion of requiring 10 pages of writing.

The World Before 1750 (WB)

Syllabi from 11 courses were reviewed. With very few exceptions it was clear that the course content was focused on human beliefs, practices, or institutions pre-1750 and that the content was historically-oriented. In addition, they uniformly help students to attain a broader and deeper understanding of pre-modern history and insight into the ways in which events and processes occurring hundreds or thousands of years ago continue to affect us today. Four of the 11 courses did not meet the criterion of requiring 10 pages of writing.

Global Issues (GL)

Syllabi from 10 courses were reviewed. For almost all the courses, the content focused on the human dimension and on transnational connections/dynamics. Most of the courses met the criterion requiring 10 pages of writing, but a few did not.

Recommendations for changes related to the Making Connections curriculum: Through the Subcommittee's discussions, review of the courses available for fulfilling Connections requirements, and review of a sample of syllabi, we arrived at several recommendations. These recommendations and a brief rationale for each are presented here.

☞ *Limit the number of General Education requirements that can be fulfilled by a single course.*

This issue was not formally raised in our Subcommittee charge, but we believe that allowing one course to fulfill 4-5 Connections requirements is excessive. We recommend that each course be allowed to fulfill no more than 2 General Education requirements.

☞ *Clarify the criteria and rationale for (1) 10 pages of writing and (2) a final exam during final exam week. Enforce the criterion for 10 pages of writing or equivalent intellectual effort, or drop it.*

Any course fulfilling a General Education requirement (with a few exceptions) are expected to require 10 pages of writing or an equivalent intellectual effort and give a final exam during final exam week. There were a number of courses included in our review sample that did not meet these criteria, but otherwise seem to fulfill the criteria related to a particular Connections requirement. Before making an effort to enforce these general criteria more uniformly, they should be re-evaluated in terms of their rationale and their relationship to each other.

☞ *Encourage faculty to clearly describe the amount of writing required in a course and the topics covered on the course schedule.*

The syllabi reviewed varied widely in terms of the level of detail and clarity of description of the relevant courses. Best practices for syllabus writing should be developed and faculty should be encouraged to adopt them.

☞ *Enforce the Communication Intensive criterion related to opportunities for revision of writing/ speaking assignments.*

The criterion related to revision of writing/speaking assignments is an important aspect of developing one's communication skills. Our syllabus review indicated that it is not being enforced in the current CI courses. It should be enforced in current and future courses that fulfill this requirement.

It is current practice to accept Advanced Placement (AP) credits in BIOL 101 and 101L as fulfilling this requirement because those UNC courses fulfill it; we recommend changing this practice, since there is no control on the amount of writing required to achieve those AP credits. In addition, we recommend that all senior theses and honors theses be included in the list of courses fulfilling this requirement, since they do accomplish the goals of this requirement.

☞ *Clarify the definition of intellectual effort equivalent to 10 pages of writing for the Quantitative Intensive requirement.*

Because most of the courses that fulfill this requirement are math courses, few of them require large amounts of writing. However, it was relatively difficult for Subcommittee members to evaluate whether the assignments in the QI courses required an equivalent amount of intellectual effort. This problem can be overcome if the assignments are described in a bit more detail.

☞ *Encourage faculty to explicitly describe how their courses meet the criteria for the various approaches to meeting the Experiential Education requirement.*

As noted above, some of the criteria for the various approaches to meeting this requirement were rarely address in the syllabi examined. As with the more general recommendation above, best practices syllabus writing specific to the EE requirement should be developed and faculty should be encouraged to adopt them.

☞ *Clarify the US Diversity criterion for a course to be reasonably balanced and well integrated in its treatment of the groups/ aspects of diversity studied.*

From the syllabi examined, we could not determine if this criterion was being met. If it is to be enforced, it must be clarified.

☞ *Formally drop the Foreign Language Intensive requirement from the curriculum.*

As in the past, the resources needed to require a fourth level of a foreign language are not available, and additional resources are not expected in the near future. Since this requirement is not feasible, we recommend that it be dropped.

Attachment A. Summary of the Connections Requirements

Foundational Connections

All students must successfully complete one **Communication Intensive** course, preferably in a major or minor area of concentration. Communication Intensive courses must integrate writing and speaking into the subject matter in evident and important ways.

All students must successfully complete a **Quantitative Intensive** course, preferably in a major or minor area of concentration. The purpose of the requirement is to acquaint students with the ways in which quantitative reasoning and methods are applied in a specific field. Students may satisfy the requirement, however, by taking a second Quantitative Reasoning course. A substantial component (roughly half) of any Quantitative Intensive course will involve some of the following: using quantitative methods to model and solve problems, using numerical reasoning; collecting and interpreting quantitative data, mathematical analysis, formal logic and proofs, etc.

Spatial and Cultural Connections

Experiential Education: All students must successfully complete one course or program of study for academic credit in one of the following five categories, each of which invites the development and application of academic knowledge, skills, and expertise within the context of real-life situations and experiences:

- Service Learning
- Fieldwork
- Sustained and mentored research
- Internship
- Study Abroad
- Direct and sustained engagement in a creative process the results of which are shared with an audience, such as the planning of an art exhibit, a dramatic or musical performance, or the wide circulation (or publication) of one's poetry or prose.

U.S. Diversity: All students must successfully complete a course that systematically explores the perspectives/experiences of at least two US groups or subcultures (or important groups within these larger communities). Such groups might include African-Americans, Asian-Americans, European-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, or distinct subcultures within these broad categories. Courses that address in systematic fashion other aspects of diversity such as age, class, gender, sexuality, region, or religion may also satisfy the US Diversity requirement.

The North Atlantic World: All students must successfully complete one course that addresses the history, geography, culture, or society of the world that they themselves inhabit, broadly defined as the North Atlantic (i.e., North America, including Native American cultures, and/or Western Europe.)

Beyond the North Atlantic: All students must successfully complete one course that addresses the history, geography, culture, or society of one or more regions geographically distant from the United States, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific.

The World Before 1750: All students must successfully complete one course that familiarizes them with the distant origins of the world in which they live, since pre-modern periods and places (i.e., the world before 1750) influenced the shape of contemporary civilizations in ways both subtle and profound.

Global Issues: All students must successfully complete a course that provides knowledge and understanding of transnational and transregional forces—economic, cultural, political, demographic, military, biological, etc.—that have shaped and continue to shape the global experience.

Attachment B. Data Collection Methods Supporting the Subcommittee’s Work

Overview of Courses Fulfilling General Education Requirements

The Subcommittee was provided with a list of all the courses that fulfill any of the General Education requirements (Foundations, Approaches, Connections, other). This listing was used in two ways: as the basis for selecting a sample of courses for detailed syllabus review, and as a means of investigating overlap across requirements. Some of the important aspects of this data set are summarized here:

Courses fulfilling any General Education Requirements	2935
Courses fulfilling both Connections and Approaches requirements	1490
Courses fulfilling any Connections requirement	1920
Courses fulfilling multiple Connections requirements	
Fulfilling 4 requirements	1
Fulfilling 3 requirements	53
Fulfilling 2 requirements	561
Courses fulfilling each of the Connections requirements	
Communication Intensive (CI)	253
Quantitative Intensive (QI)	136
Experiential Education (EE)	215 (not counting Study Abroad)
US Diversity (US)	160
The North Atlantic World (NA)	798
Beyond the North Atlantic World (BN)	440
The World Before 1750 (WB)	317
Global Issues (GL)	306

Syllabus Review

The primary data collection effort was a review of syllabi from courses approved as fulfilling Connections requirements. The method for selecting the sample of courses/syllabi, and the rubrics used to evaluate those syllabi are described here.

The sample of courses was initially selected by Barbara Wildemuth and Nick Siedentop. It is a purposively selected sample. For each Connections requirement, they reviewed the courses fulfilling that requirement that had been offered during the past two years. From that sampling frame, they selected courses that varied in size (i.e., number of students having taken the course in the last two years), were distributed across a variety of departments and disciplines, and varied on their likelihood of being closely aligned with the requirement.

Fifty-five courses were included in the initial sample. Because some of the courses fulfill multiple requirements, this sample includes at least 10 courses for each of the Connections requirements. During the syllabus review, we were not able to obtain the syllabus for one course in the sample (AMST 394) and so were not able to include it in the sample reviewed. Because it fulfills multiple Connections requirements (CI, EE, NA, and US), in addition to one other general education requirement (SS), it was lost from several of the specific subsamples of our review.

A rubric for evaluating the syllabi was developed for each of the Connections requirements. All of the syllabi were evaluated in relation to the amount of writing required (number of pages and type of writing

assignment) and whether the course required a final exam during finals week, since these are characteristics of all general education requirements. In addition, the courses were evaluated in relation to the following rubrics:

Communication Intensive (CI)

- Whether writing/speaking accounted for at least 20% of the course grade
- Whether the emphasis in the writing/speaking assignments was on content, as well as process
- Whether students had the opportunity to revise written/spoken assignments

Quantitative Intensive (QI)

- Whether the course included “some” of one or more of the following aspects:
Quantitative methods to model and solve problems, including the development and implementation of computational algorithms
Numerical reasoning above the level of basic algebra and trigonometry
Collecting and interpreting quantitative data
Constructing logically sound arguments and recognizing fallacies by using quantitative information, mathematical analysis, formal logic, and proofs
Expressing ideas and concepts from the mathematical sciences orally and in writing
Connecting the role of the mathematical sciences to cultural change, to other sciences, and to the arts and humanities

Experiential Education (EE)

- Determination of which type of experiential education was offered by the course
- For undergraduate research: whether sustained, mentored research experience was offered for academic credit
- For a course with a substantial field trip or fieldwork component: the number of hours of off-campus work required, whether the fieldwork incorporates a wide range of subject matter, and whether the student can investigate original problems or apply professional techniques
- For an internship or experiential independent study: whether it was administered by an academic unit, the number of hours of service or work required, and whether the student works with a faculty advisor from the sponsoring unit
- For an approved Study Abroad program: whether it had been approved (by the Study Abroad Office or the Summer School)
- For direct and sustained engagement in a creative process: whether it coincides with a literary, musical, dramatic, or studio arts class; whether it is supervised by a faculty member; whether it is connected with a community art program or art used for community purposes; whether it requires at least 30 hours of work; and whether it culminates in public programming

U.S. Diversity (US)

- Whether the course explores the perspectives/experiences of at least two US groups or subcultures (and which groups or subcultures)
- Whether the course addresses other aspects of diversity such as age, class, gender, sexuality, region, or religion (and which aspects)
- Whether the course is reasonably balanced and well integrated in its treatment of the groups/aspects of diversity studied

The North Atlantic World (NA)

- Whether at least 2/3 of the course content focuses on the North Atlantic world (in terms of assigned readings and number of class sessions)

- Which countries/regions are included in the course content

Beyond the North Atlantic (BN)

- Whether at least 2/3 of the course content is focused on a society or region outside North America and Western Europe (i.e., Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe, or the Pacific (in terms of assigned readings and number of class sessions)

The World Before 1750 (WB)

- Whether at least 2/3 of the course content focused on human beliefs, practices, or institutions pre-1750 (in terms of assigned readings and number of class sessions)
- Whether the content was historically-oriented, i.e., deals with change over time or is situated within a cultural, political, or social context (in terms of assigned readings and number of class sessions)
- Whether the course helps students to attain a broader and deeper understanding of pre-modern history and insight into the ways in which events and processes occurring hundreds or thousands of years ago continue to affect us today

Global Issues (GL)

- Whether at least half of the course content focused on human dimensions (perspectives and behaviors of people), rather than natural phenomena or technology (in terms of assigned readings and number of class sessions)
- Whether at least 2/3 of the course content focused on transnational connections between two or more nations or the transnational dynamics of global forces (in terms of assigned readings and number of class sessions)

These rubrics were administered as a Web survey, developed by Abigail Panter on behalf of the subcommittee. Two subcommittee members evaluated each syllabus in relation to each Connections requirement for which it had been sampled.

The results of the individual evaluations were compiled by Barbara Wildemuth. There were very few instances of disagreement between the two evaluators; in most of those cases, the discrepancies were explained by the comments accompanying the evaluations. A detailed report of the results of the syllabus review is included as Attachment C.

Attachment C. Detailed Results from the Syllabus Review

Results from the syllabus review for each Connections requirement are reported here. The courses included in the sample are listed, and the findings are reported in relation to the rubrics used for the evaluations.

Communication Intensive (CI)

Sample of syllabi reviewed: n=9

- AFRI 050 Kings, Presidents, Generals (CI, BN)
- ART 283 Picturing Paris (CI, VP, NA)
- COMM 113 Public Speaking (CI)
- COMP 380 Computers and Society (CI, PH)
- DRAM 281 Theatre Hist/Lit I (CI, VP, NA, WB)
- ENGL 121 Brit Lit, 19th/Early 20th (CI, LA, NA)
- HIST 395 US Undergrad Seminar (CI, EE)
- JOMC 153 News Writing (CI)
- POLI 265 Feminism Pol Theory (CI, PH, NA)

Findings:

- Percent of grade on writing/speaking (20% minimum): mean = 66%, from 30% to 100%
- Emphasis on content, as well as process, in writing/speaking assignments: all 9 courses met this criterion
- Opportunity for revision of written/spoken assignments: 3 courses met this criterion; on POLI 265 the raters disagreed (y/n), 6 courses either did not meet this criterion or the evaluators could not tell whether the course met the criterion
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 8 courses met this criterion; COMM 113 requires 4 speeches and 1 paper
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: 7 courses met this criterion (including 3 with a final paper due in exam period); 1 course was a First Year Seminar; for the others, it was not clear that this criterion was met (one had exams, but the dates were not specified; the other had a final exam on the last day of class)

Quantitative Intensive (QI)

Sample of syllabi reviews: n=10

- BIOL 201 Ecology and Evolution (PL, QI)
- COMP 455 Models of Languages and Computation (QI)
- ECON 400 Elementary Statistics (QI)
- EXSS 273 Research in EXSS (QI)
- JOMC 279 AD-PR Research (QI)
- MATH 058 FYS Math and Art (QI)
- MUSC 131 Theory - Musician I (VP, QI)
- PHYS 104 General Physics I (PX, QI)
- PHYS 117 Electromagnetism & Optics (PX, QI)
- PSYC 210 Statistical Principles of PSYC Research (QI)

Findings:

- To fulfill this requirement, a course must contain “some” of several possibilities for its content. A summary of which of the evaluated courses contained which of the types of content is presented in the table below, with details following the table.

Summary of content by course (i.e., two raters agree it has content):

	Quant	Num Reas	Data	Logic	Express	Connect
BIOL 201	Y		Y			
COMP 455						
ECON 400	Y	Y				
EXSS 273	Y		Y			Y
JOMC 279			Y			Y
MATH 58					Y	Y
MUSC 131						
PHYS 104		Y	Y			
PHYS 117						
PSYC 210	Y		Y			Y

- Quantitative methods to model and solve problems, including the development and implementation of computational algorithms: 4 courses had this content; there were 6 courses where at least one rater could not tell
- Numerical reasoning above the level of basic algebra and trigonometry: ECON 400 met this criterion; there were 9 courses where at least one rater could not tell
- Collecting and interpreting quantitative data: 4 courses met this criterion; there were 5 courses where at least one rater couldn't tell; MATH 58 did not meet this criterion
- Constructing logically sound arguments and recognizing fallacies by using quantitative information, mathematical analysis, formal logic, and proofs: No courses met this criterion; there were 5 courses where one rater said yes and one said they couldn't tell; there were 4 courses where neither rater could tell there was 1 course where one rater said no and one said they couldn't tell
- Expressing ideas and concepts from the mathematical sciences orally and in writing: MATH 58 met this criterion; there were 2 courses where one rater said yes and one said they couldn't tell; there were 4 courses where neither rater could tell; there were 3 courses where one rater said no and one said the course met the criterion or they couldn't tell; PHYS 104 did not meet this criterion
- Connecting the role of the mathematical sciences to cultural change, to other sciences, and to the arts and humanities: 4 courses met this criterion; there were 3 courses where one rater said yes and one said they couldn't tell (including 1 course with only one rater); there were 2 courses where neither rater could tell; for MUSC 131, one rater said the course did not meet the criterion and one said they couldn't tell
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 3 courses met this criterion or required equivalent intellectual effort; there were 7 courses where the raters did not agree
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: 9 courses met this criterion; the other is a First Year Seminar

Experiential Education (EE)

Sample of syllabi reviewed: n=9

- AFAM 560 Harlem Renaissance (HS, EE)
- CHEM 395 Research in Chemistry for Undergraduates (EE)
- ECON 328 Internship in Entrepreneurship (EE)

- EDUC 415 Culture, Society, and Teaching (EE)
- HIST 395 US Undergraduate Seminar (CI, EE)
- NURS 590 NRSG Care Adults II (EE)
- POLI 206 Ethics, Morality, Individual Liberty, and the Law (PH, EE, US, NA)
- PSYC 502 PSYC Adulthood Age (SS, EE)
- SOCI 423 Sociology of Education (SS, EE)

Findings:

- To fulfill this requirement, a course must provide an “experience” in one or more of several possible ways. The following table summarizes the way in which this sample of courses meets the EE requirement.

Summary of type(s) of experiences provided:

	UG Res	Serv Lrn	Fieldwork	Internship	Creative	Abroad
AFAM 560	Y					
CHEM 395	Y					
ECON 328		Y		Y		
EDUC 415			Y	Y		
HIST 395	Y					
NURS 590				Y		
POLI 206		Y	Y		?	
PSYC 502		Y				
SOCI 423		Y				

- Undergraduate research: AFAM 560, CHEM 395, HIST 395; each requires a semester-long research project culminating in a paper of 10 pages or more
- Approved service learning: ECON 328, POLI 206, PSYC 502, SOCI 423
Only 2 courses specified the number of service hours required; 1 required 30 hours, the other 45-75 hours
None of the syllabi specified whether the service meets community-specified needs
For all 4 courses, service work was off-campus
- Courses with substantial field trip or fieldwork components: EDUC 415, POLI 206
1 course required 30 hours of fieldwork, the other 6 hours in field trips
There was no indication that the fieldwork in either course incorporated a wide range of subject matter
For both courses, students could investigate original problems or apply professional techniques
- Internships or experiential independent studies: ECON 328, EDUC 415, NURS 590
1 course required 200 hours of internship; the number of hours required for the other 2 courses was not specified
All 3 courses were administered by academic units (an artifact of our sampling frame)
In none of them was it clear whether the student was working with a faculty advisor from the sponsoring unit
- Direct and sustained engagement in a creative process: none of the courses in the sample, though POLI 206 did require the development of a creative work as the final deliverable
- Approved Study Abroad Program: none of the courses in the sample (an artifact of our sampling frame)

US Diversity (US)

Sample of syllabi reviewed: n=9

- AFAM 050 Defining Blackness (SS, US)
- AMST 336 Native Americans in Film (VP, US, NA)
- HIST 127 American History to 1865 (HS, US, NA)
- MUSC 143 Intro to Rock Music (VP, US, NA)
- POLI 206 Ethics, Morality, Individual Liberty, and the Law (PH, EE, US, NA)
- RELI 140 Religion in America (HS, US, NA)
- SOCI 122 Race and Ethnic Relations (SS, US)
- WMST 140 Intro to Gay/Lesbian Literature (LA, US)
- WMST 297 Women's Spirituality (LA, US, GL)

Findings:

- Explores the perspectives/experiences of at least two US groups of subcultures: 6 courses met this criterion; for 1 course, the raters couldn't tell; for 1 course, the raters disagreed; WMST 140 did not meet this criterion
Groups covered (number of courses):
 - African Americans: 5
 - Native Americans: 4
 - Several racial groups: 1
 - Sexual orientation: 2
 - Gender: 1
 - Jews: 2
 - Catholics, Protestants, other Christian groups: 1
 - Muslims: 1
- Addresses other aspects of diversity such as age, class, gender, sexuality, region, or religion: 6 courses met this criterion; for 3 courses, one rater couldn't tell
Aspects covered (number of courses):
 - Gender: 7
 - Region: 3
 - Multi-racial identity: 1
 - Immigration/emigration: 1
 - Religion: 5
 - Class: 2
 - Sexual orientation: 3
 - Age: 1
- The course is reasonably balanced and well integrated in its treatment of the groups/aspects of diversity studied: No evaluator responses for 6 courses; POLI 206 was described as multidisciplinary; WMST 140 was described as covering "historical, political, social, and artistic" aspects; WMST 297 was described as covering a broad range of literature over a long period of time
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 4 courses met this criterion; for 3 courses, the raters disagreed (no and equivalent); 2 courses did not meet this criterion
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: 8 courses met this criterion; the other was a First Year Seminar

The North Atlantic World (NA)

Sample of syllabi reviews: n=13

- AMST 336 Native Americans in Film (VP, NA, US)
- ART 283 Picturing Paris (VP, CI, NA)
- CLAR 120 Ancient Cities (HS, NA, WB, GL)
- CMPL 121 Romancing the World (LA, NA, WB)
- DRAM 281 Theatre History/Literature I (VP, CI, NA, WB)
- ENGL 121 British Literature 19th/early 20th century (LA, CI, NA)
- ENGL 320 Chaucer (LA, NA, WB)
- HIST 127 American History to 1865 (HS, NA, US)
- MUSC 143 Intro to Rock Music (VP, NA, US)
- MUSC 282 Bach and Handel (NA, WB)
- POLI 206 Ethics, Morality, Individual Liberty, and the Law (PH, EE, NA, US)
- POLI 265 Feminism Political Theory (PH, CI, NA)
- RELI 140 Religion in America (HS, NA, US)

Findings:

- At least 2/3 of content focused on North Atlantic World: 13 courses yes
Proportion of reading: mean = 98%; none lower than 68%
Proportion of class sessions: 97%; one lower than 68%
Countries covered:
 - USA: 6
 - England: 5
 - Italy/Rome: 4
 - France/Paris: 3
 - Greece: 3
 - Spain: 2
 - Germany: 1
 - Egypt: 1
 - China: 1
 - Japan: 1
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 10 courses met this criterion or require equivalent intellectual effort; for 1 course, the raters disagreed; 2 courses did not meet this criterion
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: 12 courses met this criterion; for POLI 265, the raters disagreed

Beyond the North Atlantic (BN)

Sample of syllabi reviewed: n=10

- AFRI 050 Kings, Presidents, Generals, CI, BN
- ASIA 150 Asia: An Introduction, SS, BN, GL
- CHIN 252 Chinese Culture, LA, WB, BN
- CLAR 242 Archaeology of Egypt, HS, WB, BN
- HIST 140 The World Since 1945, HS, BN, GL
- HIST 142 Latin American Colonia Rule, HS, WB, BN, GL
- JAPN 162 Japanese Pop Culture, VP, BN
- POLI 130 Introduction to Comparative Politics, SS, BN, GL

- RELI 106 Early Judaism, HS, WB, BN
- SPAN 344 Mexico, Central American, and the Andean Region, BN

Findings:

- 2/3 of content focused on this region: 9 courses met this criterion; the raters disagreed in their evaluation of POLI 130
 - Proportion of reading: mean = 93%; one rater (each) had concerns about AFRI 50 (34%) and POLI 130 (60%)
 - Proportion of class sessions: 95%; one rater had concerns about POLI 130 (60%)
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 5 courses met this criterion; 2 courses require equivalent intellectual labor; the raters disagreed on 2 courses; POLI 130 did not meet this criterion
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: 7 courses met this criterion; 2 courses had final papers/projects; for RELI 106, the raters disagreed

The World Before 1750 (WB)

Sample of syllabi reviewed: n=11

- ANTH 151 Food and Culture (HS, WB)
- CHIN 252 Chinese Culture (LA, WB, BN)
- CLAR 120 Ancient Cities (HS, NA, WB, GL)
- CLAR 242 ARCH of Egypt (HS, WB, BN)
- CMPL 121 Romancing the World (LA, NA, WB)
- DRAM 281 Theatre Hist/Lit I (VP, CI, NA, WB)
- ENGL 320 Chaucer (LA, NA, WB)
- HIST 142 Latin American Under Colonial Rule (HS, WB, BN, GL)
- ITAL 241 Italian Renaissance Literature in Translation (LA, WB)
- MUSC 282 Bach and Handel (NA, WB)
- RELI 106 Early Judaism (HS, WB, BN)

Findings:

- At least 2/3 of course content focused on human beliefs, practices, or institutions pre-1750: 10 courses met this criterion; for ANTH 151, the raters couldn't tell
 - Proportion of reading: mean = 95% (for ANTH 151, one rater said 50%)
 - Proportion of class sessions: mean = 95% (for ANTH 151, one rater said 50%)
- Content historically-oriented, i.e., deals with change over time or is situated within a cultural, political, or social context: 9 courses met this criterion; for 2 courses, one rater said the course met the criterion and the other rater couldn't tell
 - Proportion of reading: mean = 98% (ANTH 151 60% from one of the raters; CMPL 121 one rater couldn't tell)
 - Proportion of class sessions: 98% (ANTH 151 60% from one of the raters; CMPL 121 one rater couldn't tell)
- Helps students to attain a broader and deeper understanding of pre-modern history and insight into the ways in which events and processes occurring hundreds or thousands of years ago continue to affect us today: 10 courses met this criterion; for ANTH 151, the raters couldn't tell
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 7 courses met this criterion, 4 courses did not
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: all 11 courses met this criterion

Global Issues (GL)

Sample of syllabi reviewed: n=10

- ASIA 150 Asia: An Introduction (SS, BN, GL)
- BUSI 610 Global Business (GL)
- CLAR 120 Ancient Cities (HS, NA, WB, GL)
- ENGL 143 Film and Culture (VP, GL)
- GEOG 120 World Regional Geography (SS, GL)
- HIST 140 The World Since 1945 (HS, BN, GL)
- HIST 142 Latin America under Colonial Rule (HS, WB, BN, GL)
- INTS 210 Global Issues (GL)
- POLI 130 Introduction to Comparative Politics (SS, BN, GL)
- WMST 297 Women's Spirituality (LA, US, GL)

Findings:

- At least half of course content focuses on human dimension: 9 courses met this criterion; raters couldn't tell for INTS 210
 - Proportion of reading: mean = 92% (none below 60%)
 - Proportion of class sessions: mean = 91% (none below 60%; POLI 130 could not be assessed because syllabus did not include class schedule)
- At least 2/3 of course content focuses on transnational connections between two or more nations or the transnational dynamics of global forces: 8 courses met this criterion; raters disagreed on POLI 130; ENGL 143 did not meet this criterion
 - Proportion of reading: mean = 90% among those meeting the criterion (none below 70%)
 - Proportion of class sessions: mean = 92% among those meeting the criterion (none below 70%)
- Requires at least 10 pages of writing: 7 courses met this criterion; for 1 course, the raters disagreed; 2 courses did not meet this criterion
- Requires a final exam during the exam period: all 10 courses met this criterion