

Adopted Definitions of the General Education Distributive Areas

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The Sciences defined at WCU

I. General Education Goals

The **SCIENCES** best fulfill goal #2 (ability to employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods) and goal #3 (ability to think critically and analytically).

II. Definition

For the purposes of this general education program, “science” courses have students gather and analyze quantitative data. They will learn to use quantitative methods to support or refute a hypothesis, and gain experience with graphical or tabular presentations of quantitative information.

In addition, in science courses, students learn the use of basic methods and thought processes typical of natural/physical science in general and of the particular discipline. They will learn the role of theory and the importance of falsifiability in scientific theory, to draw plausible inferences from observations, and to distinguish between science and pseudoscience.

III. Criteria

Approved “science” courses should have the content of the course directed largely toward the study of the natural or physical world using the methods of science. This does not preclude the use of themes from related technical areas, such as nutrition, or the environment. The course must have significant coverage of scientific evidence for the underlying theories. The evaluation of students must require demonstration of quantitative reasoning, and scientific analytical thinking.

At least one course will have a laboratory component in which students will participate about once a week for a minimum of 10 hours of activities. The format will ensure that students attend and make observations (or, in the case of disabilities, to participate in the accommodated version). In some laboratory activities, students will be required to use quantitative methods to analyze data gathered in the laboratory.

Humanities defined at WCU

I. General Education Goals

The **HUMANITIES** best fulfill goals #3 (ability to think analytically and critically); #4 (ability to demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings and perspectives of a person train in the liberal arts tradition); and #6 (ability to make informed decisions and ethical choices).

II. Definition

For the purposes of this general education program, “humanities” courses are concerned with exploring and defining that which is understood to be quintessentially “human”, including the study of language, thought, and other creative expression as they reflect and interpret human values, beliefs, and traditions.

Categories of course include:

- A. Introductions to basic material and methods in the humanities
- B. Introduction to subfields or groups of materials in the humanities
- C. Literature and culture courses, whether taught in English or in a foreign language.

III. Criteria

Approved ‘humanities’ courses should study language, texts, thought and culture; their definition, interpretation, and historical development; and their reflection of human values, beliefs, and traditions. Courses in a variety of disciplines which explicate the underlying assumptions, methods of study, practices, theories, and discussions appropriate to those disciplines may be approved as “humanities”.

Behavioral and Social Sciences defined at WCU

I. General Education Goals

The **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES** best fulfill goals 2 (employ quantitative analysis and mathematical methods, 3 (think critically and analytically) and 4 (demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal arts tradition).

II. Definition

For the purposes of this general education program, “behavioral and social science” courses are courses that examine the patterns and processes of human activities.

III. Criteria

Criteria for determining whether a course should be categorized as a behavioral or social science course are:

- A. The course must employ a systematic method of inquiry into human behavior.
- B. The course should give students an understanding of the systems that humans create.
- C. The course should help students critically process the various forces at work in modern society.
- D. Regardless of the department in which it is located, the course should expose students to the perspectives of one or more of the following disciplines: anthropology, economics, human geography, political science, psychology, and or/sociology.

The Arts defined at WCU

I. General Education Goals

The **ARTS** best fulfill goals #1 (ability to communicate effectively), #3 (ability to think analytically and critically); and #4 (ability to demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person trained in the liberal arts tradition).

II. Definition

Arts courses concentrate on the visual and performing arts. Using historical context and applicable theory, arts courses examine form and function inherent in the creative process.

IV. Criteria

Approved “arts” courses must emphasize the cognitive skills of critical thought, creativity, analysis, and synthesis that are central to a foundation in general education. Courses may be theoretical or historical and will be supported by an applied component. Courses may be comparative or integrative and should emphasize interrelationships within the arts and connections to the humanities. Courses that are purely craft will not fulfill this requirement.