

## ASCC Themes 1 Subcommittee

### Approved Minutes

Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

10:00-11:30 AM

CarmenZoom

**Attendees:** Andridge, Daly, Downing, Lower, Nagar, Neff, Søland, Steele, Vaessin, Vankeerbergen

### Agenda

1. Approval of 2-24-25 minutes
  - a. Andridge, Søland; unanimously approved.
2. Russian 3360 (new course requesting GEN Theme Lived Environments)
  - a. Theme Advisory Group: Lived Environments
    - i. Comment: The reviewing faculty express strong enthusiasm for the focus and scope of this course. Given their background in the natural sciences, they recognize potential for future collaborative efforts that embrace ideas such as ecological uncertainty, global environmental comparisons, contemporary environmental activism, and modern Russian environmental policies. Additionally, the reviewing faculty wish to highlight that there is potential for a companion course that explores how these arts have engaged with state-driven transformations of Russia's natural environment.
    - ii. Unanimously approved with one comment.
  - b. Themes Subcommittee
    - i. Comment: Given the substantial writing requirements of the course, it may be beneficial to provide additional resources or support for students who may not have had previous writing instruction.
    - ii. **Contingency:** The reviewing faculty note that the reflection assignment is integrated into the final project, yet the specific weight of the assignment within the overall grading structure is unclear. Since this assignment is tied to the fulfillment of Theme ELO 2.2, the reviewing faculty request that the syllabus outline its contribution to the final grade. Additionally, it should be clarified that completion of the reflection assignment is mandatory even if it does not carry substantial weight individually. [Syllabus p. 1, 9]
    - iii. **Recommendation:** The reviewing faculty note that the department has replaced certain language in GEN Theme Goal 1 with the Theme name, "Lived Environments." The reviewing faculty recommend that the department retain the original language of the goals and Expected Learning Outcomes as they appear on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#). [Syllabus p. 4]
    - iv. Birgitte, Andridge; unanimously approved with one comment, **one contingency**, and *one recommendation*.

3. Biology 2750 (new course requesting GEN Theme Lived Environments) (return)

a. Theme Advisory Group: Lived Environments

- i. *Recommendation:* While the course currently focuses on the cultural environment, thus fulfilling the Lived Environments Goals, the reviewing faculty recommend improving the fulfillment of ELO 3.2 by engaging with other types of environments (e.g., agricultural, built, economic, intellectual, natural).
- ii. *Recommendation:* The reviewing faculty recommend that the Center for Life Science Education consider how they can strengthen the course's fulfillment of ELO 4.1 by incorporating historical examples of environmental change (such as deforestation, industrialization, and urban expansion), cultivating deeper discussions on how environmental crises have shaped public policy and social movements.
- iii. *Recommendation:* The reviewing faculty encourage the Center to consider enriching the fulfillment of ELO 4.3 by adding diverse beliefs about human-environment interactions in the course to provide students with a broader analytical framework, including comparative perspectives on how biology and the public realm interact in different countries.
- iv. Unanimously approved with *three recommendations*.

b. Themes Subcommittee

- i. The reviewing faculty appreciate the Center's efforts in revising this course to fit into the Lived Environments Theme. They offer the friendly advice to the CLSE that submitting the revisions as soon as possible would help ensure that the proposal is returned to the same group of faculty on the Themes Subcommittee for continuity in feedback.
- ii. The reviewing faculty note that the course content appears to conflate lived environments, social environments, and cultural environments. They encourage the CLSE to provide students with a clearer distinction between these concepts to ensure that they fully understand the unique characteristics and interconnections of each.
- iii. The reviewing faculty are concerned with the overall level and rigor of the course. While it is understandable that the course, as a General Education course, may not delve into highly specialized content, the reviewing faculty want to ensure that it is taught at a more in-depth level appropriate for the Themes. Many elements of the course seem foundational and suited to introductory material (e.g., assignments based on tasks like submitting a journal article), which may be too basic for this stage. The reviewing faculty request that the assignments and assessments be adjusted to reflect the expectations of advanced work, ensuring they are appropriately challenging within the discipline. The reviewing faculty ask that the unit reach out to Harald Vaessin ([vaessin.1@osu.edu](mailto:vaessin.1@osu.edu)) to schedule a meeting to discuss what an advanced yet accessible Themes course should entail.

- iv. The reviewing faculty request that the connection between each week's material be made clearer. To meet the expectations of an advanced Themes course, it is crucial to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their ability to integrate various concepts. A final project or assignment that ties the course together could serve this purpose effectively. While the reviewing faculty acknowledge that synthesis is possibly already embedded within the course, it is not clearly articulated in the syllabus. They request that this be highlighted to make the integration of knowledge more apparent to both students and the reviewing faculty.
  - v. The reviewing faculty note that the syllabus includes language in the Student Life Disability Services Statement that is not consistent with the approved verbiage. While this additional language is certainly relevant, the reviewing faculty ask that it be removed from under the heading of the university's statement on disability services. This content can be incorporated elsewhere in the syllabus, but it should not appear within the SLDS section. [Syllabus pp. 10-11]
  - vi. Declined to vote.
4. Educational Studies: Philosophy and History of Education 4245 (existing course requesting GEN Theme Health and Wellbeing) (return) FULLY APPROVED BY ASCC THEMES; ONLY NEEDS TAG REVIEW
- a. Comment: The reviewing faculty note that a review comment remains on page 6 of the syllabus and kindly remind the department to remove it.
  - b. *Recommendation*: The reviewing faculty note that the syllabus includes language in the Student Life Disability Services Statement that is not consistent with the approved verbiage. While this additional language is certainly relevant, the reviewing faculty ask that it be removed from under the heading of the university's statement on disability services. This content can be incorporated elsewhere in the syllabus, but it should not appear within the SLDS section. [Syllabus pp. 7-8]
  - c. *Recommendation*: The reviewing faculty recommend that the department ensure that the "Policy" hyperlink in the Religious Accommodations Statement is properly included and functional, as it links to information on religious observations. Please feel free to copy and paste the link into the statement directly from this feedback. Otherwise, the full statement with the link can be found in an easy to copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#). [Syllabus p. 9-10]
    - i. **(Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#))**
  - d. *Recommendation*: The reviewing faculty recommend that the department remove the reference to the university's Office of Diversity and Inclusion from the syllabus. Effective February 28, 2025, the university's Office of Diversity and Inclusion has been sunset. [Syllabus p. 9]
  - e. Unanimously approved with one comment and *three recommendations*.

5. WGSS 2326 (existing course previously approved for 100% DL; requesting GEN Theme Health and Wellbeing)
  - a. Theme Advisory Group: Health and Wellbeing
    - i. The reviewing faculty request that the alignment of this course with the Health and Wellbeing Theme be strengthened with a more robust integration of well-being concepts throughout the course design. This includes explicitly incorporating well-being into the learning outcomes, assessments (e.g., midterm project), and the content of Modules 3 and 4. Additionally, the reviewing faculty request that well-being be more directly reflected in the syllabus materials that students engage with, including the syllabus course description and the ELO explanations.
    - ii. The reviewing faculty request that it be made clearer in both the syllabus and the GE submission form how the midterm essay and final project contribute to achieving ELOs 3.1 and 3.2, particularly given that these assessments together account for 60% of the overall course grade.
    - iii. The reviewing faculty recommend that the department review the course syllabus and materials to ensure the use person-first language. For example, they recommend considering exchanging “addiction” for “substance use disorder” and “substance abuse” for “substance use”.
    - iv. Declined to vote.
  - b. Themes Subcommittee
    - i. Comment: Given the substantial writing requirements of the course, it may be beneficial to provide additional resources or support for students who may not have had previous writing instruction.
    - ii. *Recommendation*: The reviewing faculty are concerned with the workload of this course, particularly with the requirement of weekly comments on readings, which constitute 40% of the final grade. Requiring students to write responses limited to 150 words for each reading may limit their ability to provide meaningful insights across multiple texts. Perhaps instead of requiring submissions every week, it might be more effective to require a certain number of more in-depth submissions throughout the course. [Syllabus p. 4]
    - iii. *Recommendation*: The reviewing faculty recommend that students be given the option to request to complete the final project individually, as organizing and coordinating with peers for group work can be particularly challenging in an online class setting. [Syllabus p. 4]
    - iv. Andridge, Nagar; unanimously approved with one comment and *two recommendations*.
6. History 3030 (existing course with GEL Historical Studies & previously approved for 100% DL; requesting GEN Theme Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations)
  - a. Theme Advisory Group: Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations

- i. Comment: The reviewing faculty believe that this course aligns well with the TCT Theme, with its focus on the history of Ohio making it a valuable GE offering for our land-grant institution.
  - ii. **Contingency:** The reviewing faculty request that the assignments and activities in the syllabus include more explicit explanations of how they help students achieve the Theme specific ELOs (3.1-4.3) while engaging with the course content. Additionally, for the benefit of future instructors, the reviewing faculty ask that the course designer also add some brief, concrete details about assignments, activities, and assessment opportunities in the GE submission form with attention to ELO 3.1-4.3 (they note that the descriptions in ELO categories 1-2 are great models for categories 3-4).
  - iii. Unanimously approved with one comment and **one contingency**.
- b. Themes Subcommittee
  - i. **Contingency:** The reviewing faculty request that the syllabus state that completion of all assignments is required to pass the course. Given that the reflection papers carry a low percentage of the overall grade, it is important to ensure that students complete them in order to fulfill Theme ELO 2.2.
  - ii. **Contingency:** The reviewing faculty are unclear as to whether this course is synchronous online. Though the syllabus includes an attendance policy, it does not specify how lectures will be conducted. The reviewing faculty request that the department clarify whether the course is synchronous or asynchronous (indicating the lecture times and frequency if the former and removing the attendance policy on syllabus pp. 5-6 if the latter).
  - iii. **Contingency:** The reviewing faculty request that the department ensure that the reference to the [Office of Institutional Equity](#) in the religious accommodations statement is a hyperlink to the office's email. Additionally, the Subcommittee asks that the link below be added to the bottom of the religious accommodations statement, as it is a part of the required text. Please feel free to copy and paste these two links into the statement directly from the Subcommittee's feedback. Otherwise, the full statement with the links can be found in an easy to copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#).  
[Syllabus pp. 7-8]
    - 1. (Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#))
  - iv. **Recommendation:** The reviewing faculty note that the course relies on exams administered through Carmen and recommend that the department consider the potential impact of AI tools on the exam integrity. Perhaps incorporating a clear AI policy would help to ensure fair assessment practices.

- v. *Recommendation:* The reviewing faculty recommend that the department remove the reference to the OSU standard grading scale from the syllabus, as the university does not use a standard grading scale. [Syllabus p. 3]
- vi. *Recommendation:* The reviewing faculty recommend that the department use the most recent version of the university's diversity statement if they wish to keep it in the syllabus. The updated statement can be found in an easy to copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#). [Syllabus p. 7]
- vii. *Recommendation:* The reviewing faculty recommend that the department use the most recent version of the mental health statement if it wishes to keep the statement in the syllabus. The statement was updated to include the new Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number. The updated statement can be found in an easy to copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#). [Syllabus p. 7]
- viii. Nagar, Søland; unanimously approved with **three contingencies** and *four recommendations*.