

GE Theme course submission worksheet: Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations

Overview

Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program.

Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus.

The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of **this** Theme.

Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations)

In a sentence or two, explain how this class “fits’ within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

(enter text here)

The proposed upper-level course “Family, household and kinship in the Ancient World” focuses on the role and evolution of the family in Greco-Roman societies. Students explore, through primary sources and secondary scholarship, how Greek and Roman families dealt with a wide array of topics (child’s education, marriage, divorce, fertility, parental authority, but also slavery and child labor) and how views and ideas surrounding them were negotiated and transformed through the centuries. Moreover, students are encouraged to draw connections between ancient ideas and modern systems of belief, to recognize how notions and opinions evolve through time, and to look at contemporaneous issues as the result of ancient discussions and traditions.

Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those

outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing “readings” without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

Goal 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.	<p>This course helps students to further develop their critical and logical thinking skills through in-class analysis and discussions of primary sources, and through assessments.</p> <p>In class: through the analysis of primary sources and the help of guided discussion questions provided by the instructor, the students are encouraged to ask questions, consider alternative points of view and challenge their assumptions. For example, during the eight week, the students are exposed to several Roman legal cases which showcase a relative freedom experienced by Roman women, who could inherit, own property, run businesses, separate from their husbands without anyone’s permission. The students are often surprised to learn that Roman women enjoyed so many rights which were denied to women who lived before and after them. This issue underscores the importance of understanding specific socio-historical contexts, asking questions and reading the sources, instead of projecting preconceived ideas and opinions onto the past.</p> <p>Assessments: a considerable portion of the students’ final grade (20%) is based on attendance and participation, which does not mean being physically present, but coming to class having read, digested, and carefully considered the assigned readings, and ready to participate in discussion with their classmates.</p>
ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.	<p>Every week the students engage with secondary scholarships on the Greek and Roman family, often expressing different points of view and approaches to the study of the ancient world.</p> <p>In-class: students are encouraged to participate in the weekly discussion of contemporary secondary scholarship, sharing their opinions on the readings and answering questions posed by the instructor and fellow-classmates. For example, when we discuss the</p>

	<p>role of enslaved nannies in Roman society, the students will also read an article which analyses advertisements for the sale of enslaved Black women to work as nurses and nannies in the Antebellum period. Through the comparison of the same type of exploitation of female enslaved bodies in two vastly different cultures, the students are encouraged to pose questions about the pervasiveness of certain human attitudes and whether in modern societies female bodies have complete autonomy or not.</p> <p>Assessments: each student is asked to present (i.e. summarize and critique) two articles and to foster the in-class debate by posing thoughtful questions to their classmates.</p>
<p>ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.</p>	<p>This course presents a common institution (the family) but in a different social environment (ancient Greece and Rome), which allows the students to analyze something they are exceedingly familiar with through completely new and different lenses. This way, it is easier for the students to assess 1) how much foundational institutions have changed and 2) how we are still debating and perpetrating some of the same ideas in modern societies across the world.</p> <p>In-class: the instructor presents to the students specific compranda to underscore how certain ideas about gender roles and sexuality, for example, are still pervasive in modern society. In particular, the students are asked to compare the legislation passed by the emperor Augustus to encourage families to have more children with how similar incentives are used in modern countries to increase the number of citizens (which is discussed in week nine).</p>
<p>ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.</p>	<p>Students are invited to reflect and self-assess their progress.</p> <p>Assessments: at the end of each of the four modules, students are asked to write a short (400 words max.) essay in which they reflect on what they have learned from the assigned readings and in-class interactions with classmates. Students will choose to focus on something they learned, or to discuss an issue they now see differently, or to explore whether learning about the past is changing how the perceive similar ideas and approaches in the present.</p>

Goals and ELOs unique to Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations

Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO,

describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

GOAL 3: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

GOAL 4: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals’ experience within traditions and cultures.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
<p>ELO 3.1 Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.</p>	<p>Students analyze how gender roles and gendered performances have profoundly shaped Greco-Roman societies and still echo in modern social discourse.</p> <p>In-class: through primary and secondary sources, students learn how gender played a fundamental role in a person’s everyday life. From childhood, boys and girls were trained to fulfill different roles inside and outside the household. In week ten in particular, students will read primary and secondary sources on the education of male and female children in the Roman household and learn that, while Roman women were fairly educated, certain subject of studies – which were helpful for a person’s public and political life (oratory, philosophy, etc.) – were only taught to males.</p> <p>Assessments: in their final paper, students must demonstrate their familiarity with how gender performance was prescribed and controlled in ancient societies, and how it still shapes the contemporaneous debate over women’s rights and LGBTQ+ rights.</p>
<p>ELO 3.2 Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.</p>	<p>In the ancient world, society was conceived to be built upon individual building blocks or units, namely families. The centrality of the family in a person’s life – inside and outside the household – was never in doubt. Countless modern societies also organize the life and growth of an individual around their family, whether it may be nuclear, extended, fictive or biological.</p> <p>In-class: students analyze texts from ancient and contemporaneous authors in which the centrality of the family (in whatever form it might take) is always assumed and rarely recognized to be an a priori model to which we implicitly compare any other institution.</p> <p>Assessments: in their four self-reflection essays, students are encouraged to assess how and why societies are</p>

	<p>seemingly built upon familial units, and what are the practical and intellectual consequences of this notion.</p>
<p>ELO 3.3 Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.</p>	<p>Ancient Mediterranean societies were based on a patriarchal system. Women – but also enslaved people, foreigners, and anyone who did not conform with a specific ideal of masculinity – were barred from fully participating in society. Yet, many of these sub-groups flourished (free women and manumitted enslaved individuals in particular) coming to exercise their own type of power and authority.</p> <p>In-class: through the analysis of primary sources, the instructor presents how certain sub-groups gained more and more power and visibility in Roman society, reaching levels of independence that were unknown before. For example, in the eleventh week, the students will learn how formerly enslaved individuals and their descendants often reached the very top of the imperial administration and became unbelievably wealthy, dominating entire corners of the market (as in the case of the baker Eurysaces in Rome). Moreover, under Roman law, women could divorce their husbands and regain control of their assets and dowry (albeit not their children’s guardianship), as the case studies analyzed in week eight showcase.</p> <p>Assessments: in their final paper, students will choose to explore the relationship between mainstream culture and sub-cultures, the power dynamic between them, and how such relation can evolve over time.</p>
<p>ELO 3.4 Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.</p>	<p>Students are exposed to the continued existence of ideas and notions through vastly different societies and historical times.</p> <p>In-class: The instructor helps student analyze the transformation or relative continuity of certain ideas. For example, today, we can witness that in numerous countries there is a tension between those who support a “traditional” (whatever it might mean) approach to life and government and those who push against a return to the past. Likewise, the Romans always had an eye towards an unspecified version of their glorious past and their society was always rather “traditionalist”. Yet, history did not stop for them, nor it is stopping for us. Nevertheless, the notion of a return to a more glorious, better (albeit unspecified) past as a solution to all problems is a slogan that has appeared in the political discourse of many countries, from the United States to Europe (France, Hungary, Italy)</p>

	<p>and Southeast Asia (South Korea).</p> <p>Assessments: students will use both their final paper and their self-reflection essays to explore how ideas have evolved, transformed, and morphed over time and how they still influence the modern socio-political national conversation.</p>
<p>ELO 4.1 Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.</p>	<p>This course allows the students to explore both the differences and similarities between their own culture and ancient societies.</p> <p>In-class: students learn to recognize how, in the ancient world, the ubiquity of slavery affected every member of the household and society at large. Even the enslaved individuals who obtained manumission were often regarded to be in a category of their own, separate from freeborn people. While today slavery is an atrocity of the past, its effects are still influencing modern American society and the lives of millions of people. Students learn how continuity and transformation of an institution such as slavery can linger for centuries to come.</p> <p>Assessments: students will demonstrate, both in their final paper and in the four self-reflection essays, that they have thought about and engaged with the permanence and transformation of ideas across time and recognize how they are used in modern debates.</p>
<p>ELO 4.2 Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues</p>	<p>By the end of the course, students will recognize and explain how gender, slavery, and patriarchal dominance profoundly affected Greco-Roman societies.</p> <p>Assessments: in their final paper students must demonstrate that they will competently explain how gender roles, the alienation of the enslaved and the suppression of non-accepted sexual behaviors conditioned an individual's lived experiences and possibilities in ancient societies.</p>