
Civics, Law, and Leadership 3212

From Steele, Rachel <steele.682@osu.edu>

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Cc Soland, Birgitte <soland.1@osu.edu>; Daly, Meg <daly.66@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>; Steele, Rachel <steele.682@osu.edu>; Neff, Jennifer <neff.363@osu.edu>

Good afternoon,

On Thursday, October 2, the Themes II Subcommittee of the ASC Curriculum Committee reviewed a course proposal for Civics, Law, and Leadership 3212 to be included in the GEN Theme: Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World.

The Subcommittee did not vote on the proposal as they would like the following points addressed:

- a. The Subcommittee does not believe that the course, as it is currently presented, is a good fit for the GEN Theme: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World category. However, they can see how the course's topic could fit within the theme if the Center is open to a substantial restructuring and reimagining of the course. Currently, the course is focused on the study of Christianity and its existence with and relationship to government and the law, rather than being focused on citizenship, diversity, and justice (as experienced by a variety of different populations) in a Judeo-Christian legal framework.
- b. The Subcommittee finds that the connection between Christianity and Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World is not strongly demonstrated via the descriptions in the GEN Submission form, nor explicit in the syllabus, and they ask that this be more developed and explicitly expressed. They note that one of the functions of the Subcommittee is to be a "proxy" for students who will take the course. Thus, they are reviewing the syllabus with an eye toward "signposting" for students how the course is connected to the Theme – the syllabus is, in many ways, the *evidence* of the claims made by the form. The Subcommittee offers the friendly observation that making the connection between Christianity and Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World stronger and more explicit may help the course to increase its level of rigor (see item "c" below).
- c. The Subcommittee asks that the Center enhance the rigor of the course so that it is an "advanced, in-depth, and scholarly exploration" of the theme. Currently, the course's readings and assignments are not commensurate with synthesis, critical thinking, or scholarly exploration at an advanced level. The Subcommittee asks that the Center augment the course's materials to include a variety of scholarly readings, so that students have the opportunity to engage with a range of different scholarly perspectives for their interpretation of the primary texts, the topics of citizenship, justice and diversity, and the issues under debate. For example, the Subcommittee observes that the students will read "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail", a text that is required in many foundations-level GEN courses, but it is unclear from the materials provided how students will engage with this differently or in a more in-depth manner than they do in the typical introductory-level GEN Foundations courses. Additionally, while the Subcommittee appreciates the pedagogical purpose of the Gobbet-style essays, they do not believe that these, in conjunction only with two multiple choice and short essay exams, allow students to demonstrate mastery of "critical and logical thinking about...the theme" (ELO 1.1), "identify[ing], describe[ing], and synthesize[ing] approaches...as they apply to the theme" (ELO 2.1), or "demonstrat[ing] a developing sense of self as a learner" (2.2).
- d. The Subcommittee asks that the Center provide examples of exam questions, Gobbet prompts and any additional writing assignments so that they can better evaluate how students will be

- assessed on their mastery of the GEN Theme Goals and ELOs. Since 75% of students' final grade for the course comes from these elements, it is important the Subcommittee be able to see how the Center will make the Theme the focus of these assessments.
- e. The Subcommittee appreciates the interdisciplinarity of the primary texts that is noted on the GEN submission form (ELO 2.1). However, they do not see this interdisciplinarity developed further in the course design, and they ask that the Center include additional opportunities for students to "identify, describe, and synthesize" approaches from different fields.
 - f. The Subcommittee appreciates the value of robust classroom discussion; however, they note that it is difficult (if not impossible) to utilize this as a fair and consistent tool for assessment of the GEN ELOs for every student in the course. The Subcommittee asks that the Center minimize the use of classroom discussion to meet the goals and ELOs, instead focusing on written assignments, projects, presentations, or other products produced by students.
 - g. The Subcommittee asks that the Center incorporate into the course schedule opportunities for students to demonstrate their "developing sense of self as a learner" (ELO 2.2) in an assessable manner. While the Subcommittee notes and appreciates the presence of activities that focus on students' ability to critique and improve their own writing, this ELO is focused on students' awareness of their own learning and reflection on/analysis of the ways that their thinking has changed over the duration of the course. While the Subcommittee acknowledges that there are many methods for assessing this ELO, they offer the friendly suggestion that asking students to complete a graded reflection on course topics at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the semester can be a simple and effective way to meet this ELO.
 - h. The Subcommittee asks that the Center re-phrase the statement which describes the way in which this course fits into the new General Education Curriculum (syllabus pg. 2 under "GEN Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes"). Since this is a 3-credit hour course, it does not, in and of itself, "fulfill" the GEN Theme. As the requirement is for students to earn 4-6 credit hours in this category, stating that a single course fulfills the requirement can be confusing or misleading for students. Instead, the reviewing faculty suggest wording such as "Civics, Law, and Leadership 3212 is an approved course in the GEN Theme: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World category."

I will return CLL 3212 to the department queue via curriculum.osu.edu in order to address the Subcommittee's requests.

Should you have any questions about the feedback of the Subcommittee, please feel free to contact Birgitte Sølund (faculty Chair of the Themes II Subcommittee; cc'd on this e-mail), or me.

Best,
Rachel



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(Pronouns: she/her/hers / Honorific: Ms.)

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