

# INFUSING ESSENTIAL LEARNING GOALS INTO GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

## Why Focus on Learning Goals?

- Better prepare our students with essential learning outcomes that employers and graduate schools want
- Articulate “value-added” from general education to parents and students
- Intentionally prepare our students with skills to be informed, engaged, ethical citizens
- More effectively meet EIU’s mission
- Have systems in place to intentionally monitor and improve/make adjustments over time (which is expected of accrediting bodies)
- Place EIU in a better position if systems of accountability become mandatory and tied to funding.

## Guiding Principles

EIU’s general education philosophy has evolved with recognition that explicit instruction and practice with essential learning skills are as important as liberal exposure to content in general education courses. Evidence from the American Association of Colleges & Universities’ (AAC&U’s) LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) Principles of Excellence and 2015 General Education Maps & Markers suggests essential learning proficiencies should be fostered in general education and across the curriculum. In order to prepare 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, higher education institutions should (GEMs pgs. vii, 27):

- 1) Make the Essential Learning Outcomes/Proficiencies a Framework for the **Entire Educational Experience**;
- 2) Focus Each Student’s Plan of Study on Achieving the Essential Learning Outcomes—and Assess Progress;
- 3) Immerse All Students in Analysis, Discovery, Problem Solving, and Communication;
- 4) Teach “Big Questions”— Contemporary and Enduring—in Science and Society, Cultures and Values, Global Interdependence, the Changing Economy, and Human Dignity and Freedom that require multiple perspectives to investigate;
- 5) Prepare Students for Citizenship and Work through Engaged and Guided Learning on “Real-World” Problems;
- 6) Assess Students’ Ability to Apply Learning to Complex Problems and Use Assessment to Deepen Learning and to Establish a Culture of Shared Purpose and Continuous Improvement; and
- 7) Consider proficiencies and projects to be central to the design of both courses and programs, not afterthoughts to content and credit hours.

AAC&U (GEMs p. v) suggests that the most common approach to general education in the USA, a menu-driven, check-off system mainly aimed at breadth of content coverage prior to and separate from in-depth study in a major, falls far short of its intended horizon-expanding purposes. In fact, when general education is organized mainly as a menu of disconnected survey courses and taught in classes that emphasize content delivery over critical inquiry, it is inadequate at developing the essential learning skills and capacities students need and society values.

While EIU’s program will remain in alignment with the Illinois Articulation Agreement’s (IAI) segment expectations and menu-driven approach to general education, EIU’s general education coursework will now focus on explicit instruction and practice for core essential learning proficiencies. Using course content as a vehicle for inquiry, students at EIU will learn to ask questions and define problems, evaluate and synthesize important information, craft valid arguments or hypotheses, devise solutions to complex problems, and communicate the implications of decisions to diverse audiences. Students will learn to refine their reasoning as they use evidence, ethical principles, and the ability to evaluate information from diverse perspectives to develop and justify their decisions. Because critical thinking will be infused into all General Education courses at EIU, students will have multiple

opportunities to become flexible and integrative critical thinkers as they approach related problems or questions and see connections between the methods used. Faculty in general education will act as guides and models, providing explicit instruction and giving feedback as students explore significant “big picture, real-world” problems. Students’ will engage in inquiry-based projects that allow for assessment of and feedback on their demonstrated proficiencies. Course activities and assignments will allow for the application of critical thinking in students’ written work, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and collaborative problem solving—all of which are necessary for EIU graduates’ as future citizens and leaders.

## The Model for Infusing the Undergraduate Learning Goals into General Education

All General Education Courses target critical thinking with explicit instruction and assessment of student learning outcomes.

Foundation Courses provide instruction on critical thinking and their skill focus:

- ENG 1001G & 1002G—Critical Thinking & Writing & Critical Reading
- CMN 1310G—Critical Thinking & Speaking & Listening
- MAT Gen Ed—Critical Thinking & Quantitative Reasoning

Senior Seminars include explicit instruction in all 5 learning goals

Courses in the other three General Education Segments focus on critical thinking, the specific learning goal associated with their segment, and a third learning goal chosen by the department as most appropriate for the course.

- Communication in the Arts & Humanities (Writing and Critical Reading, Speaking and Listening, or both)
- Quantitative Reasoning in the Natural Sciences
- Responsible Citizenship in the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Civics, Diversity, or Ethics focus). Courses in the social and behavioral sciences segment may include learning goals related to one or more of the three subtopics of responsible citizenship: civics, ethics, and diversity; they are not required to include all three areas in their course, but they may choose to do so.

Essential Learning Outcomes Across the Curriculum				
All GE Courses Teach Critical Thinking—13 courses				
Segment	Writing & Critical Reading	Speaking & Listening	Quantitative Reasoning	Responsible Citizenship
Foundational	ENG 1001G ENG 1002G	CMN 1310G	GE Math course(s)	
Communication in the Arts & Humanities	3 courses—courses will choose writing & critical reading, speaking & listening, or both			
Responsible Citizenship in Social and Behavioral Sciences				3 courses—may choose one, two, or all 3 subtopics: civics, ethics, or diversity

<b>Quantitative Reasoning in the Sciences</b>			2 courses	
<b>Senior Seminar</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes

In addition to critical thinking and the segment-assigned learning goal, each general education course will choose an additional learning goal to include in the instruction of that course. For example, a course in the arts and humanities segment may adopt critical thinking, speaking and listening, and writing and critical reading; another course in that segment may include instruction and assessment on critical thinking, writing and critical reading, and quantitative reasoning; a third might choose critical thinking, speaking and listening, and responsible citizenship. Courses that already carry the cultural diversity designation may choose responsible citizenship as one of their goals because of content already established in those courses.

### What does it mean to intensively target a learning goal in General Education courses?

The course's content is integrated with learning objectives, explicit instruction, practice, assignments, and feedback for the university learning goals associated with the course.<sup>1</sup>

- 1) The Syllabus/Course Proposal includes Course Learning Objectives to develop proficiencies in the learning goals assigned/chosen. Faculty should consult the approved undergraduate learning goals and subgoals to assure consistency in definitions across the curriculum (see <https://castle.eiu.edu/~eiucaa/2013-14CAA/SP14/01-23-14/Minutes/01-16-14Minutes.pdf> for goals as approved by CAA on January 16, 2014).
- 2) The Syllabus/Course Proposal's Weekly Topical outline includes time dedicated to explicit instruction to develop proficiencies in the learning goal (e.g., includes content information about the learning goal, good models with rationale/explanation provided by the instructor).
- 3) The Syllabus/Course Proposal's Weekly Topical Outline includes class time for practice activities to build proficiency in the learning goal (e.g., recognize weaknesses in flawed examples/explain strengths in good examples, focus on individual components of the learning goal in a scaffolded practice to build skills, etc.).
- 4) Explicit instruction and practice activities develop learning goal skills that are then utilized and assessed in projects/assignments. There should be at least one formal assignment that incorporates critical inquiry and the segment-assigned learning goal skill (e.g., using credible evidence and critical thinking to develop an argument, solve a problem, test a hypothesis, etc.).
- 5) Feedback related to the learning goal skill should be given so that the feedback can be used either in revision of the assignment or in subsequent assignments/courses and in the students' reflection on learning.

<sup>1</sup> Guidelines were adapted from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Communication across the Curriculum: A Faculty Guide to Teaching Writing-Intensive and Speaking-Intensive Courses as well as Marshall University's guidelines for Critical Thinking Intensive courses. <http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals>

## Updating and Review/Renewal Schedule

- The target is to have General Education courses updated to meet the proposed model over the next 3 years. Target date for completion of Foundation courses is Fall 2017, Humanities & Fine Arts Spring 2018, Social Behavioral Sciences Fall 2018, Natural Science courses Spring 2019, and Senior Seminars Fall 2019.
- An ongoing 5-year cycle of review for General Education courses will take place; the first one will be five years from the semester when the first courses are revised.

## General Education Program Description in the Catalog<sup>2</sup>

### FOSTERING ESSENTIAL LEARNING ACROSS THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

General Education at Eastern Illinois University offers students an intellectual foundation for their academic, professional, and personal lives. The General Education program is aligned with the University's mission to help students "refine their abilities to reason and to communicate clearly so as to become responsible citizens and leaders." General Education refers to the part of the university's education common to all students. It is typically grounded in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and arts, and provides a platform for fostering proficiencies that span all fields of study while probing contemporary problems and enduring questions. By facilitating students' exploration of questions across multiple fields of study, general education fosters knowledge, while also engaging students in issues encountered by citizens in a democracy. By fostering thoughtful learning and reflection, Eastern Illinois University seeks to instill the value of intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning in its students.

Core intellectual skills embodied in EIU learning goals—critical thinking, writing & critical reading, speaking & listening, quantitative reasoning, and various aspects of responsible citizenship (ethical reasoning, considering diverse perspectives, and civic implications)—are practiced and integrated continuously across general education. Foundational courses focus on critical thinking and core writing, speaking or quantitative skills. Students are advised to take these courses during the first year of study.

Courses in the other segments of general education focus on a particular learning goal in addition to their topic content (e.g. quantitative reasoning in the natural sciences, communication in the arts & humanities, responsible citizenship in the social & behavioral sciences) and also give focused attention to critical thinking and at least one other learning goal. Courses that target a specific university learning goal have learning objectives and graded assignments tied to the learning goal; they also provide explicit instruction, practice, and feedback related to the development of that skill. The required senior seminar (or study abroad capstone) targets all five learning goals.

Courses are noted with a tag denoting the goals being addressed: CT= Critical Thinking, WR = Writing & Critical Reading, SL = Speaking & Listening, QR = Quantitative Reasoning; RCD = Responsible Citizenship-Diversity; RCE = Responsible Citizenship-Ethics; RCC = Responsible Citizenship-Civics. Courses currently tagged as WC will remain WC for writing-centered; courses currently labelled WI will become WR courses. In WR courses, several assignments and activities are required—both informal, writing-to-learn activities and formal writing projects. These activities and assignments, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. Revision must be incorporated in at least one writing assignment through peer review or after a draft has been read and commented on by the instructor or the instructor may provide the opportunity for revision for a higher grade.

### CRITICAL THINKING INFUSION IN ALL GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

All of EIU's general education courses are charged with helping students develop their critical thinking skills. In a complex world, comprehension of content knowledge is not sufficient preparation for student success at EIU and beyond. Educational excellence in EIU's general education curriculum lies in fostering habits of mind that enable students to find, evaluate, integrate, and apply information; reach informed judgments; and transfer their critical thinking skills to other tasks they encounter throughout their lives.

Areas of focus for critical thinking include the ability of students to:

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<sup>2</sup> The model presented above was used as the foundation for EIU's catalog description for General Education. Information was studied and synthesized from EIU's current catalog description, EIU's undergraduate learning goals, the Senior Seminar & Study Abroad capstone course proposals, the Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education segment descriptions and objectives, associate's and bachelor's level expectations of the Degree Qualification's Profile, building on Common Core expectations, AAC&U's General Education Maps & Markers, and AAC&U's LEAP Principles of Excellence and Curricular Design.

1. Ask essential questions and engage diverse perspectives;
2. Seek data, information, or knowledge from experience, texts, and other media;
3. Understand, interpret, and critique relevant information or knowledge;
4. Synthesize information and knowledge to infer or create insights;
5. Anticipate and evaluate assumptions, arguments, or conclusions;
6. Create and present defensible arguments, positions, hypotheses, or proposals.

While studying a myriad of topics in General Education, students develop analytic strategies and produce work that represents integration of knowledge, skills, evidence-based reasoning, and personal or social responsibility.

Every general education course includes at least one critical inquiry assignment that requires students to answer an important “real-world” question, test a hypothesis, build an argument, or solve a problem by gathering, interpreting, and evaluating evidence to draw conclusions. To facilitate integrative learning and transfer of knowledge and skills, students are also asked to reflect critically on their learning in each course and consider how it relates to other learning and experiences.

### FOUNDATIONAL COURSES

Three communication courses in General Education provide students with focused instruction and multiple opportunities to practice and receive feedback on speaking, listening, writing, and critical reading. These courses also allow students to learn about critical thinking through explicit instruction and to foster critical thinking skills through practice and feedback. Students learn how to use information literacy skills to collect, analyze, synthesize, and ethically incorporate source material; identify and critique weak sources of information or weak arguments; build an argument or defend a hypothesis or claim; adapt oral or written communication based on their purpose and audience; and employ organizational strategies and language effectively.

Topics of writing projects or oral presentations assigned in these courses might also incorporate aspects of responsible citizenship such as ethical reasoning, discussion of issues from diverse perspectives, or investigation of civic problems. Students may also be required to comprehend and produce graphic material that represents numeric information.

#### Foundational Courses in Writing & Critical Reading

ENG 1001G, 1002G, 1091G, 1092G
Critical Thinking Targeted
Writing & Critical Reading Targeted

English 1001G and 1002G and their honors equivalents, 1091G and 1092G, are writing-centered courses. In these courses students learn the principles and the process of writing in all of its stages, from inception to completion. The quality of students' writing is the principal determinant of the course grade. The minimum writing requirement is 20 pages (5,000 words) of finished prose produced through multiple writing projects.

These courses provide a foundation in writing and critical reading in relation to the Writing & Critical Reading University Undergraduate Learning Goal, which states that EIU graduates write critically and evaluate varied sources by:

1. Creating documents appropriate for specific audiences, purposes, genres, disciplines, and professions.
2. Crafting cogent and defensible applications, analyses, evaluations, and arguments about problems, ideas, and issues.
3. Producing documents that are well organized, focused, and cohesive.
4. Using appropriate vocabulary, mechanics, grammar, diction, and sentence structure.
5. Understanding, questioning, analyzing, and synthesizing complex textual, numeric, and graphical sources.

6. Evaluating evidence, issues, ideas, and problems from multiple perspectives.
7. Collecting and employing source materials ethically and understanding their strengths and limitations.

### Foundational Courses in Speaking & Listening

CMN 1310G, 1390G
Critical Thinking Targeted
Speaking & Listening Targeted

Communication Studies 1310G and its honors equivalent, 1390G, focus on oral communication and include instruction in techniques of listening and informative, persuasive, and reactive speaking. Students are required to engage in critical listening through self- and peer-evaluation of oral communication. Students are required to give four speeches, three of which must be substantive (ethical topic choice, at least five continuous minutes of speaking, research must be verbally cited, graded on content, organization, and delivery). One speech must be informative and one must be persuasive. The speeches should total at least 25 minutes and speaking assignments should account for at least 50% of the course grade.

These courses provide a foundation in speaking and listening in relation to the Speaking & Listening University Undergraduate Learning Goal, which states that EIU graduates prepare, deliver, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities by:

1. Collecting, comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing and ethically incorporating source material.
2. Adapting formal and impromptu presentations, debates, and discussions to their audience and purpose.
3. Developing and organizing ideas and supporting them with appropriate details and evidence.
4. Using effective language skills adapted for oral delivery, including appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.
5. Using effective vocal delivery skills, including volume, pitch, rate of speech, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency.
6. Employing effective physical delivery skills, including eye contact, gestures, and movement.
7. Using active and critical listening skills to understand and evaluate oral communication.

### Foundational Courses in Quantitative Reasoning

MAT 1160G, 1170G, 1441G, 2110G, 2120G, 2190G, 2250G, 2290G, 2420G
Critical Thinking Targeted
Quantitative Reasoning Targeted

A math course in General Education provides the foundation for critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. Courses that fulfill the general education mathematics requirement emphasize the development of the student's capacity for mathematical reasoning and problem solving in settings the college graduate may encounter. General education mathematics courses prepare students for the different and surprising ways they may encounter mathematics in the real world such as understanding different voting systems to functional design, from optimization to interpreting statistics. Every college graduate should be able to apply basic mathematical methods to the solution of real-world problems.

These courses provide a foundation in quantitative reasoning in relation to the Quantitative Reasoning University Undergraduate Learning Goal, which states that EIU graduates produce, analyze, interpret, and evaluate quantitative material by:

1. Performing basic calculations and measurements.

2. Applying quantitative methods and using the resulting evidence to solve problems.
3. Reading, interpreting, and constructing tables, graphs, charts, and other representations of quantitative material.
4. Critically evaluating quantitative methodologies and data.
5. Constructing cogent arguments utilizing quantitative material.
6. Using appropriate technology to collect, analyze, and produce quantitative materials.

#### QUANTITATIVE REASONING IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

All Courses in the Scientific Awareness Segment
Critical Thinking Infused
Quantitative Reasoning Targeted
Third Goal Chosen by Department Targeted

In physical and biological science courses, students develop an understanding of the scientific method and quantitative concepts used in the sciences. They use critical thinking skills to analyze methods of describing, predicting, understanding, and explaining physical and biological phenomena. In the science laboratory experience, students a.) formulate or evaluate questions (hypotheses), b.) plan and conduct experiments (test hypotheses), c.) make systematic observations and measurements, d.) analyze and interpret data, e.) draw conclusions, and f.) communicate the results orally and/or in writing including representation of quantitative information.

Students learn to define a problem or key debate in science and interpret the importance of this issue for society. They consider evidence that may conflict on that scientific topic, critique the information and draw defensible conclusions. They become critical consumers of scientific claims in popular texts and the media by evaluating the rigor of investigations and appropriateness of generalizations made about scientific studies.

In General Education Science courses students will:

##### Content Specific Objectives

1. Understand and apply basic concepts in the field of science being studied;
2. Describe the scientific method and how existing knowledge or practice is advanced, tested, and revised in the field of study;
3. Recognize the role of science in society and identify potential sources of bias and influence that can affect scientific research and the use and reporting of scientific information.

##### Content Infused with Critical Thinking Objectives

4. Critically evaluate scientific evidence that may have conflicting findings (in terms of rigor of methods, caution in making generalizations) and draw defensible conclusions;
5. Anticipate possible positive or negative implications from the outcomes of scientific studies applied to real world problems.

##### Quantitative Reasoning Objective

6. Interpret quantitative information in text, tables, graphs, and charts.
7. Apply basic calculations and quantitative methods to solve problems
8. Interpret and critique quantitative information about science, such as basic statistical concepts of measures of central tendency and variability; the difference between correlation and causation; the role of sample size in statistical significance; and the difference between statistical significance and practical importance.

Additional Learning Goals—One is Chosen

9. Write critically and evaluate varied sources. (Writing & Critical Reading)

<http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals>



10. Prepare, deliver, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities. (Speaking & Listening)
11. Consider culture, class, ability, ethnicity, gender, race, and/or sexual orientation as they relate to the scientific field of study. (Responsible Citizenship – Diversity)
12. Apply ethical reasoning and standards to scientific dilemmas and research. (Responsible Citizenship – Ethics)
13. Understand how laws and government regulations impact the natural world and scientific endeavors. (Responsible Citizenship – Civics)

Additionally, these courses will build on the Quantitative Reasoning skills that students developed in the foundational mathematics courses.

### COMMUNICATION IN THE HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

All Courses in the Humanities and Fine Arts Segment		
Critical Thinking Infused		
Writing & Critical Reading Targeted	OR	Speaking & Listening Targeted
		OR
		Combination of Writing & Critical Reading and Speaking & Listening Targeted
Third Goal Chosen by Department Targeted		

Courses in arts and humanities focus on critical thinking as well as oral and written communication skills. Because critical thinking, research, and reflection are necessary to the study of the arts and humanities, both receptive (critical reading and listening) and expressive (writing and speaking) aspects of communication are significant components of arts and humanities courses.

The basis of instruction in these disciplines is primarily the interpretation and critical analysis of written and visual artifacts. Courses in the humanities provide sources and methods for reflection upon the human experience in its rhetorical, historical, artistic, literary, philosophical, and religious dimensions. Humanities courses provide students with the foundations and methods necessary for a critical understanding of languages, cultures, and traditions while also exposing students to diverse perspectives.

Courses in the fine arts provide students with a basis for understanding and evaluating musical, theatrical, and visual works in terms of production and reception. Students learn to apply historical, philosophical, aesthetic, and critical concepts to specific works and genres. Fine arts courses provide students with the foundations and methods necessary for a critical appreciation of various artistic and aesthetic traditions, as well as the evaluation of specific works.

In General Education Arts and Humanities courses students will:

#### Content Specific Objectives

1. Understand and apply basic concepts from the art or humanities field being studied.

#### Content Infused with Critical Thinking Objectives

2. Evaluate differing points of view on the same historical event, text, or creative production (rhetorical, literary, musical, theatrical, artistic) by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence;
3. Analyze and interpret texts or artistic productions on multiple levels and recognize and synthesize connections among compositions;
4. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, to form a coherent interpretation of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Communication Goals – Writing & Critical Reading and/or Speaking & Listening

5. Use organization, language, and information adapted to task and audience in oral and/or written communication.
6. Identify, evaluate and cite information resources as they engage in projects, papers, and/or oral presentations.
7. Use effective vocal and physical delivery skills.
8. Use active and critical listening and/or reading skills to understand and evaluate oral and/or written communication.

Additional Learning Goals—One is Chosen

9. Use quantitative material to make verbal or written arguments. (Quantitative Reasoning)
10. Engage with diverse ideas, individuals, groups, and cultures through humanities/arts research or creative activity. (Responsible Citizenship – Diversity)
11. Apply ethical reasoning and standards in personal, professional, disciplinary, and civic contexts. (Responsible Citizenship – Ethics)
12. Identify, analyze, and evaluate how political institutions, processes, and economics are interrelated with the arts and humanities fields. (Responsible Citizenship – Civics)

CITIZENSHIP IN THE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

All Courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Segment				
Critical Thinking Infused				
One or More of the Following Aspects of Citizenship Targeted				
Civics	OR	Ethics	OR	Diversity
Third Goal Chosen by Department Targeted				

In Social and Behavioral Science courses, students use critical thinking skills to develop insights into human behavior and discuss institutional forces that influence society. Students learn to analyze the past, develop insight into contemporary social life, and understand the impact of individual and social actions. Students learn to define problems or key debates in the social science field and interpret their importance for society. They read information that may have conflicting viewpoints or findings, critique the information, and draw conclusions that can be defended.

Social and Behavioral Sciences courses develop skills essential to be a good citizen by encouraging students to consider diverse perspectives, apply ethical decision making, and appreciate the importance of civic engagement.

Diversity courses focus on students’ capacity for viewing issues or problems from multiple perspectives. Rather than viewing the world through a single-focus lens, students learn to consider multiple viewpoints when discussing issues. Courses help students move outside their comfort zone and encourage engagement about class, culture, ability, ethnicity, gender, race, and/or sexual orientation. By developing a deeper knowledge of the factors that create difference, students can better understand, respect, and interact with different people and viewpoints, vital skills for responsible citizens. The examination of history, language, and/or traditions of other countries or cultures (anthropological, artistic, literary, philosophical, political, or sociological) aids in using cultural sensitivity when making informed and ethical decisions.

Ethical reasoning courses focus on ethical principles and codes of conduct used for making decisions and taking action. Students assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems; analyze how different perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Ethical reasoning within various cultures, professions, economic behavior, civic settings, or social relationships may be

discussed. Analytic reasoning, the use of information resources, communication, and diverse perspectives are brought to bear in the ethical decision-making process to reduce tensions, conflicts, disparities, and potential harm.

Civic engagement courses focus on a core overarching goal of higher education to produce responsible citizens armed with the knowledge, skills, and desire to work for the public good at a local, state, national, or global level. Courses challenge students to identify, analyze, and evaluate the ways in which political institutions and processes are interrelated: for example, how government institutions, economic factors, public opinion, the media, and party politics interrelate during the decision making process at the national, state, or local level. Students learn to participate in constructive deliberation (critiquing and building arguments) about issues, challenges, or solutions.

In General Education Social and Behavioral Science courses students will:

#### Content Specific Objectives

1. Understand and apply concepts in the field of Social and Behavioral Science being studied;
2. Discuss modes of inquiry used in the Social Sciences and how existing knowledge or practice is advanced, tested, and revised in the field of study.

#### Content Infused Critical Thinking Objectives

3. Explore and evaluate competing perspectives or findings on issues, critique the information, and present a reasoned analysis and defensible conclusions.

Responsible Citizenship Specific Objectives—courses will focus on one or more of the following:

4. Describe , diverse perspectives to a problem;
5. Analyze issues related to class, culture, ability, ethnicity, gender, race, and/or sexual orientation;
6. Describe the **ethical issues** present in prominent problems and apply ethical principles or frameworks that could inform decision making with respect to such problems;
7. Apply **ethical reasoning** to cases in the field of study with evidence-based justification of the best decision and evaluation of consequences of alternative decisions;
8. Identify a significant **civic** challenge, present relevant evidence pertaining to that challenge, and provide a rationale for a course of action;
9. Evaluate and/or engage in **civically** minded thinking and/or action in relation to issues affecting the local community, nation, and/or world.

Additional Learning Goals—One is Chosen

10. Produce, analyze, interpret, and evaluate quantitative material (Quantitative Reasoning)
11. Write and read critically and evaluate varied sources. (Writing & Critical Reading)
12. Prepare, deliver, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities. (Speaking & Listening)

#### SENIOR SEMINAR OR STUDY ABROAD CAPSTONE

All Senior Seminar or Study Abroad Capstone Courses
Critical Thinking Infused
Writing & Critical Reading Targeted
Speaking & Listening Targeted
Quantitative Reasoning Targeted
Responsible Citizenship Targeted

The General Education Seminar at Eastern Illinois University is a cross-disciplinary capstone experience that provides students with an opportunity to apply concepts and use skills developed in all five university learning goal areas (critical thinking, writing & critical reading, speaking & listening, quantitative reasoning, and responsible citizenship). Topics of major importance (e.g. the Holocaust, Social Movements, Women in Science, Technology, Controversies in Education, Sociobiology, etc.) are explored as students read, analyze, discuss, and write about them while students learn to approach issues related to the topic with a focus on relevant aspects of responsible citizenship. The seminar gives students experience synthesizing, analyzing, and refining ideas/concepts using a variety of methods and from a variety of perspectives while practicing oral and written communication.

The Study Abroad Capstone is taken after a study abroad experience and facilitates students' ability to think critically about their global education experiences. Students discuss their cultural experiences abroad and reflect on how the study abroad experience impacted their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Students synthesize information about their individualized experience through readings, assignments, and a substantive writing sample, an individualized project, and a presentation.

In General Education Seminar or Study Abroad Capstone courses students will:

1. Obtain information on the course topic from a variety of sources, some including quantitative data
2. Evaluate and synthesize information from diverse sources
3. Conduct a rational dialogue with others on topics generated by course materials and outside research;
4. Express in written and oral forms their synthesis of a topic and a reasoned defense of conclusions reflecting their synthesis;
5. Reflect on links between their formal course work and contemporary problems/events;
6. Discuss diverse viewpoints on problems/situations;
7. Analyze their own views in light of readings and discussions in order to make informed, responsible, and ethical civic and personal decisions.

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#### SEMESTER HOUR REQUIREMENTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Foundational Courses (Writing-6, Speaking-3, Math-3)	12 hours
Quantitative Reasoning in Natural Sciences	7 hours
Citizenship in Social and Behavioral Sciences	9 hours
Communication in Humanities and Fine Arts	9 hours
Senior Seminar or Study Abroad Capstone	3 hours
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40 hours</b>