

## **MBU Common Curriculum: Curricular Definitions Adopted by the faculty-2010**

### **Learning Outcome 1 (definitions)**

**1 a. i. Humanities:** Courses fulfilling the humanities component of the common curriculum are those that study human beings and their cultures through examination of their histories, philosophies, religions, and literatures. Students who complete humanities courses increase their knowledge of the critical methods used in such disciplines as history, philosophy, religion, or literature, while developing their ability to interpret and analyze texts and primary sources as well as synthesize this information and effectively communicate their findings.

**1 a. ii. Arts:** Courses fulfilling the arts component of the common curriculum are those that develop aesthetic awareness, offer practice in artistic skills, and/or promote analytical abilities through an introduction to the visual arts, music, dance, creative writing, and theater. Students gain experience in the practice of an artistic form or are able to express their understanding of the arts and their critical sensitivity through the interpretation of diverse forms of art and through the resolution of artistic problems.

**1 a. iii. Social Sciences:** Courses fulfilling the social sciences component of the common curriculum are those that seek to explore, describe, explain, and predict phenomena in human society through empirical investigation of economic, political, and social behavior. Students increase their knowledge of the critical methods used in such disciplines as anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, selected areas of psychology, and other social science disciplines. Students also learn to evaluate the degree to which theories or conclusions about human behavior and society are based on sufficient empirical evidence obtained from experimentation, systematic observation, interviews, and/or surveys and questionnaires.

**1 a. iv. Natural Sciences:** Courses fulfilling the natural sciences component of the common curriculum are those that study the natural world through inferences based on systematic observations and controlled experiments. Students who complete these courses increase their knowledge of the critical methods used in such disciplines as biology, chemistry, physics, and experimental psychology. Students also develop a greater understanding of their physical environment, the laws that govern it, and the methods by which these laws are discovered.

**1b. Themes:** Courses that address a theme of enduring importance require students to consider a central problem from multiple perspectives. Students analyze and contemplate the impact that important issues have on society using knowledge gained from multiple points of view. (Examples might include: *Poverty, War & Violence, Environmental Sustainability...*) Options for this requirement include interdisciplinary and cross-listed courses in addition to thematic courses within a single discipline.

### **Learning Outcome 2 (definitions)**

: In all LO2 areas the expectation is that **no less than half of the course content** is focused on the designated area.

**a. International / Global:** Global coursework consists of foreign language study as well as courses that introduce students to contemporary cultures and social, political, and economic systems outside of the United States. The objective of this coursework is to further students' appreciation of other peoples allowing graduates to more fully engage globally. Options include one year of a single modern foreign language at the beginning and/or intermediate level (F courses) and designated language and non-language courses with an international/global focus (I courses).

**b. Race & Ethnicity in the US:** Courses for this requirement build awareness of the role race and ethnicity have played and continue to play in the United States. The objective of this coursework is to broaden the perspective from which students understand American culture.

**c. Gender:** Students in an historic women's college should understand the role gender has played and continues to play in culture. The objective of this coursework is to critically identify and analyze gender/women's issues and their impact on society.

**d. Community Involvement:** Graduates must be actively involved in the communities in which they live and work. The objective of this requirement is to provide opportunities for students to enter into the life of their communities and reflect on the experience. Courses and internships that provide for meaningful interactions with members of the larger community meet this requirement.

**e. Physical Fitness and Health:** The physical education requirement provides students with the knowledge and ability to maintain active and healthy lifestyles.

### **Learning Outcome 3 (definitions)**

- *Notes: Only one skill designation (LO3 a.) may be applied to a single course. Departments are **strongly urged** not to place skill designations (LO3 a.) in the senior requirement.*

#### **a. i. Writing**

- frequent (usually weekly) formal and informal writing assignments
- at least two formal writing assignments requiring multiple drafts and revisions based on feedback from the course instructor

#### **a. ii. Oral Communication**

- multiple structured opportunities for students to explore and express ideas orally (e.g. class debates, presentations, leading peer discussion, etc) and to receive feedback from the instructor
- at least one assignment for which a substantial percentage of the grade is based on the quality of the oral presentation

#### **a. iii. Quantitative Reasoning**

- these courses offer instruction in quantitative analysis, logic and/or mathematics
- frequent opportunities for students to interpret and understand the world using charts, graphs, probability and statistics, symbolic reasoning, logical deduction and other quantitative measures

#### **a. iv. Research and Information Literacy**

- this requirement ensures that students recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, critically evaluate, and use information effectively

Approved courses:

- require students to demonstrate an understanding of the research process
- teach how to access information effectively and efficiently from a variety of sources and a diverse range of formats (both hardcopy and on-line)
- provide guidance on evaluating information critically
- teach how to use information to accomplish a specific purpose such as a research paper or thesis, a class project, or an independent study
- provide instruction on proper documentation and citation of sources

#### **b. Authentic Problems**

Students are required to address an authentic problem in their major by applying theory and evidence to a clearly defined issue or problem in the field. (*Note: the "M" designation indicates that this common curriculum outcome is met through the major.*) Typically this upper-level requirement is met through the Senior Thesis or project, a Capstone project and presentation, and/ or an interdisciplinary Honors Thesis.