

## Definition of General Education Categories

**Mathematics and Statistics:** Approved courses introduce students to or extend their knowledge of precalculus, calculus, discrete mathematics, probability, statistics and/or data analysis. Courses may be offered in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and in other departments that have expertise in quantitative reasoning and data analysis and that offer appropriate courses, particularly in statistics or discrete structures.

A student who has achieved a score of 85 or above on the Regents “Math B” Exam (former “Mathematics Course III” Exam) or on a recognized standardized examination indicating readiness to enter precalculus will be considered to have fulfilled this requirement.

**Writing Intensive or Writing and Critical Inquiry:** Students must complete with a grade equivalent to C or higher or S a Writing Intensive or a Writing and Critical Inquiry course (depending on matriculation date). These courses use writing as an important tool in the approach to college-level disciplinary study and are not designed primarily to teach the technical aspects of writing. The emphasis is on using writing as a means of sharpening critical thinking in and increasing understanding of college coursework.

Students are expected to complete satisfactorily, with a grade of C or higher or S, Writing and Critical Inquiry by the end of their second semester at the University at Albany. In addition, students must meet advanced writing requirements as established by the department or program within which they are enrolled as a major.

Transfer students who enter the University with credit for an “English Composition” course or a two-semester combined literature and writing course will be considered to have completed the Writing Intensive or Writing and Critical Inquiry requirement at this University.

**The Arts:** Approved courses provide instruction in or about a medium of creative expression. Courses may focus on the physical practice and techniques of the medium, on its critical and theoretical interpretation, on its historical development, or on a combination of these approaches. Courses explicate the methods used to study and critique the medium as a vital element of personal or cultural expression and exchange.

Approved courses generally fall into one of five categories:

1. introductions to the disciplines
2. introductions to subfields in the disciplines
3. courses on the physical practice of a medium (studio art, creative writing, music composition or performance, dance, and theatre acting, directing or stagecraft)
4. instructional courses on the skills and methods required and their critical evaluation
5. courses focused upon performance

**Humanities:** Approved courses are concerned with defining and disputing that which is understood to be quintessentially "human:" studying language, texts, thought, and culture; their definition,

interpretation, and historical development; and their reflection of human values, beliefs, and traditions. Courses in a variety of disciplines explicate the underlying assumptions, methods of study, practices, theories, and disputes appropriate to those disciplines.

Approved courses generally fall into one of three categories:

1. introductions to basic materials and methods in the disciplines
2. introductions to subfields or groupings of materials in the disciplines
3. literature and culture courses taught in a foreign language higher than the third- semester level

**Natural Sciences:** Approved courses show how understandings of natural phenomena are obtained using the scientific method, including data collection, hypothesis development, employment of mathematical analysis, and critical evaluation of evidence. Courses provide an overview of major principles and concepts underpinning a discipline's current base of knowledge and discuss major topics at the current frontiers of disciplinary knowledge. Courses show how answers to fundamental questions in science can change the world in which we live and often explore how social issues can influence scientific research. Opportunities for scientific inquiry within laboratory and/or field settings may be provided.

Approved courses generally fall into one of three categories:

1. introductions to scientific disciplines, designed for majors, non-majors, or both
2. introductions to disciplinary subfields, designed for majors, non-majors, or both
3. courses open to majors and non-majors on broad topics that are addressed by one or more scientific disciplines and which may focus on the application of science to practical issues

**Social Sciences:** Approved courses provide theory and instruction on the role of institutions, groups and individuals in society. The focus of these courses is on the interaction of social, economic, political, geographic, linguistic, religious, and/or cultural factors, with emphasis on the ways humans understand the complex nature of their existence. Courses include discussion of skills and practices used by the social sciences: data collection, hypothesis development, employment of mathematical analysis, and critical evaluation of evidence. Opportunities to experience social science methods in the field may be provided.

Approved courses generally fall into one of three categories:

1. introductions to the various disciplines of the social sciences
2. introductions to disciplinary subfields, designed for majors, non-majors, or both
3. courses open to majors and non-majors on broad topics that are addressed by one or more social scientific disciplines

**U.S. History:** Approved courses focus on specific narratives or themes in the historical unfolding of the United States, including political, economic, social, cultural and/or intellectual dimensions. All courses will feature an explicitly historical organization; deal with topics of national, as opposed to regional or local, import; and consider a topic of sufficient specificity for the course to be coherent, but over a

period long enough to ensure that the historical dynamic is clearly visible. Students should acquire knowledge of substance and methods for comprehending the narratives or themes presented.

Certain of these courses will balance topical focus and chronological breadth. A student who has achieved a score of 85 or above on the Regents Examination in “United States History and Government” will be considered to have fulfilled the chronological breadth criterion. Therefore, such a student has the choice of fulfilling the requirement by completing a course chosen from the basic list (Part 1 U.S. History) available to all students or from a list of more specialized courses (Part 2 U.S. History). All other students must complete a Part 1 U.S. History course. The more specialized courses cover to some extent knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups, provide an understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world, and deal substantially with issues of American history.

***International Perspectives:*** Approved courses and study abroad programs develop students’ understanding of the history, cultures and/or traditions of any region, nation, or society beyond the United States. Students must fulfill this requirement in one of two ways:

1. participating in a study abroad program that earns University at Albany academic credit
2. taking a course that meets the learning objectives below (this includes courses taught in a foreign language beyond the elementary level that addresses histories, institutions, economies, societies, and cultures beyond those of the United States)

***Foreign Language:*** One course of at least 3 credits in a language other than English. This requirement is also considered satisfied for students who have

- demonstrated competency in a language other than English, including languages not currently offered for formal instruction at this university or
- passed a Regents “Checkpoint B” Examination or a Regents-approved equivalent in a foreign language, with a score of 85 or above or
- completed three or more years of a foreign language in high school with a course grade in the third year of 85, or B, or better or
- earned a score of 530 or better on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language

***Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:*** This category is a new requirement, specific to UAlbany. At least one course in this category will be required for all students matriculating in Fall 2013 and thereafter. Since it is a “local” requirement, even students who have completed all their general education courses at another SUNY college/university, or have completed their A.A. or A.S. at another SUNY campus, must complete 3 credits in this local UAlbany category.

Approved courses in the category of *Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* address a variety of issues focusing on challenges and opportunities in such areas as cultural diversity and pluralism, science and technology, social interaction, ethics, global citizenship, and others, and may include interdisciplinary approaches. Courses in this category will be expected to address the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of challenges that lie ahead as students move into the world beyond the University at Albany.

