

Proposed Changes to the Cultural Diversity Component of the Culture-Centered Inquiry Requirement

Motion

To expand the definition of, and thus the number of courses fulfilling, the Cultural Diversity component of the Culture-Centered Inquiry requirement.

Rationale

The Goals for Student Learning and Development call for our students to “understand social and cultural diversity in national and global contexts,” to “interact effectively and collaboratively with individuals and across social identities,” and to “interrogate one’s own values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences.” NSSE data has identified areas of concern in the degree to which we pursue these goals within the curriculum. For example, when students responded to question (1e) “Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments,” the answers revealed perceived decreases in that content over time (between student cohorts in 2003 and 2010), and increasing divergence in the experiences reported by seniors at Skidmore and peer institutions.

Currently, students take two courses to complete the Culture-Centered Inquiry requirement: one course in a foreign language or literature, and one course from either the “Non-

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Proposed language for the Culture-Centered Inquiry Requirement

Students fulfill this requirement by completing one course in a foreign language plus a second course designated as Cultural Diversity.

x Foreign Literature and Language: All students must choose one course at the appropriate

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Current language for the Culture-Centered Inquiry Requirement

Students fulfill this requirement by completing one course in a foreign language plus a second course designated as either non-Western culture or cultural diversity study.

- x Foreign Literature and Language: All students must choose one course at the appropriate level in a foreign language or foreign literature in its non-translated form.
- x Non-Western Culture: Students may fulfill the requirement by successfully completing one 3- or 4-credit course designated as Non-Western (NW).
- x Cultural Diversity Study: Students may fulfill the requirement by successfully completing one 3- or 4-credit course designated as Cultural Diversity (CD).

Current language for the Non-Western Cultures cluster of courses:

In completing a Non-Western Cultures course students are required to study culture(s) that are neither European, nor derived from European culture.

- a. The students may focus on a particular dimension of a culture or culture-area (e.g., social institutions, artistic productions, religious beliefs, historical experiences) as an organizing principle, but that dimension must be continuously placed in reference to others that also significantly shape the culture(s) in question;
- b. If the context for these courses is comparative and cross-cultural in nature the students must study in depth a culture, cultures, or culture area; such comparative courses will be focused on a small number of cultures;
- c. The NW course will normally include the cultures of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the indigenous, pre-European cultures of Australia and of the Western Hemisphere. Courses concerning areas with both Western and non-Western elements such as the Near East or the