WOU General Education Update

03/02/2020

Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning.

- Thomas Edison

Did you know that you can locate the options for any General Education requirement using the attribute search in both the Real Time search tool and in the College Scheduler tool?

Just select the subjects you want (or all of them if you are exploring the options) and pick the relevant General Education attribute to find the available courses.

The attribute search function is available for both the LACC and BA/BS Additional Graduation Requirements (AGRs) and for the new Gen Ed program.

Pending catalog updates

The General Education Committee has recently recommended a series of new additions to the program. You can learn more about the courses recently recommended for inclusion in General Education at www,wou.edu/gened/course-updates/

Programs wishing to strategize their General Education course planning and scheduling may wish to take note of categories that are particularly well-populated. We'll be continuing to collect Institutional Research data on enrollments to help guide future planning.

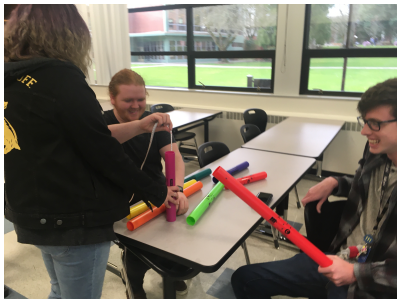
General Education Courses planned for 2020-21 catalog

Category	Recommended Catalog Additions 2020-21	Total Courses in Category 2020-21
Foundations: Communication and Language	**5**	**44**
Foundations: Critical Thinking	**6**	**11**
Foundations: Health Promotion	**1**	**2**
Exploring Knowledge: Literary & Aesthetic Perspectives	**5**	**61**
Exploring Knowledge: Scientific Perspectives	**2**	**25**
Exploring Knowledge: Social, Civic & Historic Perspectives	**2**	**45**
Integrating Knowledge: Citizenship, Social Responsibility & Global Awareness	**14**	**50**
Integrating Knowledge: Science, Technology & Society	**11**	**22**

Courses recommended for inclusion in the 2020-21 catalog will be available to students who began the program in previous catalog years, as long as they take them in the catalog year for which they were approved by Faculty Senate or after.

Seniors who changed catalog years and are in need of Integrating Knowledge coursework this year, may contact the General Education office for assistance finding options for completing this requirement.

First Year Seminar Spotlight



Students measure instruments called *Boomwhackers* to determine their fundamental frequencies and harmonic series using formulas from physics. The students then played the Boomwhackers as an ensemble to demonstrate the how the lengths of the instruments affect the pitches they create. Aside from the math, they had a great time whacking themselves and other objects with big plastic musical sticks on the lawn between Smith and APSC.

Dr. Leanne Merrill told us a little about her second term teaching the FYS 207 topic: Mathematics, Music and Mind.

Early in the term, we focused on developing foundational skills and concepts in mathematics, physics, music, and psychology. We learned about acoustics and sound waves, and how those concepts apply to musical instruments. We studied musical terminology and theory to describe various musical instruments, styles, and techniques. We also learned about the basic functions of the brain, and how the brain is affected by musical inputs. We've researched questions like: Why do a guitar and a clarinet sound different when they are playing the same note? Why do certain songs get stuck in our heads? How do cultural and societal influences affect how we listen to and interpret music?

We've answered these questions in various ways. The textbook for the course, *This is Your Brain on Music* by Daniel J. Levitin, provides great fodder for class discussions, and a jumping-off point for the musical, psychological, and mathematical ideas we later explore in depth. Students have also participated in several lab activities (sidebar) in which they are observing and interpreting data about physics and music.

Students have had many opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of this exciting and diverse material. They have written short papers, given class presentations, and participated in group activities as formative assessments. For their signature assignment, each student will create a report and presentation that explains the mathematical features of an instrument of their choice. Additionally, they'll analyze a piece of music that uses their instrument, and talk about the musical and psychological aspects of that piece.

In addition to the main curriculum of the course, I've woven in opportunities for students to learn about and interact with the campus and local communities. Each week, students are responsible for finding and reporting on arts, cultural, academic, and sport events on and off campus. I've also incorporated presentations from various campus groups such as Abby's House, Student Success and Advising, the Library, and the Food Pantry to introduce students to the services our campus has to offer them. I also brought my students to the Career Fair hosted by Service Learning and Career Development. Initially, they were nervous to attend a Career Fair as first-year students, but all of them eventually expressed gratitude for the experience!

On a personal level, teaching this First Year Seminar has given me the chance to combine my passions for both mathematics and music into a single cohesive course, and it's been a joy to teach slightly outside my usual subject area. It has also been incredibly freeing to teach a course that focuses on building foundational skills and exploring content, which has given me the time to address what students need both academically and outside of the classroom.

We're excited to announce our First Year Seminar Summer Pilot. Each Summer term will include an FYS 107 and an FYS 207 section available to students and we'll be gathering evidence on enrollment to help us plan future Summer offerings.