General Education Revision at St. Olaf:

August 2019 Update

from

the GE Summer Team and the GE Task Force

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General Education Revision: A Plan for the Fall of 2019

Greetings from the GE Summer Team and the GE Task Force,

Welcome back from summer break. As those of you who were part of the process last year will recall, we ended the 2018-19 academic year with the faculty voting to approve two resolutions related to GE revision. The first of these resolutions (CC Resolution 18/19-19) outlined the expectations for a 2019 Summer GE Transition Team and the 2019-2020 GE Task Force; it also charged the Summer Team and the Task Force to "continue to move toward the goal of introducing a revised general education curriculum for a vote or a series of votes at one or more faculty meetings during the Fall Semester of 2019." The second of these resolutions (CC Resolution 18/19-20) set a maximum size (but not a minimum size) on the general education curriculum that the Task Force is charged with presenting to the faculty.

Over the past three months, the six-person Summer Team has worked diligently on several interrelated tasks. We have continued to refine the draft of the proposed general education curriculum (the OLE Core), considered a variety of proposals related to the content of the curriculum and the process by which we as a faculty might make decisions about it, sought the guidance of a variety of members of the St. Olaf community, engaged in dialogue with the Board of Regents, and, in general, worked to develop a plan that will help us carry out the work that we've been charged to do: to prepare the faculty to vote on a revised GE curriculum in the fall.

The bulk of this rather lengthy document describes the refinements that we've made to the GE proposal (see pages 10-27). Let us provide an overview here. In deciding how to set our priorities for the summer, we focused on those areas that provoked the most commentary in discussions with the faculty in the spring and in our exchanges with the Board of Regents over the summer. We have tried to more clearly delineate the expectations for the two First-Year Experience courses (First-Year Seminar and Writing & Rhetoric), including how we expect to deliver on our objective of ensuring that students develop more "college knowledge" during this crucial period, and we have weighed the advantages and disadvantages of linking these two courses. We have spent time investigating the responsibilities and opportunities that come with our Lutheran affiliation, and we have sought to refine the two religion requirements--and the general education curriculum as a whole--in light of this work. We know that some faculty are particularly interested in having students produce portfolios as a way to encourage integration and reflection across the curriculum, and we've taken our best shot at developing a portfolio requirement that would achieve this objective without being overly burdensome. We have taken up the responsibility of mapping out how we might deliver ethics in the major and writing in the major, and we have made somewhat modest but meaningful changes to the language requirement, the creativity requirement, and the experiential learning requirement.

Over the past year, the GE Task Force has received a number of suggestions. Two of the most intriguing ideas came to us near the end of the spring semester: the Integrated Societal Engagement proposal and the Grand Challenges proposal. The Summer Team and the GE Task Force considered both of these proposals, and though we have not opted to suggest that either be adopted as a college-wide requirement at this time, we believe that the college should seek ways to pilot both of them. Both course models will fit readily within the OLE Core as presently proposed (Integrated Societal Engagement could be used to satisfy Ethics in the Major or the Social Investigation and Analysis requirement; Grand Challenges could be developed in the context of a few sections in the First-Year Experience and expand outward from there). We see these proposals as great examples of the creative thinking and new opportunities generated by general education revision.

One of the Summer Team's top priorities has been to design a process that will take us from where we are now to a vote on a general education resolution in the fall. In formulating a plan, we have been mindful of the desire expressed by various members of the faculty that we create opportunities for the faculty as a whole to make meaningful decisions about the general education curriculum before voting on a comprehensive GE resolution. At the same time, we have tried to find a way to satisfy the request from the Board of Regents that they have the opportunity to weigh in on the GE resolution during their meeting on campus in early October.

An overview of our plan in calendar form can be found on page 4. On the afternoon of August 29, we will discuss our plans for moving ahead on general education revision with particular attention to what we see as a key step in the process: preparing the faculty to vote on five important questions on October 3. These five votes, outlined on pages 5-9 of this document, will give the faculty the opportunity to decide whether the science requirement will require a lab section, whether all First-Year Experience courses will be linked, whether we will adopt Ethics in the Major and Writing in the Major, and whether we will have a portfolio requirement. After our initial discussion on August 29, the GE Faculty meeting on September 19 will most likely be our second opportunity to discuss these questions as a full faculty, though, depending on faculty interest, we could also schedule other events before or after this date. Then, at the regular faculty meeting on October 3, we will vote on each of the five questions, with each vote decided by a simple majority. At that point, though we may continue to make refinements, the content of the resolution that the GE Task Force will present to the faculty in November should be clear. On October 10, we expect the faculty to be joined by the Board of Regents (just as we were last October), for a discussion of general education revision. We hope that the Board of Regents will express their approval for our vision of general education revision at that time. Finally, at the November 7 faculty meeting we expect to present a comprehensive general education resolution to the faculty.

Why are we inviting the faculty to vote on these questions? This is a response to the request that faculty be given more opportunity to make decisions about GE Revision prior to the ultimate vote. The questions themselves are ones that have come from suggestions from faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Regents. They are legitimate, meaningful questions that, while

broadly compatible with the OLE Core that has been developed over the past several years, will result in distinctly different versions of our general education curriculum.

To turn now to more immediate matters, the plan for the afternoon of August 29 is to meet for our first full-faculty GE discussion of the fall at 1:30 in Urness. We will have a brief full faculty conversation, then head out for two rounds of breakout sessions (1:50-2:30 and 2:35-3:15), and finally reassemble in Urness at 3:20 for a 55-minute full faculty discussion. For the breakout sessions, each faculty member will be invited to choose two of seven sessions. Each session will have a different topic: First-Year Experience, Religion, Writing in the Major, Ethics in the Major, Religion, Scientific Exploration and Investigation, Language, and Portfolios. We will also have a breakout session during both rounds specifically for staff; staff are encouraged to attend one of these sessions as well as one of the others listed above.

As always, please feel free to get in touch with any suggestions, questions, or comments. Though a new academic year is about to begin, we promise to keep reading email sent to the email alias that the Task Force established last year (getaskforce1819@stolaf.edu). See you on August 29, if not before.

Sincerely,

The GE Summer Team: Kathy Glampe (To Include is To Excel Rep), Karil Kucera, Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, Jon Naito, Myrtó Neamonitaki (Student Rep), and Susie Smalling

The 2019-2020 GE Task Force: Shelly Dickinson, Tim Howe, Ulises Jovel Orantes (Student Rep), Karil Kucera, Jon Naito, Myrtó Neamonitaki (Student Rep), Jonathan O'Conner, Susie Smalling, and Tom Williamson

GE Revision: A Fall 2019 Calendar

August 29	Opening Day GE Discussion: 1:30-4:15. Discussion of the five questions and other developments since the spring
September 19	Faculty Meeting (GE): Further discussion of the five questions presented on August 29 and the OLE Core in general
October 3	October Faculty Meeting: Faculty vote on the five questions
October 9-11	Board of Regents Meet on Campus: GE Task Force seeks "pre-approval" from the Board for the OLE Core
October 10	Faculty Meeting (GE)
Mid to Late October	GE Task Force seeks CC approval for an OLE Core resolution
November 7	Faculty Votes on OLE Core Resolution

Question #1. A Lab Requirement for Science in the OLE Core

Should the science requirement (Scientific Exploration and Investigation) require a lab?

Option A: Yes, it should require that students participate in a lab section

Option B: No, it should not require that students participate in a lab section

Yes Considerations:	No Considerations:
- A vote "Yes" will mean that all courses that fulfill the science requirement in the OLE Core will include a lab component similar to that which is currently part of SED courses. - This will reinforce the traditional conception of lab research as essential to the doing of science. - All students will be exposed to lab science work at the undergraduate level, which may differ significantly from what they have done in high school. Some students may discover an interest in science or even a desire to major in a science discipline based upon their participation in a college-level lab course. - Even if all students are required to take part in a lab, departments and programs will retain some flexibility in determining how to meet this requirement, just as they do at present with SED courses.	- A vote "No" will allow science faculty to continue to offer--and to create in the future--a number of science courses geared toward non-majors that do not require a lab section. It may prove unsustainable for science departments to offer non-lab courses for non-majors if the faculty votes "yes." - Even if it is not a GE requirement, many students will take lab courses in order to fulfill requirements for a major, explore a potential major or career path, or simply out of interest in the subject matter. For instance, roughly one third of incoming St. Olaf students express an interest in medical school. - A more strategic use of lab space. Our lab space is limited. This limits the faculty's ability to design and offer new or more narrowly focused lab courses. If there is less demand for lab space from non-majors, faculty in NSM, SS, and IGS will be able to redirect more of this resource toward their majors. - Lab sections are a significant time commitment on the part of faculty and students.

Question #2. Linking First-Year Experience Courses

The March 2019 draft of the OLE Core proposed that all students complete a linked, two-course sequence during their first year at St. Olaf, with the first semester described as a "First-Year Seminar" and the second semester as "Writing and Rhetoric." (Students in first-year Conversation Programs would receive credit for "First-year Seminar" and "Writing and Rhetoric" in fall and spring semester of year one.) **Question #2 is should students be allowed to choose either linked or unlinked versions of "First-Year Seminar" and "Writing and Rhetoric"?**

> Option A: Yes, students should be allowed to choose **either** linked or unlinked versions of "First-Year Seminar" and "Writing and Rhetoric"

> Option B: No, students should **only** be allowed to choose linked versions of "First-Year Seminar" and "Writing and Rhetoric," with the exception of students who fail to pass one of the above classes and those who receive pre-college credit for "Writing and Rhetoric."

Yes	No
Considerations: ● Not all faculty want to teach linked courses. A vote "Yes" will allow faculty to choose whether to take part in team teaching or not. For those who choose not to participate in a linked control over their teaching. ● Not all students want to take such courses. A vote "Yes" will give students greater flexibility in setting up their schedules and choosing a learning environment. This flexibility might be especially valuable during the first-year, as students are making the often difficult transition to college and are focused on exploring various academic paths. ● A vote "Yes" will make it easier to accommodate students who receive pre-college credit for "Writing and Rhetoric" and those who fail to pass either "First-Year Seminar" or "Writing and Rhetoric."	Considerations: ● This will ensure that every St. Olaf student participates in at least one learning community. As a high impact practice, the college has long sought out ways to give more students access to this valuable experience. ● This will encourage faculty collaboration and peer-to-peer faculty development. ● Even if we linked first-year seminar and writing and rhetoric, there would be ways to accommodate students who fail to pass one of the above classes and those who receive pre-college credit for "Writing and Rhetoric." Space would be set aside for students who need to complete only one of the two linked courses, and we could give students the option of either taking one semester of a two-semester sequence or taking a stand-alone one semester course.

Question #3. Ethics in the Major

Should the GE Task Force propose the development of "Ethics in the Major" as outlined (see pages 14-15 of this document)?

Option A: Yes, the GE Task Force should propose "Ethics in the Major" as part of the OLE Core.

Option B: No, the GE Task Force should not propose "Ethics in the Major" as part of the OLE Core.

Yes	No
Considerations: ● Requiring departments and programs to develop a specific plan for their majors to engage with ethics will help ensure that ethical considerations will be at the center of the intellectual, professional, and personal development of each student. ● Ethics in the major will distribute ethical inquiry across the campus, including in departments and programs where it has been less routinely encountered. ● Ethics in the major has been designed to give departments and programs flexibility in choosing a model (or combination of models) that satisfies the needs of their discipline, their academic program, and their students.	Considerations: ● "Ethics in the Major" will impose additional expectations on departments and programs which, in some cases, may be difficult to meet. ● "Ethics in the Major" will impose additional expectations on students.

Question #4. Writing in the Major

Should the GE Task Force propose the development of "Writing in the Major" as outlined (see pages 14-15 of this document)?

Option A: Yes, the GE Task Force should propose "Writing in the Major" as part of the OLE Core.

Option B: No, the GE Task Force should not propose "Writing in the Major" as part of the OLE Core.

Yes	No
Considerations:	Considerations:
● The ability to write and communicate is highly context dependent and departments and programs are well positioned to ensure that students are receiving high quality, relevant preparation in this respect. ● The system that has been devised will give departments and programs considerable flexibility in identifying a solution that is compatible with their other objectives. ● Developing a plan for writing in the major will help departments and programs clarify their expectations and ambitions for their majors in general.	● "Writing in the Major" will impose additional expectations on departments and programs which, in some cases, may be difficult to meet. ● "Writing in the Major" will impose additional expectations on students.

Question #5. Portfolio

Should all students be required to complete a portfolio as outlined (see pages 20-21 of this document)?

Option A: Yes, students should be required to complete a portfolio

Option B: No, students should not be required to complete a portfolio

Yes	No
Considerations:	Considerations:
● Completing a portfolio will allow students to reflect on the totality of their education at St. Olaf, potentially integrating general education, work done as part of major or concentration requirements, and electives. It could also provide opportunities for students to integrate curricular with co-curricular experiences. ● A portfolio might help us to reset the advisor-advisee relationship, making for more meaningful conversations and, ultimately, more meaningful relationships. ● As designed, the portfolio will not require extensive additional work from faculty beyond what we already do. ● The portfolio will allow the college to fundamentally change the way that we go about assessment. We can rely on random sampling of student artifacts rather than our current assessment practices. This is likely to result in more reliable assessment data. It may also mean less work for faculty.	● The costs may outweigh the benefits in terms of money, time, and/or energy. ● Some students and faculty will approach the portfolio as a superficial, bureaucratic exercise ● A portfolio will impose additional expectations on academic advisors, which, in some cases, may be difficult to meet. Note: A "No" vote will simply mean that the GE Task Force will not include the portfolio in the list of requirements for the OLE Core resolution. At a later date, the faculty would be free to consider an alternative portfolio proposal or alternative requirements in terms of reflection and integration.

The OLE Core: A Summary of the Updated Draft

First-Year Experience (2 credits). A two-semester course sequence that focuses on engaging the OLE Questions. The first course in the sequence, First-Year Seminar, emphasizes reading, critical thinking, conversation, and academic habits for the liberal arts. The second course, Writing and Rhetoric, introduces and engages students in academic and public discourse (audience, purpose, genre, context) related to a particular topic. (See pages 12-13)

Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith and Values (1 credit). A course that builds religious literacy with a focus on one religious tradition or a set of related religious traditions. Students not only work to develop the skills necessary for critically interpreting and understanding religious life, they also gain a more complex understanding of the relationship between religion and community and the role of religion in answering fundamental questions about existence, meaning, and ethics. (See pages 16-17)

Christian Theology in Dialogue (1 credit). A course that focuses on the dialogue between Christian theology and the theology (or its equivalent) of another religious tradition or other form of inquiry. (See pages 18-19)

Power, Inequity and Race (1 credit). In this course, students gain deep, contextualized knowledge of how race and ethnicity manifest themselves in U.S. institutions and intersect with other forms of structural inequity such as gender, religion, sexual orientation, and social class. They will acquire familiarity with cultural differences and their contributions to a multicultural society and a clear understanding of how these differences have been shaped by power and privilege, using concepts and tools of inquiry from at least one discipline to critically analyze race and ethnicity in the United States, but need not focus exclusively on the U.S.

Global Histories and Societies (1 credit). This course asks students to interrogate the ways in which the past is known, constructed, deconstructed, curated and preserved by the present, without privileging any tradition, region or period; global in scope and intent. Courses will focus on analyzing and understanding textual, artistic and oral evidence within the broader historical and cultural contexts in which they were created.

Scientific Inquiry (1 credit). Students will learn about their place in the world and develop skills to lead a meaningful and responsible life in a global community. Courses focused on scientific inquiry must include significant blocks of time to explore through observation, measurement, experimentation and data analysis. Through their significant exploratory components, scientific inquiry courses deeply engage students in collaborative problem solving, design challenges, data analysis, and consensus building.

Social Investigation and Analysis (1 credit). In this course, students use social science approaches to better understand human complexity, and analyze important social issues

through theories and empirical evidence while developing their ability to evaluate social science research.

Writing In Context (**1 credit**). Writing intensive courses are 200-level, general education writing courses, emphasizing Ole Questions 2 and 3, typically taken during the sophomore or junior year. They bridge the first-year foundations of critical reading, writing, inquiry, discussion, and information literacy with deeper learning and transfer as students 1) navigate one or more majors/concentrations; 2) engage in academic and co-curricular experiences that invest in vocation and career planning; 3) develop a sense of place/role in community that invites effective communication.

Quantitative Reasoning (1 credit). In this course, students gain knowledge of quantitative and computational methods. They learn how to apply quantitative and computational knowledge in contexts of interest to the student. Examples of students' applications of quantitative reasoning could be collected in portfolios and evaluated to determine whether they contain evidence that the QR intended learning outcomes have been satisfied.

Language (1-3 credits). This requirement aims to develop intermediate language skills; extend understanding of language as a system; generate reflection about one's own language(s) and culture(s); and engage critically with the perspectives, practices, and products of users of different languages. With some exceptions for transfer credits, all incoming students must complete at least one course and a maximum of three courses at St. Olaf in order to fulfill the language requirement. Generally, students fulfill this requirement by completing a 4th-semester or higher course in French, German, or Spanish or completing a 3rd-semester or higher course in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian, or Russian. Students who begin French, German, or Spanish in the 1st-semester course, however, fulfill the language requirement by completing the 3rd-semester course. (See page 22-23)

Creativity (1 credit). The Creativity requirement asks students to explore either "making and doing" - creation as an embodied experience whether it be in the form of a studio art project, a short film, a work of fiction, a dance or music piece or even a Rube Goldberg machine - or the products of "making and doing", i.e., art, film, literature, music, performance, or visual culture. Many options are available to enable students to choose a creative outlet that suits their style and interests, but the overall goals of the Creativity requirement are the same for all courses across the college. (See page 24)

Experiential Learning in Context (0-1 credit; can be satisfied by a non-credit bearing experience). All students will be required to engage in work that integrates academic and experiential learning by applying classroom theories and ideas in a practical setting and/or drawing upon experiential learning to advance their understanding in an academic setting. All students will have the opportunity to benefit from the mentoring, guided inquiry, and reflection that characterize experiential learning.   (See page 25-26)

The First-Year Experience

A two-semester course sequence that focuses on engaging in the Ole questions. The first course in the sequence, First-Year Seminar (FYS) emphasizes reading, critical thinking, conversation, and academic habits for the liberal arts. The second course, Writing and Rhetoric (W&R), introduces and engages students in academic and public discourse (audience, purpose, genre, context) related to a particular topic.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

First-Year Seminar:

Students will demonstrate the ability to

- Respond with explicit reasoning to OLE question 1, *In what ways can I understand the world and my role in it?*
- Explain the concept of academic conversation and recognize different ways of learning and making knowledge.
- Learn and practice foundational academic habits for the liberal arts:
    - Use critical reading and annotation to show how texts communicate to particular audiences for particular purposes
    - Write to learn, to reflect, to respond to texts, and to understand one's own prior knowledge.
    - Ask questions, gather information from multiple sources of print and digital information, collaborate, and determine the relevance and credibility of their sources.
    - Prepare for and participate in productive and respectful classroom discussion

Writing and Rhetoric:

Students will demonstrate the ability to

- Explain how writers and speakers, including class peers, situate themselves in relation to course topics.
- Develop and express ideas through the following critical activities:
    - evaluate claims and evidence in a variety of texts.
    - ask research questions, identify, locate, and evaluate sources, and manage research-driven projects.
    - synthesize information from a variety of sources to express understanding of course-related ideas.
- Evaluate and use appropriate technologies for different purposes and audiences.
- Engage in writing as a systematic, interactive process, using flexible strategies for generating drafts, responding to feedback, revising, editing, and proofreading.

Course Guidelines with Comments:

The First Year Experience courses must explore the open, linked, and enduring questions--OLE questions--through a wide variety of topics. The FYE can take the form of a conversation program such as "Great Con," a linked first-year course sequence, or, potentially (depending on the outcome of the faculty vote on Question #2), in standalone seminars.

As part of students' FYS and Writing and Rhetoric courses, students will be required to attend at least three St Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) workshops on topics such as wellness and belonging, vocation and career, registration, study strategies and college resources. The purpose of these workshops is to increase students' knowledge of college resources and expectations, including the multiple opportunities for deeper learning available.

FAQ:
Q1: *How will the FYE work with the conversation programs?*
A1: The first course in the conversation program will satisfy the First Year Seminar and the second semester course will satisfy the Writing and Rhetoric requirement.

Q2: *Will all First Year Seminar and Writing and Rhetoric courses be linked?*
A2: This will depend on the outcome of the faculty vote on Question #2. Allowing flexibility so that the First Year Experience can be satisfied through a conversation program, linked course sequence or unlinked courses would provide flexibility for both students and faculty. For example, a student who transfers to St. Olaf in February of their first year could join an unlinked Writing and Rhetoric course with ease.

Q3: *Are there specific themes or topics to which the First Year Seminar and Writing and Rhetoric courses must adhere?*
A3: No. As long as the course addresses the Ole Questions and teaches the foundational academic habits of the liberal arts and introduces and engages students in academic and public discourse (audience, purpose, genre, context), any topic may be used. For example, a theme might be a "Grand Challenge" or another topic of broad relevance.

Q4: *How will the required SOAR workshops work?*
A4: Students will be required to "swipe" their ID when they attend a qualifying workshop. Faculty will be provided with a list of students who did or did not satisfy this requirement of the course.

Q5: *What about the Grand Challenges proposal?*
The Grand Challenges proposal outlines an intriguing model with, among other things, its focus on problem-based learning, community building, and civic engagement; however, carrying it off successfully will require further development of the general model and considerable work on the part of faculty and staff. The GE Task Force recommends piloting this proposal within one or more of the three options (conversation programs, linked-course sequences, and/or stand alone courses) available to incoming first-year students. It can always be expanded from that point.

Writing in the Major & Ethics in the Major

On several occasions over the past few years, the St. Olaf faculty has affirmed the idea that our new general education curriculum should be smaller than our current general education curriculum. One consequence of a smaller GE is that it seems worthwhile to consider whether elements of a student's education that had previously been addressed in the general education curriculum might instead be addressed within a student's major.

With one exception, the plans for Writing in the Major and Ethics in the Major are quite similar. Writing in the Major specifies that a minimum of 50% of the content must be delivered at the 300-level or above, while Ethics in the Major does not carry this condition. This is because Writing in the Major is envisioned as the final component of a three-part sequence ("Writing and Rhetoric," "Writing in Context," and "Writing in the Major").

Writing in the Major

Individual departments and programs will be responsible for reviewing the structure of their major and completing an application that explains how their students will achieve an ability to write within their major. As a starting point, departments or programs might consider the following set of models:

Model #1: Students are required to take a 300-level seminar that focuses on writing in the major in the major department or program.

Model #2: Students choose a 300-level writing intensive seminar from a pre-approved list. This list of courses might include courses within the major department (or program) as well as those taught within other departments or programs. Students might also have the option to petition the major department/program for approval of a course that is not on the list. This model might be especially practical for interdisciplinary programs and small departments.

Model #3: The distributed approach: A department or program builds writing in the major into two (or more) courses required for the major with particular units, modules, and/or assignments. A minimum of 50% of the content involved in justifying the fulfilment of writing in the major must occur at the 300-level.

Note: In all cases, relevant coursework must include both writing assignments and instruction in writing.

As with other aspects of curriculum development, this process will be directed by the Curriculum Committee. The list of models above is a set of examples; other models will be considered.

Ethics in the Major

Individual departments and programs will be responsible for reviewing the structure of their major and completing an application that explains how their students will receive instruction in ethics and opportunities to wrestle with ethical questions. As a starting point, departments or programs might consider any of the following models (or a combination thereof):

Model #1: Students are required to complete a course that focuses on ethics in their major department or program.

Model #2: Students choose an ethics-focused course from a pre-approved list. This list of courses might include courses within the major department (or program) as well as those taught within other departments or programs. Students might also have the option to petition the major department/program for approval of a course that is not on the list. This model might be especially practical for interdisciplinary programs and small departments.

Model #3: The distributed approach: A department or program builds instruction in ethics and opportunities to wrestle with ethical questions into two (or more) courses required for the major with particular units, modules, and/or assignments.

Model #4: Integrated Societal Engagement. In April of 2019, a group of faculty submitted a proposal to the GE Task Force that outlined interdisciplinary courses in "Ethical and Empirical Perspectives." In these team-taught courses pairing an expert in ethics with a specialist in the social or natural sciences, "students would receive training in/exposure to social/natural-scientific modes of analysis and investigation alongside ethical modes of analysis and investigation, with emphasis on integrating the two to address problems of profound public concern." Departments or programs might decide to offer, accept, or require "Ethical and Empirical Perspectives" courses of this type as part of any of the three models described above. This might be an especially attractive model for departments and programs in the social sciences and interdisciplinary programs that involve social science methodologies. Depending on course design, it seems likely that non-majors might also be interested in such courses.

Note: In all cases, relevant coursework must include both instruction and assignments that center on ethical questions.

As with other aspects of curriculum development, this process will be directed by the Curriculum Committee. The list of models above is a set of examples; other models will be considered.

Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values

Description

A course that builds religious literacy with a focus on one religious tradition or a set of related religious traditions. Students not only work to develop the skills necessary for critically interpreting and understanding religious life, they also gain a more complex understanding of the relationship between religion and community and the role of religion in answering fundamental questions about existence and meaning.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Critically interpret and understand religious life (texts, symbols, and actions).
2. Reflect on how faith practices, wisdom, and communities shape knowledge of the world, including questions of existence and meaning.
3. Reflect critically on the role of context(s) in shaping religious life.
4. Compare and contrast religious and non-religious perspectives.

Comments:

As a Lutheran college and a member of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU), St. Olaf shares with its peers a common calling. A recent NECU publication, 'Rooted and Open: The Common Calling of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities,' offers a useful description that, while speaking to this broader common calling, also resonates with the specific history and contemporary existence of St. Olaf: "Neither sectarian nor secular, NECU colleges and universities take a third path of being rooted in the Lutheran intellectual and educational traditions while being open to others." Both the "Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values" and the "Theologies in Dialogue" requirements aim to help students develop religious literacy while reflecting the NECU's articulation of Lutheran education. Many students will fulfill the Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values requirement with a course that focuses on Christian ideas specifically; all students will fulfill this requirement with a course that is consistent with the aims and ambitions of Lutheran education. In the words of "Rooted and Open" once again, Lutheran colleges "intentionally pursue conversation about big questions from the full array of religious and secular academic traditions. In so doing, they shape character, invite vocational discernment and build religious literacy."

FAQ:

Q1: *Will students take a "Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values" course during their first year (as students currently do with BTS-B)?*

A1: Not necessarily. Some students will choose to fulfill this requirement during their first year, while others will fulfill this requirement during a subsequent year. For a variety of reasons, some students will be more comfortable taking a course like this during a later year. Also, allowing students to determine when to fulfill this requirement will give them more flexibility in assembling their first-year schedule.

Q2: *Will students take their two required religion courses in a particular sequence (such as "Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values" first and "Theologies in Dialogue" second)?*

A2: This is still under discussion. There are arguments for requiring that these courses be taken in a particular sequence (with "Critical Understanding" first and "Theologies in Dialogue" second), as well as arguments for a more flexible approach that would allow students to fulfill these two requirements in either order or concurrently. We welcome input on this question.

Q3: *Is there a requirement that "Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values" courses include Christian material?*

A3: No, though given our faculty and our student body it is quite likely that many courses that fulfill this requirement will have a Christian focus. Note that all students will be required to engage with Christianity as part of their "Christian Theology in Dialogue" course. For more on this topic, see "Comments" and "Rooted and Open: The Common Calling of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities."

Q4: *If this is the replacement for the "Biblical and Theological Studies-Bible" (BTS-B) requirement, doesn't this new requirement drift from our identity as a Lutheran college? Shouldn't we require that all students take a course on the Bible?*

A4: The breadth of this requirement is intended to help foster a more complex understanding of religion and its place in the world among students of all religious and non-religious backgrounds. Fostering an appreciation for religion in this fashion is in keeping with the principle of Lutheran education as "neither sectarian nor secular." As mentioned in A3, given our faculty and our student body, it is quite likely that many students will fulfill this requirement with a course with a Christian focus that involves reading the Bible.

Christian Theology in Dialogue

Description

A course that focuses on the dialogue between Christian theology and the theology (or its equivalent) of another religious tradition or other form of inquiry.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Construct theological knowledge.

2. Place Christian theologies in dialogue with theologies (or their equivalent) from other religious traditions or other forms of inquiry.

3. Understand how claims and arguments that have arisen in Christian theology interact with those that have arisen in other religious traditions or other forms of inquiry

4. Reflect critically on the engagement, cooperation, conflict, and solidarity of the communities or discourses in question, in historical and/or contemporary context.

Course Guidelines with Comments:

Christian Theology in Dialogue courses must be structured around a particular dialogue and give equal weight to the major participants in this dialogue. For instance, a course that centers on the relationship between Christianity and Buddhism should not privilege one of these traditions over the other. The course should be structured as a true dialogue. In this fashion, these courses are intended to model and foster the spirit of radical hospitality that is central to Lutheran education. No matter the identity of the student in question, Christian Theology in Dialogue courses should help prepare individual students for a life of service to and with the neighbor.

As indicated in the Intended Learning Outcomes, "Christian Theology in Dialogue" courses may pair Christian Theology with a non-religious form of inquiry. For instance, a course might focus on the relationship between Christian theology and scientific thought or Christian theology and political philosophy.

For the purposes of this requirement, a course may approach Christian theology in either a narrow (e.g. "contemporary Lutheran theology") or a broad (e.g. "Christian theology") fashion. Theologies in Dialogue courses may include multiple Christian traditions, but cannot focus only

on the pairing of two forms of Christian theology; instead, they should focus on Christian theology (narrowly or broadly defined) and something else.

Note: The qualification "theologies (or their equivalent)" has been made because not all religious traditions use the term "theology."

FAQ:

Q1: *Are there any prerequisites for "Christian Theology in Dialogue" courses?*

A1: Not necessarily. See Q2 under "Critical Understanding of Religion, Faith, and Values." If the two religion courses are not placed in a set sequence, any prerequisites for these courses will be proposed by the course proposer.

Portfolio Requirement

Ideal general education does not simply offer siloed content or skill development with little to no connection among areas of study and experiences. Students should have opportunities to analyze and synthesize their learning as it relates to their development and futures post matriculation. Such efforts minimize the chances the general education process will be reduced to "checking boxes" of requirement completion with no thought to the meaning of courses/learning and their connection to their major, electives and students' futures post St. Olaf.

Portfolios provide an evidenced based practice for encouraging integration of learning. Available research suggests students who complete a portfolio as part of their degree process have higher GPAs, higher graduation rates and higher persistence rates than their control group peers (Watson et al., 2016). Portfolios offer learners the opportunity to assemble key artifacts of their education and reflect on those artifacts and the processes leading to them in a formal, structured way. Specifically, the portfolio process encourages:

> *Remembering*: allows students to catalogue learning for future review and facilitates higher level integration of learning using the ability to look back at older content and integrate it with the new

> *Analyzing*: students engage in multitemporal (past, present, future) analysis of the connections among content and learning experiences

> *Envisioning*: students contemplate what learning experiences are best for moving forward in their educations including identifying need areas

> *Synthesizing*: given all the learning experiences, students assess who they are now, how their thinking has evolved and what the learning process means for them moving forward in their lives
> (Mathews-DeNatele, 2019)

Assessment and the Portfolio:

In addition to serving as a way for students to integrate their learning, the portfolio will provide data for assessment of the St. Olaf curriculum. All students will tag the content in their selected artifacts according to key learning outcomes. For example, a student whose artifact is a research paper reporting and interpreting quantitative data might tag the paper as "applied quantitative reasoning," "social analysis" and "writing in context." A student writing a blog about current political events in a second language might label that artifact "second language proficiency" and "rhetorical skills." A student submitting a video clip of a dance performance

might tag the video "creative expression." Other possible tags could include "scientific inquiry" and "critical synthesis of learning." Having all students create a portfolio of artifacts tagged according to key educational outcomes allows the college to take a random sample and increase the reliability and validity of assessment data.

The portfolio at St. Olaf College:

- Students will collect artifacts throughout their time at St. Olaf college sufficient to have at least one example of each of the key content/skill areas from the curriculum. The student will tag each artifact according the content or skill they feel it represents. Students should have a minimum of two artifacts in their portfolio from each year and each artifact should have no more than three tags. A student may not tag an artifact prior to completing a course focused on a particular learning outcome. For example, a student cannot tag an artifact "second language proficiency" prior to completing the language general education requirement.

 - Students will complete two reflections on their learning. The first will be completed as part of the student's second semester first year seminar with the timing determined and approval granted by the instructor. The final reflection will be completed just prior to the final advising period of a student's final semester. The advisor will approve the reflection after a discussion of the document in an advising session. Both of these reflections will be artifacts in the portfolio tagged with critical synthesis of learning.

> Year one reflection: The student will reflect on the Ole questions as their first year concludes. These include: In what ways can I understand the world and my role in it? What skills do I need to live a meaningful and purposeful life in community? How can I live responsibly and prepare for challenges in a dynamic, global society? The students will have a common understanding of how the Lutheran heritage of St. Olaf seeks, "to train graduates who are called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish" (Rooted and Open, 2018, p. 8). They will also reflect on the meaning of this goal as they plan the rest of their study at St. Olaf and what comes after for their lives. The reflection should include citation of specific course content and learning.

> Final year reflection: The students will reflect on their first year reflection. What has changed and what has stayed the same or been strengthened in how they view the Ole questions and serving the neighbor? What learning has contributed to their changing views? How does their St. Olaf education affect their immediate and long term vocational and life goals? The reflection should include citation of specific course content and learning from general education courses, electives and major/concentration courses.

- Students will complete a vocation section of their portfolio related to their major and goals after St. Olaf college. All students will include a resume (or equivalent) and cover letter or professional statement approved by the Piper Center in this section. The rest of the content of the vocation section will be determined by individual majors.

Language

This requirement aims to develop intermediate language skills; extend understanding of language as a system; generate reflection about one's own language(s) and culture(s); and engage critically with the perspectives, practices, and products of users of different languages. With some exceptions for transfer credits, all incoming students must complete at least one course and a maximum of three courses at St. Olaf in order to fulfill the language requirement. Generally, students fulfill this requirement by

- completing a 4th-semester or higher course in French, German, or Spanish

OR

- completing a 3rd-semester or higher course in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian, or Russian

Students who begin French, German, or Spanish in the 1st-semester course, however, fulfill the language requirement by completing the 3rd-semester course.

Draft Intended Learning Outcomes
Students will demonstrate
1. intermediate language skills appropriate for the level completed and the ability to use those skills to communicate and to interpret texts and contexts made by and for native users of the language.
2. awareness of language as a system and of the ways in which language reflects culture and organizes thought processes and information.
3. knowledge of multiple perspectives of at least one non-English speaking culture by evaluating and analyzing authentic materials in that language to explore important issues.
4. the ability to reflect critically on the connections and differences between their own experience and the diverse experiences and perspectives of users of other languages.

FAQs
Q1: What if I've already studied a language somewhere else?
A1: Generally, all students take at least one language course at St. Olaf. If a student has already studied a language and wishes to continue with that language at St. Olaf, they will take a placement test offered through the department or program to determine the appropriate placement level. Based on placement, some students may begin at a higher level in order to fulfill the requirement. A student may instead choose to begin studying a different language at St. Olaf. Students with a native language other than English, see Q2.

Q2: What if my native language is not English?
A2: Students who enter St. Olaf College with a native language other than English should consult the registrar. These students may have their foreign language requirement fulfilled by showing evidence of proficiency in their native language or other means.

Q3: Can I place out of a language?
A3: Generally, all students take at least one St. Olaf course to satisfy the language requirement. Based on placement, some students may begin at a higher level in order to fulfill the requirement. There are some exceptions for students whose native language is not English (see Q2) and transfer students (see Q4).

Q4: What about transfer students?
A4: Transfer students who enter St. Olaf as juniors or seniors may receive credit for fulfilling the language requirement if they completed a 4th-semester course in French, German, or Spanish or 3rd-semester course in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian, or Russian at an accredited college or university. Otherwise, students should take a placement test offered by the department or program to continue study of a familiar language or start at the beginning level of a new language.

Q5: Will my language courses count towards a language major?
A5: Across the college, different majors have different requirements. Check the St. Olaf website and consult with faculty in the specific department or program to determine the requirements for the major you are considering.

Q6: Do I have to take a language course if I have a learning disability?
A6: Students with a documented learning disability should confer with a disability and access specialist in the Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS) in Tomson Hall 153. Students who do not have a documented disability but believe they may qualify should contact the Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS) in Tomson Hall 153.

Creativity

The Creativity requirement asks students to explore either "making and doing" - creation as an embodied experience whether it be in the form of a studio art project, a short film, a work of fiction, a dance or music piece or even a Rube Goldberg machine - or the products of "making and doing", i.e., art, film, literature, music, performance, or visual culture.

Many options are available to enable students to choose a creative outlet that suits their style and interests, but the overall goals of the Creativity requirement are the same for all courses across the college. Upon completion of the Creativity requirement, students will be able to:

1. cultivate, improvise, adapt, and apply flexible strategies as an iterative, reflective process for creative inquiry in disciplinary or interdisciplinary contexts;
2. integrate cognition and action to design experiences that include embodied, applied solutions to open-ended problems;
3. develop inclusive practices that deepen their capacity for collaboration, empathy, and resilience;
4. identify, analyze and evaluate the formal properties of primary works across a variety of media;
5. recognize the relationship between creative works and their cultural context.

FAQ:

Q1: Will students be allowed to fulfill the Creativity requirement within their major?
A1: Yes, although students majoring in areas such as studio art, music and dance will be encouraged to explore other areas to see how areas outside of their own major work through the creative process.

Experiential Learning in Context

<u>Description</u>

The Experiential Learning in Context requirement promotes the integration of academic and experiential learning through the application of classroom learning in a practical setting, while also drawing upon experiential learning to advance understanding in an academic setting. Though it can take one of several different forms, this requirement ensures that all students have the opportunity to benefit from the mentoring, guided inquiry, and reflection that characterize experiential learning.

A student can satisfy this requirement by taking part in any of the following:

1. An off-campus interim program
2. Off-campus study of at least one semester
3. Directed Undergraduate Research (DUR)
4. A CURI project or other research opportunity, even if non-credit bearing (if approved)
5. A credit-bearing internship
6. A non-credit bearing internship (if approved)
7. Other relevant courses and experiences equivalent to those above (if approved)

<u>Comments:</u>

The Experiential Learning in Context requirement differs from the other OLE Core requirements in two respects. First of all, students can satisfy the requirement not only with a credit bearing activity (such as a course), but also, in some instances, by taking part in a non-credit bearing activity such as CURI research or an internship that does not carry academic credit. Second, a student can use a single course to fulfill the Experiential Learning requirement and another OLE Core requirement. For instance, a student who takes part in a single off-campus interim course can fulfill both the Experiential Learning requirement and a second requirement such as language or global histories and societies at the same time. Students who participate in study abroad for one semester (or more) can use this experience to fulfill the Experiential Learning in Context requirement. They can also use coursework undertaken while abroad to fulfill other OLE Core requirements.

<u>FAQ</u>

Q1: What about ACE courses?
A1: In an earlier draft of the OLE Core, the GE Task Force considered including ACE courses on the list of approved experiences. The Task Force supports the concept of including ACE courses; however, we have determined that it is not practical to include them at this time. Further work is necessary to determine the guidelines for ACE courses that would offer

opportunities that are comparable to off-campus study, undergraduate research, and internships.

Q2: What about employment and student leadership?
A2: In an earlier draft of the OLE Core, the GE Task Force considered including employment and leadership positions on the list of approved experiences. There are considerable logistical challenges in including either of these as options, and, as with ACE courses, the Task Force has decided against proposing these as approved experiences at this time.

Q3: *Why should we require something that nearly all students are already doing?*

A3: The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that all students have an opportunity to integrate academic and experiential learning by applying classroom theories and ideas in a practical setting and draw upon experiential learning to advance their understanding in an academic setting. It's true that participation in these immersive activities is already high: since 2015, 93%-95% of all St. Olaf graduates have completed at least 1 experiential internship, ACE course, research experience, or off-campus course (only 33 students of the 692 members of the Class of 2018 did not complete any). Given that graduates who do not complete an internship, ACE course, research experience, or off-campus study are disproportionately first-generation and low-income students, the proposed requirement is aligned with institutional goals for equity of participation, in this case, for all St. Olaf students to benefit from the mentoring/guided inquiry and reflection that characterize these experiences. The proposed requirement is aligned with the Strategic Plan goals and is likely to support the work of the Retention Task Force, given research linking immersive experiential learning to student retention.

Q4: Can a student petition to have an experience or course that is not on the list satisfy this requirement?
A4: We may want to consider this option.