

“Grand Challenges*” & the OLE Core



A Proposal Presented to the GE Task Force & St Olaf Faculty
May 2, 2019

** Note: We are excited about the intention behind the title of this proposed requirement, “Grand Challenges”. However, this title has also been used for other GE requirements, including a requirement at [UMN](#). We are open to making changes to this title in order to make it more specific to St. Olaf.*

Addresses OLE Questions & Complements Current Proposal by Encouraging Students to:

1. Self-select & participate in common experiences designed to foster community (*student agency*)
2. Consider how different societies, cultures, and faith traditions have understood and continue to understand local/global issues through an interdisciplinary lens (*breadth*)
3. Creatively & collaboratively design applied solutions for the common good (*forward looking; college mission*)

Fosters Collaboration & Innovation by Encouraging Faculty to:

1. Determine (with or w/out student input) “Grand Challenges” topics in a 4yr. cycle (*faculty owned and supported*)
2. Team or parallel teach in interdisciplinary contexts (*resource sensitive*)
3. Connect classroom material & assessment to campus-wide initiatives & civic engagement opportunities (*inclusive access & equity*)

Example 1: An Attribute Approach

- Key aspect is student agency/freedom in course scheduling
- Students can take classes to address whatever challenge(s) is/are of greatest interest to them
- Students fulfill “Grand Challenges” requirements by taking three (?) classes
- “Grand Challenges” classes can be independent of other GEs or required to satisfy an additional GE

Challenge #1: Power, Inequity & Race <i>* Required of all students?</i>	RACE 121: Introduction to Race & Ethnic Studies
Challenge #2: Climate Change	GERM 276: Green Germany
Challenge #3: Gender & Sexuality	BIO 124: The Biology of Women

Example 2: A Syncretization Approach

- Key aspect is opportunity for team teaching/interdisciplinarity
- Students fulfill “Grand Challenges” requirements by taking three (?) classes
- “Grand Challenges” classes are linked to a second class on a common topic; collaborative course design and team/parallel teaching is encouraged
- Classes may meet GE and/or major requirements

Challenge #1: Gender & Sexuality	Topic: The Nature of Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Biology of Reproduction (scientific exploration)● Feminist Theology (theologies in dialogue)
Challenge #2: Climate Change	Topic: Anthropogenic Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Global Climate Change (scientific exploration)● Environmental Economics (social investigation)
Challenge #3: Technology	Topic: Technology and Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Artificial Intelligence (quantitative reasoning)● Ethics of Software (ethical inquiry)

Example 3: An Integrated Approach

- Key aspect is a multivalent, sustained examination of a challenge through an interdisciplinary lens
- Two classes linked to one “Grand Challenge,” to be taken any time or in a linked sequence within one year
- Classes may meet GE and/or major requirements
- Civic engagement requirement linked to one “Grand Challenge”

	Challenge #1: Gender & Sexuality	Challenge #2: Power, Inequity & Race	Challenge #3: Climate Change
Semester 1	SOAN: Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective	WRIT 111: Seeing Race in the 21st Century	ESPS 201: Global Environmental Politics
Semester 2	Music 346: Music, Gender & Sexuality	HIST 282: Topics in Native American History	ENVST 381: Theo-Ethics of Climate Change