

Draft Resolution for new General Education curriculum - the “OLE Core”

First-Year Experience: The OLE Seminar (1 course). This course emphasizes critical thinking, conversation, collaboration, and academic habits for the liberal arts. Students learn key skills like locating and evaluating academic sources, as well as reading, reflecting, and responding to texts. Students will cultivate their own curiosity while also learning how to engage in community, better understanding their responsibilities to each other.

First-Year Experience: Writing and Rhetoric (1 course). This course engages students in academic and public discourse (audience, purpose, genre, context) related to a particular topic. Students write in multiple genres and engage in writing as a systematic, interactive process. They understand, evaluate, and use appropriate technologies for different purposes and audiences.

Religion, Faith and Values (1 course). This course builds religious literacy with a focus on one religious tradition or a set of related religious traditions. Students develop the skills necessary for critically interpreting and understanding religious life as well as a more complex understanding of religion’s place in the world. This includes the relationship of religion with community and/or the natural world, and its role in answering fundamental questions about existence, meaning, and ethics.

Christian Theology in Dialogue (1 course). This course focuses on the dialogue between Christian theology and the theology (or its equivalent) of another religious tradition or other form of inquiry.

Power and Race (1 course). In this course, students gain knowledge of how race and ethnicity manifest in contemporary U.S. society, and how forms of inequality based on race and ethnicity intersect with other aspects of identity, such as gender, religion, sexual orientation, environmental injustice, and/or social class. Students acquire familiarity with cultural differences and their contributions to a diverse society. Courses must discuss the U.S., but need not focus on it exclusively.

Global Histories and Societies (1 course). This course asks students to interrogate the ways in which the past is known, constructed, deconstructed, curated and preserved by the present. Courses will focus on analyzing and understanding textual, artistic, environmental and/or oral evidence within the broader historical and cultural contexts in which they were created.

Natural Science (1 course). Using scientific paradigms and methods, students will learn about and develop skills to lead a meaningful and responsible life in the natural world that all inhabit. This course engages students in observation, measurement, experimentation, and the interpretation and analysis of data.

Social Science (1 course). In this course, students use social science approaches to better understand the complexity of human systems with communities and/or other-than-human life and analyze important social issues through theories and empirical evidence while developing their ability to evaluate social science research.

Writing Across the Curriculum (1 course). Taught at the 200-level, this course bridges the First-Year Experience foundations of critical reading, writing, inquiry, discussion, and information literacy with deeper learning and transfer as students navigate one or more majors/concentrations, engage in academic and co-curricular experiences that invest in vocation and career planning, and develop a sense of their place and role in community.

Quantitative and Computational Reasoning (1 course). In this course, students gain knowledge of quantitative and computational methods. They learn how to apply quantitative and computational problem-solving and knowledge in specific contexts.

World Languages and Cultures (1-3 courses). This requirement aims to develop language skills and the ability to use those skills to interpret authentic texts and reflect critically on the connections and differences between one's own experience and the diverse experiences and perspectives of users of other languages. Depending on placement, incoming students must complete at least one course and a maximum of three courses at St. Olaf in order to fulfill the requirement.

Creativity (1 course). This course asks students to explore "making and doing" - the experience of creation, whether the creation in question takes the form of a studio art project, a short film, a dance performance or a music piece. Likewise, students can also fulfill this requirement by study of the creative processes of "making and doing."

Ethical Reasoning in Context (1 course). In this course students develop an understanding of a range of ethical perspectives and the contrasts among them within a scholarly field (e.g., history, biology, computer science, philosophy) or a domain of inquiry (e.g., politics, human development, the environment, love and friendship). Students will apply those perspectives to relevant questions and controversies and critically examine their assumptions and limitations.

The OLE Experience in Practice (0-1 courses; can be satisfied by a non-credit bearing experience). 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.

Proposed Requirement to be Fulfilled Outside of the OLE Core

Writing in the Major (1 course or its equivalent). A single course or a set of modules distributed across two or more courses that provide writing instruction relevant to a specific major and build upon lessons learned in the “First-Year Experience” (especially “Writing and Rhetoric”) and “Writing Across the Curriculum.” At minimum, half of this requirement must be delivered at the 300-level.

Policies and Procedures

Courses Can Carry a Maximum of Two Requirements: Individual one-semester courses can be approved to fulfill zero, one, or two general education requirements. No single one-semester course can be approved to fulfill more than two requirements.

Depending on the Course and Requirement in Question, Students Can Fulfill One or Two Requirements with a Single Course: In four instances, students will be permitted to fulfill two requirements with a single course. The only instances in which a student can fulfill *more than one general education requirement with a single course* are those in which (at least) one of the two general education requirements is “Writing Across the Curriculum,” “Power and Race,” “Ethics in Context,” or “The OLE Experience in Practice.”

In all other cases, students will only be allowed to fulfill a maximum of one requirement with a single course, even if the course carries two requirements. In these instances, students will be able to use the course to meet whichever of their general education requirements they have not yet fulfilled. If a student has not yet fulfilled either requirement, the course will fulfill the first of the two requirements on a provisional basis. This provisional fulfillment will become final if the student completes a course that fulfills the second requirement. If the student subsequently fulfills the first requirement with another course, the original course will then fulfill the second requirement.

First Year Experience Courses Cannot Fulfill Additional General Education

Requirements: “The OLE Seminar” and “Writing and Rhetoric” courses can fulfill only these general education requirements. They cannot also fulfill “Writing Across the Curriculum,” “Power and Race,” “Ethics in Context,” or “The OLE Experience in Practice.”

Course Level: Unless specified, requirements can be fulfilled at the 100-, 200-, or 300-level.

Assessment, Review, and Revision. Assessment of the general education curriculum will be built into the multi-year cycle of assessment overseen by the Academic Assessment Committee. The college will be required to review and reaffirm its commitment to the general education curriculum at least every ten years.

Rationale:

In the Fall Semester of 2018, the St. Olaf faculty approved the following statement about general education revision:

An acceptable revised general education curriculum is one that

- Has **breadth** that complements depth in a major
- Supports the **college mission**
- Is owned and supported by the **faculty**
- Is **forward-looking**
- Is **inclusive, accessible**, and supports **equity**
- Is **resource-sensitive**
- Promotes **student agency**

These principles have shaped every aspect of our work on general education revision, from the size of the OLE Core and the specific requirements that it contains to the deliberative process through which this proposal has been developed.

This proposal will also bring the general education curriculum into better alignment with the basic outline of the balance of general education, major, and elective credit in the [current](#) St. Olaf College Catalog:

A typical course of study may have proportions as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| General Education | 14-16 Credits |
| Major | 8-10 Credits |
| Electives | 10-12 Credits |
| Total for graduation | 35 Credits |

St. Olaf students will need a maximum of 16 courses to complete the fourteen requirements of the OLE Core. In many cases, students will need fewer than 16 courses. Based on language placement, many students will complete the World Languages and Cultures requirement in fewer than three courses. In addition, we expect that many students will complete the OLE Experience in Practice requirement with a non-credit bearing activity. Finally, in four instances, students will have the option of fulfilling two requirements with a single course. This will be an option for courses in which at least one of the two requirements is “Writing Across the Curriculum,” “Power and Race,” “Ethics in Context,” or “The OLE Experience in Practice.”

The GE Task Force has proposed this last change--the decision to allow students to fulfill two requirements with a single course in three instances beyond "The OLE Experience in Practice"--in response to feedback from faculty after the October 3, 2019 meeting that students were required to complete too many courses in the new general education curriculum. The flexibility that results from giving students the option to complete several of their requirements in this fashion will empower students to make thoughtful choices about how best to balance general education with their other ambitions.