

Introduction to Liberal Studies

The contents of this Liberal Studies Curriculum Handbook are intended to serve as a guide for faculty and departments in their efforts to develop courses for the Liberal Studies curriculum. It is necessary for this program to meet the goals of the University and to provide a comprehensive curriculum that will provide all IUP students the opportunity to meet the Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes. This is the objective of the Liberal Studies program as a whole but not the responsibility of individual courses. No one course or program is expected to meet all of the Student Learning Outcomes.

When developing curriculum proposals, individual faculty and departments should review the Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes and define them as appropriate to their courses and departmental goals. Specific terms included in the outcomes should be defined as appropriate to the course content or disciplinary area. This is particularly important in cases where multiple sections of a course are offered and being taught by different faculty members. These instructors will need to agree on how these student learning outcomes are defined within their courses.

Proposals will need to include a justification for the exclusion of an Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcome that has been designated as “required” in a particular course or curricular category. A justification will be needed should a proposer determine that a required outcome (in whole or in part) does not fit the course or category.

I. Guidelines for Liberal Studies Curriculum Proposals

A. Course Proposal Content Guidelines

Wherever appropriate to the course content, courses in the Liberal Studies curriculum should:

- provide course content that addresses issues of diversity, including the contributions of ethnic and racial minorities and of women
- address critical-thinking and scholarly discourse
- require the reading and use by students of at least one non-textbook work of fiction or non-fiction or a collection of related articles

Additionally, all courses in the Liberal Studies Curriculum must:

- be distinguished from technical courses designed primarily for majors
- be distinguished from professional or pre-professional courses, with the exception of the Capstone course
- be distinguished from courses that are designed primarily for the needs of beginning majors and which presume the taking of additional course work in that discipline
- be distinguished from remedial courses
- address (for multiple sections of the same course) how a basic equivalency will be achieved to enable all sections to meet common student learning outcomes and course content

B. Faculty and Department Commitment to Liberal Studies

Individual faculty and academic departments offering courses in IUP’s Liberal Studies program must commit to the following:

- sustaining the course content set out in the original course proposal in such a way that the course will continue to meet the course outcomes outlined in the approved course syllabus and the primary Expected Student Learning Outcomes set forth in the course criteria
- participating in the Liberal Studies Committee's periodic review and assessment of Liberal Studies courses, including requests for updated syllabi, assignments and grading rubrics
- addressing the teaching of Liberal Studies courses in departmental five-year reviews, including assessment of Liberal Studies courses taught by the department
- participating in assessment as set forth by the approved University Assessment Committee
- participating in relevant discussions and meetings related to Liberal Studies courses

II. Liberal Studies Proposal Submission Guidelines

All curriculum proposals for Liberal Studies follow the procedures as outlined in the University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UWUCC) curriculum handbook. New and revised Liberal Studies courses and revisions to the Liberal Studies portion of any program also come to the Liberal Studies Committee for review, are forwarded to UWUCC and University Senate for action.

New and Revised Course Proposals submit:

- One copy of the course syllabus (in UWUCC Syllabus of Record Format), with signed cover sheet attached to the Liberal Studies Office
- One copy of the Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes Chart (following page), identifying the primary outcomes for the course as outlined in the course or category criteria
- Assignment instructions for one of the major course assignments and a grading rubric or grading criteria for that assignment.
- Individuals proposing courses that fulfill only part of a requirement for a given course or category must address how students will be able to meet the remainder of the requirement. For example if a one-credit course is designed to fulfill one-third of a three-credit Liberal Studies requirement proposers will need to address the availability of two-credit courses to that allow students fulfill the remainder of the requirement.

Program Proposals

- Proposals for new programs or revisions to the Liberal Studies portion of an existing program will submit one copy of the proposal, following the UWUCC guidelines, with signed cover sheet attached, to the Liberal Studies Office.
- Syllabi for new or revised courses that are part of the program revision must also be included.