

AIMS AND TASKS: 251 LITERATURE COURSES

Within the new General Education curriculum (approved 11-07), courses satisfying the Appreciation and Interpretation dimension of its Arts, Literature, and Performance requirement will: (1) examine artistic production through appropriate historical, theoretical, analytical, and/or aesthetic frameworks; (2) require students to analyze, respond to, and critically assess works within a given art form; (3) encourage the individual interpretation of artistic work; and (4) explore how the artful creation of other worlds in language, music, movement, or image enriches our own.

Accordingly, all 251 ENGL literature courses intending to fulfill this requirement should incorporate each of these four particular goals into their individual sets of aims. This document will draw upon language from the Report of the General Education Task Force, as well as from the existing Aims and Tasks Sheet for ENGL 205 and the old course proposal document for ENGL 206A, in order to delineate these interrelated aims. English 251 is a topics course, and will be suffixed appropriately to identify the subject matter of each course, e.g. Short Fiction, Poetry, Shakespeare, etc.

These aims are intended to be broad enough to allow ample flexibility for faculty members to teach and to develop a range of courses that will have a role in General Education, including courses that connect the literature they study with (inter)disciplinary forms of knowledge and experience they may encounter in their other coursework.

AIM I: All 251 ENGL literature courses should examine literary production through historical, theoretical, analytical, and/or aesthetic frameworks.

Students in these courses should acquire specific knowledge of and appreciation for the concerns, methods, and/or contributions of literature. In order to do so, students should be acquainted with basic terminology, be able to recognize common textual forms, and be familiar with a relevant range of writers and/or movements (as individually appropriate). They further should be able to recognize the role of the reader, of the surrounding culture, and of the language of the text itself in the production of the meanings of a text.

AIM II: All 251 ENGL literature courses should require students to analyze, respond to, and critically assess literary texts.

Students in these courses should practice literary analysis in both oral and written forms. Students should have practice playing the role of critic, reading for insight into literary texts, and reflecting on the assumptions and values of their own methods and conclusions. They should be able to engage in critical thinking, to formulate clear ideas and compelling arguments, to analyze and evaluate evidence, and to research thoroughly and with integrity (as individually appropriate).

AIM III: All 251 ENGL literature courses should encourage the individual interpretation of literary texts.

Students in these courses should practice close reading. At the same time, students should participate in an exchange of ideas that facilitates collaborative learning as well as individual intellectual development (as individually appropriate). They should be able to understand, articulate, and evaluate not only their own ideas but also the ideas of others, helping them cross the distance between their assumptions and those of writers and other readers.

AIM IV: All 251 ENGL literature courses should explore how the artful creation of other worlds in language enriches our own.

Students in these courses should experience the pleasures that reading literature offers. Students should appreciate how human societies find clarity, beauty, compassion, and a richer understanding of the human experience through literature. They further should be able to grasp how literature fosters an awareness of the connections between different ways of viewing, knowing, and engaging the world—including an awareness of the ways in which literary texts affect their own lives and identities (as individually appropriate).

All 251 ENGL literature courses should ensure their collective tasks address the core academic value and curricular goal that students be able to write and speak effectively in a variety of contexts.