



The Hope College Anchor Plan

A New General Education Plan for Hope College



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Why the Anchor Plan?	4
A New Vision	4
A Community of Learners.....	5
Processes for Revision and Renewal	5
Background	6
Vision & Student Learning Outcomes	7
Through Hope College's Anchor Plan, students will:	7
Anchor Plan Curriculum	8
Overview.....	8
First Year Seminar	9
Rationale.....	9
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	9
IDS 100: FYS (3 Credits)	9
What's New	10
Expository Writing	11
Rationale.....	11
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	11
ENGL 113 (3 Credits)	11
Health Dynamics	12
Rationale.....	12
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	12
KIN 140 (2 credits)	12
Mathematics & Natural Sciences	13
Rationale.....	13
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	13
Courses (10 Credits)	13
Religion	14
Rationale.....	14
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	14
REL 200-Level Courses.....	14
Courses (6 Credits)	14
What's New	14

Social Sciences	15
Rationale.....	15
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	15
Courses (6 Credits)	15
What's New	15
Arts and Humanities	16
Rationale.....	16
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	16
Arts in Practice Courses.....	16
100 Level Perspectives Courses	16
Philosophical Perspectives Courses	16
Courses (11-12 Credits)	17
Art in Practice (2-3 Credits).....	17
Humanistic and Artistic Perspectives (9 credits).....	17
100 Level Course Requirements	18
200 Level (or above) Course Requirements	18
What's New	18
Human Diversities	19
Rationale.....	19
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	19
Courses.....	20
Global Language (3-6 credits).....	20
U.S. Diversities (1 course)	20
Global Perspectives (1 course)	20
What's New	21
Senior Seminar.....	22
Rationale.....	22
Associated Student Learning Outcomes	22
IDS 452 or 492 (3 credits)	22
What's New	23
Implementation Timing.....	24

Introduction

The General Education Revision Task Force is pleased to propose the Anchor Plan as a revisioning of the Hope College General Education. After three years of study; conversations and with faculty, staff, students and alumni; and careful reflection, the committee believes that the Anchor Plan honors what has worked well in our current curriculum while also recognizing that students need an education for the world in which they live. We've strived to create a program that is sustainable for teaching, adaptable over the long-term, clear in its assessment, and inspiring to our community.

Why the Anchor Plan?

At Hope College, we embrace the anchor as a symbol of hope, a hope that comes from the security that God has a plan for us and will not abandon us. As scripture says, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews, 6:19). Our hope frees us to ask big questions and pursue knowledge and truth without fear.

We chose to call Hope College's general education the Anchor Plan because it represents an education anchored in the liberal arts and in the historic Christian faith. That secure foundation liberates students to explore the world in all its diversity and gain the knowledge, skills, and habits to pursue lives of leadership and service in a global society.

A New Vision

The Anchor Plan is grounded in the liberal arts, guiding students through a learning process that expands their knowledge and makes connections across disciplines. We want students and faculty to see that a liberal arts education is more than a series of box-checking. Through the Anchor Plan, students will learn how to seek answers to fundamental and emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, and God, and they will learn that we cannot answer these questions through one discipline or approach. The First Year Seminar will introduce students to the idea of “big questions” that have been central to the liberal arts, questions such as what does it mean to be human? Can we find unity in a diverse society? What is our responsibility to the natural world? Why does God permit suffering? Through their coursework, students will learn to answer numerous questions through humanistic, artistic, mathematical, scientific, social scientific, behavioral, and religious modes of inquiry. Finally, in Senior Seminar, students will reflect on how their liberal arts education has given them the courage to not only answer big questions with sensitivity and nuance, but also to take on challenges, solve problems, and seek wisdom.

The historic Christian faith also anchors a Hope education. The Anchor Plan will tie our general education more closely to our Christian mission by explicitly providing students with the opportunity for an intellectual understanding of key tenets of Christianity. At the same time, through the Anchor Plan, students will develop an ethical framework, a sense of responsibility to others, and a deeper understanding of their own values, commitments, and beliefs.

The Anchor Plan prepares students for communicating with those who have different backgrounds and worldviews, understanding complex social dynamics, and finding ways to bridge social, religious, racial and ethnic boundaries. An education grounded in the historic Christian faith compels us to see all people made in the image of God, and, therefore, the Anchor Plan calls on students to hear and appreciate the perspectives, experiences, sufferings, and achievements of those who have faced discrimination and exclusion in the United States. In order to lead and serve in a global society, the Anchor Plan also calls students to turn outward and study the perspectives, cultures, and experiences of communities around the world.

The Anchor Plan provides students with foundational skills and habits that prepare them for lives of leadership and service in a global society.

They will practice effective communication in writing, numerical and scientific analysis, and artistic expression. They will learn to analyze and interpret texts, data, images, and language of various forms in ways that allow them to reach valid conclusions, make sound judgements and compelling arguments, and find creative solutions to problems. They will practice listening to and understanding views and beliefs and express their own with courage and empathy.

A Community of Learners

We've positioned the Anchor Plan at the heart of a Hope education. We see the Plan providing a framework for building communities of learners, where students and faculty can work together to answer big questions, debate important issues, and solve complex problems.

Within the Anchor Plan's structure, we encourage faculty members to imagine the creative possibilities of the curriculum. This could include First Year Seminar or Senior Seminar sections oriented around a common set of Big Questions (as currently modeled by the Phelps Scholars and the First Day program). Faculty could propose clusters of courses within the Anchor Plan that address common questions through different disciplinary perspectives. We now have the Office of Possibilities, which will provide support for faculty who would like to try new approaches to pedagogy and content areas within the Anchor Plan.

Processes for Revision and Renewal

The vitality of the Anchor Plan will also depend on faculty investing themselves in providing good stewardship of the curriculum. Recently, Hope has created a new structure for administering the Anchor Plan as a formal part of campus governance. The General Education Council will help keep us accountable to the learning goals we set for our students. It will also be where on-going discussions about the Anchor Plan and potential revisions will take place. The new General Education Council can serve as a body that can be active in evaluating and renewing our general education.

Background

In February 2018, by a vote of 69% (*n*=107) to 31% (*n*=48) Hope faculty voiced their support of revising the general education curriculum. The provost put out a call for faculty to volunteer to serve on a General Education Revision Task Force. In April, another vote determined which two faculty members from each of the divisions would serve on the task force. Representatives from the Boerigter Center and Van Wylen Library were appointed by the provost, and in May, the composition of the task force was announced.

Arts Division Anne Heath Matthew Farmer	Humanities Division Jared Ortiz Jeanne Petit (co-chair)	Natural & Applied Sciences Gerald Griffin* Katharine Polasek
Social Sciences Marissa Doshi** Pamela Koch	Boerigter Center Shonn Colbrunn	Van Wylen Library Todd Wiebe (co-chair)

**In September of 2019, Vicki Voskuil joined to replace Gerald Griffin upon Gerald's appointment as Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning. Gerald remained on task force with ex-officio status*

***In January 2021, Mary Inman joined to replace Marissa Doshi while on maternity leave*

The task force commenced its work in August 2018, spending most of the first year reading about the liberal arts and Gen Ed models, and also meeting with academic departments to gather initial thoughts about the curriculum. In the summer and fall of 2019, the task force led a series of discussions about the Hope College Mission and how it can be reflected in Gen Ed. The task force organized the 2019 Pre-College Conference, “The Heart of A Hope Education,” bringing in guest speaker Leon Botstein and leading sessions and activities for faculty. Later that fall, the task force invited two guest speakers to campus to share on topics related to Gen Ed and the liberal arts.

In February 2020, Gen Ed “design teams” consisting of faculty volunteers presented brief proposals at the General Education Symposium put on by the task force. Faculty then ranked proposals, providing the task force with a clearer picture of what type of Gen Ed model and revision the faculty were most interested in pursuing. Other groups consulted by the task force include: recent alumni, Student Congress, multicultural student groups, program directors, student-facing staff, the Assessment Committee, the Academic Affairs Board, and the Dean's Council. Task force members also attended several national conferences to learn about Gen Ed innovation and reform.

Vision & Student Learning Outcomes

The Anchor Plan is the heart of a Hope education in which students explore fundamental and emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, and God. They seek answers through humanistic, artistic, mathematical, scientific, social scientific, behavioral, and religious modes of inquiry. Grounded in the traditions of the Liberal Arts and the historic Christian faith, the Anchor Plan calls students to cultivate curiosity, pursue truth and knowledge, care about the world around them, communicate with clarity and grace, and bridge boundaries that divide communities.

Through Hope College's Anchor Plan, students will:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
2. Reflect on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world.
3. Practice Hope College's Virtues of Public Discourse: humility to listen; hospitality to welcome; patience to understand; courage to challenge; honesty to speak the truth in love.
4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to a specific audience by employing multiple approaches, media, or languages.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.
6. Understand key tenets of the historic Christian faith.
7. Explain their own values, commitments, and convictions.

Anchor Plan Curriculum

Overview

Below is the Anchor Plan curriculum at a glance. There is no required sequencing of courses, except for the First Year Seminar, Senior Seminar, the different levels of Perspectives courses in conjunction with Expository Writing, and other courses that require specific prerequisites.

First Year Seminar

IDS 100 (3 credits)

Expository Writing

ENGL 113 (3 credits)

Health Dynamics

KIN 140 (2 credits)

Math/Science

Various classes; at least one must be a lab science course and one must be a mathematics course (10 credits)

Religion

REL 100-level (3 credits)

REL 200-level (3 credits)

(at least one of the two courses taken must have a Christian Tenets (TEN) attribute)

Social Science

Various classes from two different departments (6 credits)

Arts and Humanities

Arts in Practice (2-3 credits)

Historical Perspectives (3 credits)

Human Creative Perspectives (3 credits)

Philosophical Perspectives (3 credits)

Of the Perspectives courses, one must be taken at the 100-level and two at the 200-level. The 100-level course, as well as ENGL 113, must be taken before the 200-level courses can be taken.

Human Diversities

Global Language (3-6 credits)

US Diversities (1 course)

Global Perspectives (1 course)

Senior Seminar

IDS 452/492 (3 credits)

TOTAL CREDITS: 47-51

First Year Seminar

Rationale

The purpose of the First-Year Seminar is to introduce students to the liberal arts tradition and provide an intellectual transition into Hope College. In the seminar, each section with a unique topic, students will explore fundamental or emerging questions that they answer through multiple modes of inquiry and through listening to and understanding diverse perspectives. Thus, the seminar will serve as a critical first step in preparing students for lives of leadership and service in a global society.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The Seminar will introduce the following learning outcomes:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
2. Reflect on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world.
3. Practice Hope College's Virtues of Public Discourse: humility to listen; hospitality to welcome; patience to understand; courage to challenge; honesty to speak the truth in love.

IDS 100: FYS (3 Credits)

FYS is an interdisciplinary introduction to the liberal arts and to college-level ways of learning. This two-credit course will be taught topically and will engage fundamental or emerging questions on topics such as humanity, the natural world, and God that are broadly explored through the liberal arts. While each section will cover a unique topic and have additional specific learning objectives, all sections will include instruction and activities related to the three broad student learning outcomes listed above.

The instructor of the First-Year Seminar will also be the student's academic advisor. This will allow the student and advisor an opportunity to get to know each other in an academic setting. Conversations about other courses, grades, adjustment to college, personal interests, career goals, and campus involvements will occur more naturally in this setting.

Additional instructional blocks (beyond the two hours/week presently scheduled) are a part of Freshman Year Seminar. Students will be required to attend instructional sessions with content critical for first-year students. Sessions are facilitated by campus partner representatives such as the Library, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, the Boerigter Center, the Registrar's Office, and the Writing Center.

The First-Year Seminar must be taken in the first semester (fall semester) of a first-year student's academic program. The seminar may not be repeated in subsequent semesters. Transfer students are exempted from this course.

What's New

Fundamental and Emerging Questions: While most FYS sections already address big questions, this will allow Hope to more confidently proclaim that ALL students explore the big questions that are core to a liberal arts education. This creates a common thread for all FYS sections while still allowing for latitude to identify different questions and craft unique content. Big questions would also be the subject of a “Big Questions” essay, replacing the Liberal Arts essay common assignment. Faculty will be asked to identify on their syllabus which “big question(s)” their course addresses.

Reflections on Diversity: While many FYS sections already discuss diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences, our new student learning outcome will mean this topic is more formally integrated into the instruction of each section.

Virtues of Public Discourse: One of our new student learning outcomes is for students to practice Hope's Virtues of Public Discourse. While we see this being a part of various Anchor Plan courses, FYS provides a perfect starting point for teaching foundational knowledge and basic skills for respectful dialogue.

Additional Instructional Blocks: Presently, content presentations from campus partners take place inconsistently across sections. We propose to have students complete additional instructional hours along with their FYS course. These meetings will occur periodically throughout the semester and not necessarily every week. While many logistical details will need to be defined, we anticipate that scheduling, coordination, and attendance tracking would be handled centrally (not by individual instructors), similar to the work of a lab coordinator.

Expository Writing

Rationale

The primary purpose of this component of the general education program is to equip Hope College students with essential writing and associated research skills and practices for education and life. ENGL 113 serves as a foundation for additional writing instruction that occurs in subsequent writing-intensive general education courses and courses in the majors.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be introduced:

4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to a specific audience by employing multiple approaches, media, or languages.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.

ENGL 113 (3 Credits)

This course is normally completed during the first year of a student's academic program. Emphasis in the course will be on the student's ability to express thoughts clearly in writing. The course also stresses the development of critical thinking skills with an emphasis on information literacy and library research. Generally, the course is taught topically, leaving the area of exploration to the discretion to the individual instructor. All sections of the course focus on the writing process, and all instructors shape their courses with writing objectives constantly in mind.

Some sections of this course may emphasize global learning; these sections may also satisfy the global learning component of the general education program.

Health Dynamics

Rationale

The purpose of Health Dynamics is to help students understand the principles of exercise, proper diet, stress management, and to establish habits and skills that will enable them to reach and maintain good health and fitness for life. This requirement addresses the behavioral way of knowing about one's body and one's health.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

Health Dynamics will introduce the following learning outcomes:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.

KIN 140 (2 credits)

This course will emphasize the importance of good health, a healthy diet, the value of exercise, and the ability to manage stress, thus seeking to develop patterns that will serve each student for life. Health Dynamics should be taken in the first year of a student's academic program.

Mathematics & Natural Sciences

Rationale

MATHEMATICS: The purpose of the mathematics component is to deepen the student's understanding of mathematical reasoning, address some of the prevalent misconceptions of mathematics, and demonstrate both the usefulness and limitations of mathematical models in a variety of applications. This requirement addresses mathematical thinking and skills; written and oral communication; and analytical, synthetic and systematic thinking.

NATURAL SCIENCE: The purpose of the natural and applied science component is to deepen the student's understanding of the processes of science and the way in which science interprets the world. The science component focuses both on "doing" science, and on the influence of science and technology on both society and the environment. Courses will emphasize the hands-on nature of science. This requirement pushes students to explore questions about what it means to be physical beings in a physical world and how to live in a changing world. In addition, it enables them to understand and constructively engage technology.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be introduced in all mathematics and natural and applied sciences courses:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.

In addition, Natural Science and Applied lab course will introduce outcome 4:

4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to a specific audience by employing multiple approaches, media, or languages.

Courses (10 Credits)

The total mathematics/natural science requirement is ten credits. There are a variety of ways in which this requirement can be satisfied; the options differ depending on whether the student is a science or non-science major.

For non-science majors: Take any combination of ten credits in the natural and applied sciences division, with the stipulation that two credits be in mathematics (MA1) and that one course include a lab (NSL). The remaining credits may be a combination of GEMS, mathematics courses or science disciplinary courses (biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geological and environmental sciences, physics).

For science majors: Courses already required in the sciences and mathematics for natural and applied science division majors will satisfy this requirement, however, at least two disciplines must be represented.

Religion

Rationale

The mission of the college is “to offer, with recognized excellence, academic programs in the liberal arts...in the context of the historic Christian faith.” The general education requirement in religion is related to the mission of the college in two ways.

First, religion is one of the liberal arts central to questions of human identity; therefore, an academic program in religion takes its place among the other academic programs in the liberal arts. Second, the general education requirement in religion provides students with a college-level understanding of “the historic Christian faith,” the context for education at Hope College.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be introduced:

REL 100 Courses

7. Explain their own values, commitments, and convictions.

REL 200-Level Courses

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.

Christian Tenets Requirement: All students will be required to take one course with a Christian Tenets (CT) attribute which fulfills the objectives of SLO 6: Understand key tenets of the historic Christian faith. This could be in a REL 100 or REL 200 course

Courses (6 Credits)

Two courses totaling six credits are necessary to satisfy this requirement. The first is a three-credit 100-level course focusing on the key tenets of the historic Christian faith. The second is a three-credit 200-level course in biblical studies, historical studies, theological studies or world religions studies. Religion 100 must be taken before enrolling in a higher-level religion course. Additional section objectives and focus areas can still be unique, provided the overall SLO is achieved.

What's New

Historic Christian Faith: Previously, students may or may not have taken a religion course where they studied the historic Christian faith. With SLO 6, ‘Understand key tenets of the historic Christian faith,’ every student will take a course in the Religion Department that aligns directly with this part of the Mission of Hope College. Students will be required to take a Religion 100 or 200 level class marked with a ‘Christian Tenet’ attribute.

Social Sciences

Rationale

The purpose of the social science requirement is to provide students with social scientific perspectives on human, social and institutional behavior. The social sciences provide a unique perspective for enabling students to explore and understand central questions of human identity. This requirement addresses the Anchor Plan vision of various modes of inquiry concerning knowing about humanity. These courses explore what it means to be social beings who shape, and are shaped, by each other and by cultures.

They help prepare students to live in a changing world, enabling them to understand and constructively engage their heritage, community, nation and world and to deal with technology, social complexity and cultural diversity.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The Social Science requirement will introduce the following learning outcomes:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.

Courses (6 Credits)

The Social Science requirement is met with two courses (a minimum of six credits), from two different social science departments (communication, economics, political science, psychology, sociology). One must be a full-term three or four-credit introductory level course with a laboratory component (SS-Lab). Lab is defined as course experiences that engage students in the given discipline's "mode of inquiry" about important questions related to human, social, and institutional behavior (see the Rationale above). Students experience how the given social science discipline asks questions, gathers information, critically evaluates the method and results to make informed answers and/or conclusions. The second course can be two, three or four credits. Students seeking teacher certification complete the Social Science lab (SS-Lab) requirement by completing Education 220/221 and Education 500.

Social Science classes that contain a laboratory component (SS-Lab) emphasize ways of knowing in the social sciences. Principles of quantitative thinking are taught, especially in the laboratory. Some sections of Social Science classes focus on issues of global learning and also meet part of the general education requirement in global learning.

What's New

Increased Simplicity: If some social science classes become three-credit classes, we want to make it clear that students can achieve this requirement by taking two three-credit classes. Also, we want to ensure that students complete at least one full-semester course with a lab to more fully understand the way of knowing of that discipline. In addition, we are removing the distinction between 551 and 552 for the sake of simplicity.

Arts and Humanities

Rationale

The arts and humanities enrich and ennoble the human spirit. In this area of the Anchor Plan, students explore enduring and contemporary questions of what it means to be human. Immersed in these modes of inquiry, students will observe the world around them, listen to and engage diverse perspectives, draw conclusions, and spark communication and dialogue through the creative process

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be introduced:

Arts in Practice Courses

4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to a specific audience by employing multiple approaches, media, or languages.

100 Level Perspectives Courses

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.

200 Level Perspectives Courses

4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to a specific audience by employing multiple approaches, media, or languages.
5. Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements.

Philosophical Perspectives Courses

3. Practice Hope College's Virtues of Public Discourse: humility to listen; hospitality to welcome; patience to understand; courage to challenge; honesty to speak the truth in love.

Courses (11-12 Credits)

Art in Practice (2-3 Credits)

In this area of the Anchor Plan, students explore enduring and contemporary questions of what it means to be human. Immersed in these modes of inquiry, students will observe the world around them, listen to and engage diverse perspectives, draw conclusions, and spark communication and dialogue through the creative process.

Humanistic and Artistic Perspectives (9 credits)

These are courses where students examine artistic and humanistic approaches to knowledge, the first of which must be at the 100 level, and the other two at the 200 and above level. The three required areas are:

Human Creative Perspective

These courses will explore the creative endeavor, past and present, within the visual, performing and literary arts. Students will encounter the myriad ways in which people across time and cultures have used creative expression for unlocking humanity's greatest potential for love, beauty and wonder, as well as documenting the human capacity for destruction and folly. Students will learn strategies for interpreting the arts and related primary sources, while also building empathy and a deeper understanding of the human condition.

Philosophical Perspectives

These courses will explore the ways people ask and answer questions fundamental to understanding humanity, the natural world, and God. Students will explore these questions through deep reading as well as written and oral argument. In these courses students cultivate skills of intelligent inquiry and practice the virtues of public discourse.

Historical Perspectives

These courses will explore the ways in which people in the past imagined, understood, and lived in societies, as well as the social, political, and cultural contexts in which societies changed over time. Students will engage in historical interpretation by examining multiple perspectives, using a variety of written, visual, oral, and/or musical primary sources, and employing strategies for interpreting them.

100 Level Course Requirements

- A focus on reading, viewing, listening to, discussing, and analyzing original or primary sources
- Close reading, viewing or listening to of texts and objects
- Introduction to approaches to knowledge from a specific disciplinary perspective in the arts and humanities
- Reflective and/or analytical writing to develop a deeper understanding of human thoughts, experiences and creations.

200 Level (or above) Course Requirements

- Prerequisite Completed 113 requirement and one introductory Arts and Humanities course
 - More advanced/focused approaches to knowledge from a specific disciplinary perspective in the arts and humanities
 - Two or more academic writing assignments that total at least 20 pages (This is a course page total, not necessarily a total for one assignment. One could, for example, assign four 5-page essays that total about twenty pages).
 - At least one of these is a thesis-driven assignment that integrates research and demonstrates information literacy.
 - The courses will have writing process activities in the syllabus that include feedback from peers and the instructor. These processes will include the opportunity for students to revise their writing based on critiques of their written work.
 - One of the significant writing assignments will go through a revision process - a substantial work that participates in process writing.
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What's New

Shifts in Fine Arts 1 and Cultural Heritage: While the FA 2 (Art in Practice) requirement remains the same, a significant reorganization has occurred in the Humanistic and Artistic Perspectives requirement. Instead of one course in the Fine Arts (FA 1) and two courses in Cultural Heritage (CH 1 & CH 2), students will now take these three courses across three themes: Creative, Philosophical, and Historical Perspectives. This approach eliminates the complexity of the Cultural Heritage requirement that led to difficulties in advising. The new Humanistic and Artistic Perspectives requirement also decouples disciplinary ownership of the FA 1, CH 1 and CH 2 requirements, allowing greater flexibility and course offerings for students and faculty. Another important change is the introduction of a two-tiered system, by which students will now have the opportunity to develop advanced writing skills.

No Time Period Requirements: Courses in the Humanistic and Artistic Perspectives will no longer be based on historical time periods (ancient & modern); however, we foresee all time periods to be represented in this requirement.

Human Diversities

Rationale

The Human Diversities requirement is in line with our mission to prepare students for "lives of leadership and service in a global society." In order to lead or serve in a global society, students need self-knowledge and an understanding of how they and their communities shape and are shaped by social systems. This component of the curriculum consists of Global Language (4-8 credits, depending on whether students come in with language credit), Global Perspectives, and US Diversities.

FYS and Senior Seminar often emphasize self-knowledge and therefore are particularly well suited to have students reflect on understanding themselves in relation to others. The other requirements attend to helping students understand issues of diversity in different political, economic, social, cultural, religious, scientific, and/or artistic contexts

Our plan deemphasizes a checklist approach and instead allows students to engage with issues of diversity and inclusion throughout their education at Hope.

Human Diversities components throughout the curriculum:

- FYS component on intercultural competence
- Global Languages
- US Diversities
- Global Perspectives
- Senior Seminar component on intercultural competence; assessment of intercultural competence

Courses and/or sections of courses satisfying the US Diversities and Global Perspectives requirement are offered throughout the curriculum, both in the general education program and within major programs and will be flagged as such in the class schedule.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be introduced:

Global Language:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
2. Reflect on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world.
4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to a specific audience by employing multiple approaches, media, or languages.

U.S. Diversities:

2. Reflect on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world.

Global Perspectives:

2. Reflect on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world.

Courses

Global Language (3-6 credits)

The Global Language component centers on achieving a deeper understanding of the culture(s) of countries or communities through the study of language. Language study addresses what it means to be creators and users of language and prepares students to live in a global society. These courses will help students:

- Develop competence in reading comprehension and written expression in a second language, as well as listening and oral communication for modern languages
- Develop a deeper appreciation for worldviews different from their own through knowledge of the history, politics, religion, literature and the arts that shape cultures and societies in the past or present
- For modern languages, gain empathy and learn to respect and understand personal cultural differences
- Enhance their understanding of their native language

U.S. Diversities (1 course)

The primary focus of the U.S. Diversities component centers on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and/or historical experiences of historically marginalized groups in the United States, with a focus on race as well as other categories such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, socioeconomic class, disability and/or environmental conditions.

- The majority (more than 50%) of the course content is authored by or from the perspective of historically marginalized groups.
- The course explores how communities and individuals within the United States shape and are impacted by ideas, institutions and systems. This includes a focus on issues such as equality, equity, access, justice, resilience, creative expression, and belonging.
- These can be offered from many departments and could be part of or outside of a student's major.

Global Perspectives (1 course)

The primary focus of the Global Perspectives component centers on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and/or historical experiences of the people and communities in nations or regions outside of the United States.

- These courses will help students to understand connections between communities, nations and/or environmental conditions.
- The majority (more than 50%) of content authored by or from the perspective of the people of that nation or region.
- The course explores how communities and individuals within the nation or region shape and are impacted by ideas, institutions and systems. This includes a focus on issues such as equality, equity, access, justice, resilience, creative expression, and belonging.
- These can be offered from many departments and could be part of or outside of a student's major.

What's New

Combined with Languages: The task force put global languages as part of Human Diversities (formerly Global Learning) because of the increased focus of the language courses on understanding global cultures and to create a more cohesive student experience. While not listed here, all of the existing requirements and processes for language placements and credits will continue to operate as they do now.

New Labels and Content Expectations: We have changed Global Learning Domestic to US Diversities and Global Learning International to Global Perspectives. These titles provide a clearer sense of course purpose. Also, the content expectations of diverse perspectives in the U.S. Diversities and Global Perspectives were increased to ensure that students have a meaningful engagement with diverse perspectives, cultures and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world. For U.S. diversities, we are asking faculty to ensure racial diversity in their course content. Having the content requirement set to at least 50% is an increase from the current requirement, which is 20%.

Senior Seminar

Rationale

As the milestone of graduation approaches, senior students gather in seminars to forge communities and again explore big questions about humanity, the natural world, and God through different modes of inquiry. They will also ask questions that help them reflect on their liberal arts education such as: What does it mean to be a lifelong learner? What are my abiding beliefs and convictions and how can I live them out? What is my worldview? How can I make a difference in the world?

As the historic Christian faith is central to the mission of Hope College, Senior Seminar explores how Christianity engages with the broader world. The examination and discussion of both Christian and diverse viewpoints helps students to refine their own convictions even as they learn to comprehend, consider and evaluate perspectives different from their own. This is accomplished by engaging in activities that allow students to practice Hope's Virtues of Public Discourse.

Associated Student Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be reinforced:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
3. Practice Hope College's Virtues of Public Discourse: humility to listen; hospitality to welcome; patience to understand; courage to challenge; honesty to speak the truth in love.
7. Explain their own values, commitments, and convictions.

IDS 452/492 level courses (3 Credits)

The specific purpose of the senior seminar is to ensure that before students graduate from Hope College, they have explicitly confronted questions of value and belief in a practical and concrete way. These courses will deliberately examine "Big Questions" by seeking answers through multiple disciplines, practice Hope College's Virtues of Public Discourse, demonstrate an ability to communicate clearly, explore Christian ways of knowing, and explain what they believe and why.

Students will develop an understanding of the diverse and life-giving purposes and perspectives by which people live. They will also deepen their ability to discuss differences sensitively, reasonably, and honestly.

Because this course serves as the capstone to a student's liberal arts education, this course should be taken no earlier than the May Term of a student's junior year.

What's New

Fundamental and Emerging Questions: While most Senior Seminar sections already address big questions, this will allow Hope to more confidently proclaim that ALL students explore the big questions that are core to a liberal arts education. This creates a common thread for all Senior Seminar sections while still allowing for latitude to identify different questions and craft unique content. Faculty will be asked to identify on their syllabus which “big question(s)” their course addresses.

Virtues of Public Discourse: One of our new student learning outcomes is for students to practice Hope's Virtues of Public Discourse. While we see this being a part of various Anchor Plan courses, Senior Seminar provides an excellent opportunity for students to practice and refine the skills they developed in the previous three years. Building the competency to disagree constructively and engage in respectful dialogue would become a distinguishing hallmark and differentiator of a Hope College education.

Implementation Timing

The process of phasing-in the Anchor Plan will span an estimated two to three years. During this time, an Implementation Team will be spearheaded by the Director of General Education and the General Education Council, along with two members of Student Congress and the Associate Provost (ex-officio). Serving in consulting roles will be the Director of the Office of Possibilities, the Assessment Committee, the Registrar, the Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, and members of the General Education Revision Task Force. The Implementation Team will work to analyze course needs, finalize the assessment plan, and draft language for the course catalogue.

As part of this implementation, the Transition Team will have to consider staffing needs. In particular, extra support will be needed to accommodate the proposed changes to First Year Seminar. There will also be a need for stipends and support opportunities (e.g., workshops) available for faculty working on designing or revising courses to fit within the Anchor Plan. In addition, certain courses covering U.S. and Global Diversities may need to be taught more often to accommodate all students, which could have a staffing impact.

Once the college implements the plan, we propose that within a year or two, the General Education Council and the Assessment Committee review the mapping of the Student Learning Outcomes to specific courses in the Anchor Plan to ensure that what is being taught in the courses aligns with the learning outcomes in the plan.

We also propose that in five years, we do a more formal evaluation of the vision, Student Learning Outcomes, and course structure of the Anchor Plan to see if there are broader improvements we can make. The world is ever rapidly changing, and we must take this into account as we educate our students. By instilling a five-year evaluation process, we can ensure that our General Education curriculum remains meets the needs of our students and plays to our faculty's strengths.