In its role as trustee of the campus-wide undergraduate General Education requirements and as agreed at
the University Academic Planning Council of December 18, 1997, the College of Letters and Science
presents the annual report on the General Education requirements at UW-Madison. This report on
committee activities since the last report to the UAPC was prepared by the Chair of the University
General Education Committee (UGEC), Dr. Elaine M. Klein, in consultation with the previous chair of
the committee, Dr. Nancy Westphal-Johnson. It was reviewed and endorsed by the committee on
February 23, 2011.

I. Committee Transitions:

A list of current members of the committee is attached. Since our last report (November 2009), there
have been a few changes in membership and in leadership positions.

- We would like to thank John Curtin (Professor of Psychology) and Judy Switzky (Advisor, Social
  Work) for their service on the committee. The committee welcomes Clare Huhn (Academic
  Planning and Analysis), Adam Nelson (Professor of Educational Policy Studies) and Will Lipske
  (Advisor, Institute for Biology Education), and welcomes back Greg Smith (Director, FIGs
  Program).

- After leading many interesting and informative research projects to investigate student learning
  achieved in the Quantitative Reasoning and Communication requirements, Professor Chuck
  Halaby (Sociology) resigned from his role as the Research Director of General Education
  Assessment. Thanks to the work of Professor Halaby, we are assured that students who satisfy
  the QRA requirement by examination or by taking a QRA course are on a par with each other
  when they begin their QRB studies, that students who complete the Communication A
  requirement feel that they do, indeed, develop skills associated with the requirement, and that all
  of our newest students report general learning gains in their first terms on this campus. We are
  indebted to Professor Halaby for his work to understand student learning in General Education
  courses. We are also pleased that Professor Jim Wollack (Education Psychology) has assumed
  the role of Research Director, and believe this area will benefit from his expertise as the Director
  of Testing and Evaluation Services.

- Associate Dean Nancy Westphal-Johnson has worked with university-wide General Education
  from its inception on this campus. She oversaw the implementation of the requirements and
  managed a host of administrative, curricular, and technical challenges. During her tenure as
  Director, the requirements weathered the need to develop “section-level Comm B courses”, the
  adoption of the Integrated Student Information System, the transition from a paper Catalog and
  Timetable to the online Course Guide and Schedule of Courses, substantive revisions to the
  Ethnic Studies course array, two HLC accreditation reviews, and the host of technical,
  philosophical, and administrative questions that attended these activities. With Dean Certain, she
  conceptualized and convened a campus-wide, interdisciplinary committee with broad
  membership of faculty and staff whose attention is focused on this aspect of the undergraduate
  curriculum; over the years, that committee has integrated more generally issues of undergraduate
  learning into its discussions, conceptualizing the General Education Requirements as
  foundational to the breadth and variety of student learning on our campus, and central to The
  Wisconsin Experience. The committee wishes Associate Dean Westphal-Johnson well as she
  assumes new duties in the College of Letters and Science. Assuming the role of Director is
  Assistant Dean Elaine M. Klein, who has assisted Dr. Westphal-Johnson for several years as the
committee’s advisor on the assessment of student learning and coordinator of changes to the GER course array.

II. Policy Matters

1. Implementation of policy: satisfaction of QR-A before taking QR-B. In the last UGEC report, we indicated that the UGEC had approved implementation of a policy recommendation made when the General Education requirements were first approved, but which was not technically feasible at that time. The policy held that students must satisfy the Quantitative Reasoning-A requirement before they could enroll in a course approved to meet the Quantitative Reasoning-B requirement. In consultation with departments offering QR-B courses and with Curricular Services, this requirement was implemented and first affected students enrolling in the Fall 2009 registration cycle. Registration patterns have been monitored to ensure that implementation went well, and no issues have been reported.

2. Consideration of policy: sequencing Comm A and Comm B. The discussion of “QR-A before QR-B” raised questions as to the wisdom of similarly sequencing the Communication A and B requirements. In the absence of a recommendation to that effect when the recommendations were approved, the UGEC sought information as to whether lack of sequencing has a deleterious effect on students.

A study was conducted by Clare Huhn of Academic Planning and Analysis to determine (a) the prevalence of students taking these courses “out of sequence”, and (b) if taking courses “out of sequence” is detrimental to students. The study found that very few students (2.1% of the cohorts studied) take these courses “out of sequence”. Though the comparative analysis of “out of sequence” vs. “in sequence” student performance was limited by the few students who do this, as well as by the small number of courses with enrollments large enough to make comparisons, it appears that taking the courses out of sequence is not detrimental to students. The UGEC concluded that it would not be a good use of faculty or staff time to work with departments to set and implement a Comm A prerequisite for the more than 200 courses that satisfy the Comm B requirement; however, individual departments may set “satisfaction of Comm A” as a prerequisite for individual courses for which it is appropriate, if they wish to do so.

3. Filling in “gaps” when Comm A is satisfied by placement test, AP, IB, or transfer courses. The APA study considered a third question suggested by the many ways in which Comm A can be satisfied other than by taking a Comm A course at UW-Madison, i.e., by Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate credit, performance on the UW English Placement Test, and transfer credit. A growing proportion of students satisfy the requirement via these alternatives, and the committee has asked if doing so has a deleterious effect on students. The study looked at student grades in Comm B courses in light of how they satisfied Comm A, and found no variation among students earning D/F grades, and only minor variation among students earning A/AB. These results suggest that allowing credit by examination and transfer is not disadvantageous to students when viewed from this fairly narrow perspective.

That said, the UW-Madison Comm A course is designed to include both written and oral communication, as well as to introduce students to library and information literacy skills essential to college-level study. These features are not encountered in Comm A alternatives, and student skills in these areas may not present themselves in a single grade in a single course. The committee has discussed two concerns specific to this issue:
a. For many students, Comm A presents the only “small course experience” of their early college careers, and in this context, provides an important orientation to the college experience. Students who delay completion of Comm A may be at a disadvantage. The UGEC therefore continues to recommend that students who must complete a Comm A course do so early in their academic careers. The committee recommends implementation of a system to identify students who must meet the requirement with a Comm A course (other than ESL) and who have not done so within the first 3 semesters. These students will be contacted prior to the enrollment period for the following term, and advised of the need to complete the requirement.

b. Currently, students who complete Comm A via alternatives to taking a UW-Madison course are informed of the multiple goals of Comm A and encouraged to complete a brief online instructional module provided by the General Library System, Computerized Library User Education (CLUE). Available to everyone at UW-Madison, CLUE introduces users to our many libraries and a plethora of library research tools, while also encouraging critical evaluation of these and other resources – in short, tools essential to research in higher education. Completion of CLUE is recommended, but not required, and there is no mechanism for verifying that students have completed the module. The committee will discuss whether or not to require all students to complete CLUE, and if so, how such a requirement might be implemented. Among the factors to be considered are how completion of the module might be audited by the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) and the need for continuing support for CLUE as a service to the undergraduate instructional mission by the General Library System.

4. Ethnic Studies and Pass/Fail Policy Discussion

As described in greater detail below, the UGEC and the Ethnic Studies Subcommittee have engaged the faculty and staff who teach ESR courses in several discussions about student learning outcomes in these courses. Several participants expressed concern that some students had been meeting the requirement with courses undertaken on a “Pass/Fail” basis. (Ordinarily, instructors are not aware of this grading basis when students select it; however, ESR instructor reported that students in their courses present themselves in the courses seeking information about the minimum amount of work required to pass the course.) When an analysis of Degree Audit Reports confirmed that students in a particular program had met the requirement in this way, the UGEC endorsed the principle that fundamental degree requirements should not be met with courses taken on a “Pass/Fail” basis. Since policies governing degree requirements are approved individually by the faculties of each school and college, UGEC members charged Dr. Westphal-Johnson to present this issue to the Council of Associate Deans. Following discussion among that group, she and Dr. Klein met with the Associate Dean of the college involved and asked the college to look into the matter. We have since heard that the faculty of that college is considering a request to revise the practice of allowing students to meet the Ethnic Studies Requirement in this way. The UGEC seeks UAPC endorsement of its recommendation that all courses designated to meet the Quantitative Reasoning, Communication, and Ethnic Studies Requirements must be taken on a graded basis.

III. Updates on Activities Related to the Assessment of Student Learning.

For more information and links to the General Education Assessment Plan, please refer to the “Assessment Reports” link at http://www.ls.wisc.edu/gened. The 2009-2010 General Education Assessment Activity Report is attached (Appendix B). Of note:
Communication Requirement

A. Conducted a benchmarking study of peer institutions’ first-tier communication/writing requirement(s), and efforts to assess student learning in the realm of written and oral communication. Although we hoped to identify potential instruments for assessing student learning in Comm A, we learned that few of our peers have institution-level assessment programs for General Education in place (instead delegating assessment to departments that assert greater control over courses and requirements). In light of our distinctive requirement, and an implementation strategy that allows courses across the four departments and three units to meet the requirement, we came to understand the need to design a project specifically to directly assess student learning in Comm A at UW-Madison.

Ethnic Studies Requirement

B. Consulted with faculty and instructors who teach courses that meet the Ethnic Studies Requirement in order to identify essential learning outcomes common to all ESR courses. These outcomes have now been incorporated into the memorandum sent every semester to departments and instructors teaching courses that meet the requirement (attached as Appendix C).

C. Developed, with the L&S Teaching Assistant Resource Center, a “Lesson Share” project to help TAs who teach in ESR courses. The project will provide opportunities for discussion about challenges particular to teaching ESR courses, as well as resources to guide TAs to effective teaching tools for ESR topics. We anticipate that this resource will be made available to faculty, and that it will support the aspiration of creating a “community of practice” in Ethnic Studies teaching and learning.

Several assessment projects are also under way:

Communication Requirement

A. Directors of the courses that meet the Communication A requirement continued to meet to discuss mechanisms for assessing student learning in these courses. That group developed a pilot project which is currently in the data analysis phase. In this pilot project, we used a convenience sample found in a large enrollment first semester, first-year course. Writing samples produced at mid-semester and late-semester were gathered; these will be evaluated using a rubric and the results analyzed to see if students who were required to take Comm A and who were concurrently enrolled in a Comm A course performed the writing task differently than did similar students not enrolled in Comm A. It may also be possible to see if student writing produced later in the term reflects improvement in Comm A instructional areas. Though any conclusions from this study will be limited, we are pursuing it as a “proof of concept” to see if this strategy may be useful for other, similar projects.

Ethnic Studies Requirement

B. Having developed, through faculty consensus, a set of learning outcomes common to all courses that meet ESR course criteria, the Ethnic Studies Subcommittee of the UGEC is now designing an assessment strategy to evaluate if and how well students attain these outcomes. Though the project has not been finalized, it is likely to include elements of direct student learning (via evaluation of student work, considered in light of the common learning outcomes) as well as a survey of student attitudes. This latter aspect is an important consideration, in view of the fact that the ESR was approved as a curricular intervention intended to affect campus climate.
To help students and instructors better understand the purpose of the requirement and the role it plays in the General Education Requirements, the subcommittee has revised the Undergraduate Catalog language used to describe the requirement (attached as Appendix D).

Quantitative Reasoning
C. A project has been planned in which student work in “non-computational/mathematical” QR-B courses will be reviewed. That project has been delayed, but will begin in Summer 2011.

IV. Essential Learning and Continued Discussion of the Wisconsin Experience.

A. The Committee continued discussions of learning outcomes related to the “Wisconsin Experience”, and specifically, how the general education requirements contribute to that experience.

B. A subcommittee of the University General Education Committee served as the review panel for student essays submitted in the fifth annual UW System Liberal Arts Essay contest. Evan Mast, whose essay, “The Importance of Cartography” was one of the three finalists, marking the fifth time a UW-Madison student has submitted a winning essay. Three UW-Madison student essays have been selected and submitted to UW System for the sixth annual competition. (See http://liberaleducation.uwsa.edu/scholarship/index.htm for more information about this year’s contest and links to past winning essays.)

C. Dr. Nancy Westphal-Johnson and Professor Jolanda Vanderwal Taylor continued to represent UW-Madison to the UW System Advisory Group on Liberal Education (SAGLA). This year, Dr. Westphal-Johnson assumed the role of SAGLA co-chair, with Dean Mary Pinkerton (UW-Whitewater). SAGLA recently participated in a session designed to teach others how to engage their institutions in discussions of “what matters most”, using the model developed at UW-Madison.

D. Since our last report, the work of UW-Madison to actively engage the university community in discussion of liberal education has been featured in two national magazines: the AAC&U Winter 2010 edition of Liberal Education, and the Lumina Foundation’s Winter 2011 edition of Focus magazine.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Sandefur, Dean, College of Letters and Science
Elaine M. Klein, Director, University General Education
Assistant Dean, Academic Planning, College of Letters and Science
Appendix A: Membership

University General Education Committee

2009-Dec 2010 Chair: Nancy Westphal-Johnson, Associate Dean, Letters and Science
Jan 2011-present Chair: Elaine M. Klein, Assistant Dean, Letters and Science

Term Members:
John Curtin, Psychology*
Christina Greene, Afro-American Studies, also, Ethnic Studies Review Committee
Barbara Ingham, Food Science
Clark Landis, Chemistry
Will Lipske, Institute for Biology Education†
Adam Nelson, Educational Policy Studies‡
Jeff Russell, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Majid Sarmadi, Design Studies
Sissel Schroeder, Anthropology
Judy Switzky, Social Work*
Morris Young, English

Ex Officio:
Mo Noonan Bischof, Assistant to the Provost
Aaron Brower, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, Social Work
Chuck Halaby, Research Director for General Education Assessment, Sociology, and Associate Dean for Social Sciences, L&S*
Brad Hughes, Writing Center and Writing Across the Curriculum
Clare Huhn, Academic Planning and Analysis‡
Christina Klawitter, L&S Undergraduate Academic Services
Elaine Klein, L&S Administration
Gloria Mari-Beffa, Math (Quantitative Reasoning Liaison)
Sarah McDaniel, Library & Information Literacy Instruction Program
Wren Singer, Center for the First-Year Experience
Greg Smith, L&S Student Academic Affairs‡
Jolanda Vanderwal-Taylor, German
Tim Walsh, Cross College Advising Service
Jim Wollack, Research Director for General Education Assessment Committee, Professor of Educational Psychology‡
David Zimmerman, English (Communication Liaison)

Student Members appointed by ASM
Jacob Klein‡
Stephanie Go‡

UGEC Subcommittees:

Ethnic Studies Subcommittee
Christina Greene, Afro-American Studies
Elaine M. Klein, L&S Administration
Louise Mares, Communication Arts
Tori Richardson, Assistant Dean, L&S Student Academic Affairs
Sissel Schroeder, Anthropology
Ethelene Whitmire, School of Library and Information Studies

General Education Research Committee
Elaine M. Klein, Assistant Dean for Academic Planning and Assessment, College of Letters and Science
Nancy Westphal-Johnson, Senior Associate Dean for Administration, College of Letters and Science
Jim Wollack, Research Director for General Education Assessment and Professor of Educational Psychology, School of Education

* Ending 2009-2010
‡ Beginning 2010-2011
Progress Report on General Education Assessment, 2009-2010

Long Range Assessment Plan:

The 2008 five-year “Assessment Plan for General Education at UW-Madison” articulates the strategy for assessing student learning within the UW-Madison’s General Education Requirement. For 2009-10, assessment projects focused on Ethnic Studies, Communication A, and QR-B. This focus diverges somewhat from the cycle for assessment proposed in the 2008 plan, indicating delays encountered with respect to planning projects to assess student learning with respect to the Communication A and Ethnic Studies requirements. Both projects have proven to be somewhat more challenging than originally envisioned; however, we are optimistic about the plans for 2010-2011.

Professor and Associate Dean Chuck Halaby provided guidance to the UGEC and consultation on assessment efforts in 2009-2010, in his role as Research Director for General Education Assessment and chair of the General Education Assessment Subcommittee. This year, the subcommittee conducted its work in consultation with the Ethnic Studies Subcommittee and the Communication A Course Directors Subcommittee of the UGEC. Dean Halaby also served as the UGEC representative on the University Assessment Council. We take this opportunity to salute Dean Halaby’s many contributions to general education assessment as he rotates out of the role of Research Director beginning in 2009-10.

Assessment Projects, 2009-10

Quantitative Reasoning Studies:

QR-A as a prerequisite for QR-B:

Professor Gloria Mari-Beffa, QR liaison, and Assistant Dean Elaine Klein completed the review of QR-B courses that began last year, as reported in the 2008-09 progress report. The review was undertaken to determine that all current QR-B courses meet the stated criteria for QR-B courses, and to ensure that all of these courses require satisfaction of QR-A as a prerequisite. The course syllabi of 78 QR-B courses were obtained and reviewed. Professor Mari-Beffa corresponded with departments offering QR-B courses for which there were questions about meeting the QR-B criteria or about enforcing QR-A as a prerequisite, and some courses were revised to align with the QR-B criteria. Of the 78 courses, 30 did not specifically require QR-A as a prerequisite. Upon further investigation it was determined that some of these courses had other prerequisites that required completion of QR-A. The remaining courses agreed to add “Satisfaction of QR-A” as a prerequisite. One course elected to have the QR-B designation removed. Assistant Dean Klein worked with Curricular Services to enforce the prerequisite, by creating a student group into which students are placed when they satisfy QR-A; when they do so, they may register for QR-B courses.
**QR-B Project Assessment**

The completion of the QR-B syllabus review and enforcement of the QR-A prerequisite makes possible the next stage of a plan to assess directly student learning in “non-mathematical” QR-B courses. In Summer 2010, Professor Mari-Beffa will invite faculty to identify (or, if necessary, create) a "quintessentially QR-B" problem that will be embedded into an exam or assignment they give at the end of the course. Instructors would submit all responses to this question and Professor Mari-Beffa would select a random sample from each course. The course instructor, Professor Mari-Beffa, possibly the General Education Assessment Research Director, and outside raters would then review the students’ work to determine proficiency in QR-B related learning outcomes.

**Communication Studies:**

**Communication A**

As indicated in the assessment funding request for 2009-10, the Comm A course directors group (which has since become a recognized subcommittee of the UGEC) determined a need for benchmarking and background work in the area of placement, criteria for 21st century literacies, course structures, assessment techniques and technologies as a precursor to undertaking direct assessment of student learning outcomes in Communication A. Ross Benbow, whose work as a General Education Assessment Project Assistant was made possible through the UGEC assessment funding grant, devoted substantial time to contacting and studying peer institutions about these topics, and the subcommittee is working to complete the background work needed to conduct a direct assessment of student learning in the requirement.

The Comm A Course Directors Subcommittee’s work has now advanced to a point at which we will be requesting funding for a direct study of Comm A student learning outcomes for 2010-11.

**Communication A and B (sequence)**

In the course of discussions about sequencing of QR-A and QR-B, the UGEC and Comm A Course Directors Subcommittee considered also a concern that students should also take the communication courses in sequence. This is not currently required, as it is with the QR requirements which explicitly state that the courses must be completed in order (A before B). Since we lacked data on the number of students who take courses out of sequence and also have several questions concerning student satisfaction of the Comm A requirement in general, Associate Dean Nancy Westphal-Johnson sought the assistance of the Office of Academic Planning and Analysis. Clare Huhn, APA Policy and Planning Analyst, conducted preliminary studies that suggest that only 2% of students may take the courses out of sequence; based on anecdotal evidence, many of those who do are admitted into FIGs courses after careful review of their previous coursework in communication and writing preparation. The UGEC decided to wait until the full report from Ms. Huhn is available before making a final decision about this issue although,
given the small number of students affected, and the large workload associated with reviewing syllabi and enforcing prerequisites, it is likely that imposing a sequencing rule on Communication A and B is not the best use of limited resources. It is expected the UGEC will receive the full report by the beginning of the 2010-11 fall semester.

**Ethnic Studies Requirement:**

As noted above, the UGEC received assessment funding for a project assistant position who has been working to advance the assessment of student learning in two areas: Communication A and Ethnic Studies. Ross Benbow has been working with the Ethnic Studies Subcommittee to identify, and ultimately, assess student learning outcomes in the Ethnic Studies requirement. While we had originally planned to conduct focus groups with faculty and academic instructional staff who are involved with ESR courses, the ESR Subcommittee recommended instead that we undertake a “March 12-like event” to foster conversation about faculty and staff learning goals in ESR courses as well as best practices for teaching in such courses. Assistant Vice Provost Mo Noonan Bischof authorized the change in funding that had been set aside for focus groups and incentives to support this event instead. (Please see the attached agenda) This event filled to capacity with 38 ESR instructors and/or department chairs/faculty representatives of departments with a large concentration of ESR courses. By all accounts, the event was highly productive and very useful in creating a cross-campus discussion of learning outcomes in ESR. We were not able to accommodate all who were interested and thus held a follow-up session as part of the campus-wide Teaching and Learning Symposium. This discussion attracted twenty faculty and instructional staff, some of whom attended the first event and others who could not. Again, this discussion was by all accounts productive and highly engaging. At both events, many faculty and instructional staff asked that we hold similar discussions in the future since they highly valued interaction with peers on these topics. A final synthesis of the two discussions is currently being prepared.

**Learning Outcomes for Breadth:**

Due to the press of other projects, we have not yet been able to hold focus groups of faculty and instructional staff around the area of learning outcomes in breadth areas. At the same time, the work of faculty and staff in various areas, such as that found in the focused attention given to the Humanities during the “Year of the Humanities” has moved some groups on campus to a greater awareness of breadth areas. We hope, in the next conversation about essential learning (the strategy we have used in our “March 12 events”) to capitalize on these efforts. For example, the next conversation might focus on “Essential Learning in the Humanities”, in an event that would bring together faculty and staff from across the campus for synergistic conversation from which we will be able to distill statements of desired learning outcomes.
Website and Communications:

The General Education website conversion to a CMS format was finished this year. The revised website is easier to navigate, thus making our assessment studies and findings more readily available. See www.ls.wisc.edu/gened.

Dissemination of Information on Assessment Projects and Student Learning:

Several members of the UGEC have engaged in discussions of General Education and Essential Learning at UW-Madison across campus and beyond the boundaries of campus.

- Mo Noonan Bischof, Elaine Klein, and Nancy Westphal-Johnson presented a workshop at the UW System Presidential Summit entitled “How do We Assess Essential Learning Outcomes?” While this session highlighted work at UW-Madison, it also allowed for participants across the UW System to discuss approaches and issues at their own institutions.

- The Convergence Group wrote an article for the current Winter 2010 issue of Liberal Education, “Liberal Education and Institutional Identity: The University of Wisconsin-Madison Experience”. This essay discusses the need for each institution to take ownership of the essential learning outcomes of liberal education in its own distinctive way as UW-Madison had done through the Wisconsin Experience.

- Vice Provost Aaron Brower joined with UW System Colleague Rebecca Karoff to present “High Impact Practices and the UW-Madison Experience” at the UW System Presidential Summit. Vice Provost Brower was also a co-presenter of “Closing the Achievement Gap with an Emerging Hybrid Classroom Model” and “Closing the Achievement Gap Through Course Reform in Introductory Chemistry” at the same conference.

- Wren Singer and colleagues in the Center for the First Year Experience gave a presentation entitled “Engaging First-Year Students in Large Lectures” at the UW System Presidential Summit and followed this with a presentation entitled, Engaging First-Year Students in Large Lectures: The Teaching Assistant Experience” at the UW-Madison Teaching and Learning Symposium.
In March, 2010, UW-Madison’s Ethnic Studies Subcommittee invited faculty and academic staff who teach or influence the most frequently taken ESR courses to meet and talk about student learning in the requirement. A key objective of the event was to articulate the goals ethnic studies courses share across campus, despite the breadth of topics these courses cover.

Beginning with the fundamental assumption that mastery of the content is the primary goal of any course, the group identified four learning goals that transcend specific content areas and instead speak to common objectives among ESR courses offered in a wide variety of topics. Instructors understand that the balance of attention paid to these learning goals will vary across the range of Ethnic Studies Courses we offer; however, every course is expected to emphasize at least one of these goals, and many will attend to all.

**Awareness of History’s Impact on the Present** - Ethnic Studies courses highlight how certain histories have been valued and devalued, and how these differences have promulgated disparities in contemporary American society.

**Ability to Recognize and Question Assumptions** – Ethnic Studies courses promote recognition and application of critical thinking skills, specifically with respect to teaching students to harbor a healthy skepticism towards knowledge claims, whether in the form of media, political, or popular representations, primarily as these relate to race and ethnicity. As part of this process, the ESR should challenge students to question their own assumptions and preconceived notions on these topics.

**A Consciousness of Self and Other** - Awareness of self is inextricably linked with awareness of and empathy towards the perspectives of others. In constructing a space for this kind of discussion in their classrooms, Ethnic Studies courses give students an opportunity to think about identity issues, including their own identity, as well as the connections they might have to people “outside” their focused social circle.

**Effective Participation in a Multicultural Society** – Ethnic Studies courses should be relevant to students’ “lives outside the classroom”, and pursuing the objectives above should not only lead to student behavioral change, but to *action* in the real world. The ESR should ultimately engender in students the ability to participate in a multicultural society more effectively, respectfully, and meaningfully. This participation may be as mundane as being able to discuss race with a colleague or friend, or to recognize inequities in interpersonal, institutional, or other contexts.

Participants also stressed that the ESR, in keeping with UW-Madison’s tradition of exposing students to a diverse array of subject matter, helps to educate students about the presence and legitimacy of academic disciplines (e.g. those related to minority arts and literature) that they may otherwise not have encountered.

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From the University General Education section (http://pubs.wisc.edu/ug/study.html#ger):

Ethnic Studies, 3 credits

All students must take one course of at least 3 credits which is designated as an Ethnic Studies course. The ethnic studies requirement is intended to increase understanding of the culture and contributions of persistently marginalized racial or ethnic groups in the United States, and to equip students to respond constructively to issues connected with our pluralistic society and global community. Many ethnic studies courses also fulfill other breadth and other requirements.

The Schedule of Courses “search” feature may be used to generate a list of “e” designated ethnic studies classes offered during a particular semester or term. The Course Guide can be searched to find all “e” or ethnic studies classes. For more answers to commonly asked questions about the Ethnic Studies requirement, please refer to Frequently Asked Questions section of the General Education Requirements website (http://www.ls.wisc.edu/gened/HelpStudents.htm#Ethnic_Studies).

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From the L&S section:

University General Education Requirements

All students must complete the university's General Education Requirements. Briefly, these requirements consist of four components: Communication (parts A and B), Quantitative Reasoning (parts A and B), Breadth (course work in the humanities, social and natural sciences), and Ethnic Studies. These requirements are explained in greater detail in the Undergraduate Study section of this catalog. Additional information of interest to students and advisors in L&S:

- The university's General Education Requirements for Natural Science, Humanities/Literature/Arts, and Social Science are satisfied by completing the L&S degree requirements for breadth.
- Students must take at least one 3-credit course that has been reviewed and designated as an Ethnic Studies course. Criteria for courses that satisfy this requirement are available at www.ls.wisc.edu/gened. Courses meeting this requirement are intended to increase students' understanding of the culture and contributions of persistently marginalized racial or ethnic groups in the United States, and to equip them to respond constructively to issues connected with our pluralistic society and global community. Many ethnic studies courses also fulfill breadth and other requirements. Courses that meet the Ethnic Studies Requirement are designated in the Course Guide and Schedule of Courses with an “e”; only 3-credit courses carrying this designation may be used to meet this requirement.