Areas of Knowledge Descriptions

Area of Knowledge #1: Civic Engagement and Public Values

Definition of Area 1:

The primary aims of these courses are to aid students to be involved and responsible in the community, to act with informed awareness of contemporary issues in their historical contexts, and to understand and value diversity. Students will:

- *Consider the notion of citizenship from a disciplinary perspective.*
- *Have a community-based learning experience.*
- *Develop leadership abilities.*
- *Integrate service and learning.*

Area 1 Criteria

Service-learning is defined as an educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs. Service-learning courses (1) link the service experience to course content and (2) demonstrate that students have reflected on their service experience, by utilizing, for example, directed writings, small group discussion, and class presentation.

Syllabi Guidelines for Area #1 courses

1. Clear description of the service experience.
2. Statement of how the service experience will be measured and what will be measured.
3. Statement of the roles and responsibilities of the students in the placement and/or

service project.

4. Elaboration of the need(s) the service placement meets.
5. Description of the reflective process that will accompany the community placement.
6. Statement of how the service learning is linked pedagogically to the content of the course.
7. Description of assessment procedures to be used in evaluating the outcomes as specified under *primary aims*.

Faculty interested in submitting courses for inclusion in the Area 1 section of the Core are encouraged to meet with the staff of the Center for Community Outreach (CCO) in Dyson College. This program in Dyson College has reference materials that should help faculty in the course construction process. The CCO can provide models for "best practices" syllabi, information on assessment, course design materials, and general advice on how to prepare for course review by the Dyson Curriculum Committee.

Area of Knowledge #2: Western Heritage

Definition of Area 2:

The primary aim of these courses is to enrich students' knowledge and understanding of the Western Heritage in North America and Europe. Students will:

- *become familiar with historical, philosophical, artistic, linguistic, religious, political, and literary traditions of North America and Europe*
- *read and discuss texts from North America and Europe*

Area 2 Criteria

- The courses that fit in Area #2: Western Heritage must have the appropriate geographical component, i.e. enrich students' knowledge and understanding of the

Western Heritage in North America and Europe. In those courses students must read and discuss texts from North America and Europe.

- The courses in Area #2 must also have a developmental component, i.e. they must show how the Western Heritage—its historical, philosophical, artistic, linguistic, religious, political, and literary traditions—developed over time.
- Generally, core courses in this category should have a broad scope, e.g. Western Civilization From 1815 to the Present; Introduction to Philosophy: Philosophical Problems; American Literature I and II, etc. However, specialized, in-depth courses that demonstrate a paradigmatic significance for the Western Heritage are also desirable. Examples might include a course on Shakespeare; U. S. History Since 1945; or New York City: Studies in Values.

Area of Knowledge #3: World Traditions and Cultures

Definition of Area 3:

The primary aim of these courses is to enrich students' knowledge, understanding, awareness, and appreciation of diverse world traditions and cultures. Students will:

- *become familiar with historical, philosophical, artistic, linguistic, religious, political, and literary traditions and experiences that shape our world.*
- *read and discuss texts from diverse world traditions and perspectives.*

Area 3 Criteria

1. 1.The courses that fit into Area of Knowledge # 3 include those that focus specifically on "non-Western", or non-northern American cultures, i.e. Latin America, Middle East, Africa, or Asia, or those that might be considered comparative or "global" courses in which at least 50% of the syllabus is devoted to the "non-Western" world. We welcome the development of courses which attempt to minimize the traditional East/West dichotomies, focusing instead on interrelationships between various parts of the world.

2. Courses in Area #3 may be historical or contemporary in focus and might include courses from such disciplines as history, political science, philosophy and religion, languages, literature, anthropology, art, music, communications, economics, psychology, etc.
3. Courses in this category may be either broad or more specific in scope as long as they incorporate the methodologies of their discipline and required elements of core courses and foster a greater understanding of world traditions and cultures. Thus, courses such as Asian art, Chinese history, Religions of the Globe, History of Brazil, African Literature in Translation, International Economics, International Relations, Global Jewish History, World Music, and Women in the Third World could qualify. Courses focusing on non-Western diasporas would have to be internationally oriented: a course on the Asian diaspora that covered the U.S., Southeast Asia and Latin America might qualify, whereas one that focused on Asian-American alone would be considered part of Area # 2.

Area of Knowledge #4: Humanistic and Creative Expressions

Definition of Area 4:

The primary aim of these courses is to develop an informed understanding and appreciation of humanistic, literary and artistic creativity. Students will:

- *study important works of the human imagination.*
- *explore the interaction of the artist, writer, or thinker and society.*

Area 4 Criteria

1. The objects of study in an Area 4 course must be "important works of the human imagination," which will usually mean important literary or artistic works but in justified cases may not; but a course focused on other kinds of

materials (e.g., from history, philosophy, the sciences, etc.) must study those materials as humanistic and imaginative creations.

2. A course in this category may have wide or narrow scope, so long as it provides students the analytical and discipline-specific tools needed to understand and appreciate other works in the creative genres or media engaged by the course.
3. Among acceptable courses for this AOK will be hands-on studio courses that give the student a new way of looking at the area of art involved. Traditional music history, theater history, and 100-200 level art history courses usually will belong in other AOKs (such as Western Culture, etc.). Also in Area 4 would be Art, Dance, and Theater courses which support the NYC Humanities concentration.
4. Area 4 courses lend themselves to writing-enhanced status, which should be encouraged, but this requires the appropriate commitment and training on the part of the instructor.
5. The successful Area 4 proposal will include a syllabus having:
    A. an explanation for students of Area 4 goals and reference to Core goals generally
    B. specific objectives relevant to the course (including those listed below) and clear statements as to how the instructor will assess students' achievement of each objective.
    C. other standard information contained in a good syllabus, including a clear policy on academic honesty / plagiarism (has "good syllabus" ever been defined by the College?)
6. The successful Area 4 course proposal will make clear what students will *do* in order to demonstrate the following *at a level appropriate to the course*:
    A. knowledge of relevant social/historical contexts and their impact on the production of the works studied in the course [this is part of the definition of AOK #4]
    B. an understanding of informed aesthetic response, in the context of the course materials; in studio classes, and otherwise where applicable, this includes understanding the difference between the aesthetic of the artist and that of the critic.

C. mastery of relevant terms, concepts, and specialized vocabulary needed to achieve an informed understanding and appreciation of the course materials and the genre or medium each work represents; for studio classes this includes learning the working vocabulary of the artist and his/her working materials, techniques, and methods of artistic production.

D. in studio classes, proficiency in critiquing works of art in an informed manner, both orally and in writing

Area 5: Analysis of Human, Social, and Natural Phenomena

Definition of Area 5:

The primary aim of these courses is to examine human, organizational, and scientific experiences. Students will:

- *analyze human, social, and natural phenomena.*
- *understand concepts and issues that affect the human, social, and natural realms.*

Area 5 Criteria

- Courses that carry Area 5 AOK core credit should teach students to analyze human, social, and natural phenomena. By the end of such courses, student should understand basic concepts and issues that affect the human, social, and natural realm.
- Area 5 courses will typically, although not exclusively, use the methodologies of the natural, social, and behavioral sciences or of philosophical analysis.
- Area 5 AOK core courses should teach students at least 2 of the following 5 competencies:
    1 Global, National and International Perspectives: become familiar with traditions that shape our world and nation. Read and discuss texts from

diverse traditions and perspectives. Understand the cultural, economic, social, and biological interdependence of global and national life.

2 The role of values in science and society: students will examine and evaluate the role of values in the scientific process or will learn about value systems among various cultures, including our own.

3 Problem solving: define problems and their probable causes. With others or alone, form strategies that work in different situations; then propose solutions and evaluate their effectiveness.

4 Scientific and quantitative reasoning: understand the workings of the natural and social world. Develop problem-solving strategies using scientific and quantitative reasoning.

5 Technological fluency: Make efficient use of technology for personal and professional needs. Use graphics, electronic media, computers, and quantified data.