

Feedback Report

UCA Core Council Assessment sub-committee

February 2019

Re: Review of LD Core Responsible Living Course Offerings

Thank you for providing the information requested by the UCA Core Council assessment sub-committee. The sub-committee is diligently reviewing all courses in the Lower Division Core Responsible Living area to assure that our students are receiving a shared, common experience across the university as regards this Core competency. Your participation is greatly appreciated in this endeavor. The sub-committee would like to provide you with this feedback report documenting our recommendations. If you have questions, concerns, or comments please direct them to the Director of the UCA Core, Jake Held (jmheld@uca.edu)

Course Prefix and Number: MCOM 1300

Course Title: Media & Society

Syllabus: Any syllabus for a course in the UCA Core must include language indicating the course's relative position within the UCA Core. The required boilerplate language can be located here: <http://uca.edu/academicaffairs/publications-information/>

All syllabi of courses in the UCA Core need to include Core language. The required language was lacking from the syllabus we were provided. In addition, there were not clear outcomes listed for the course and thus the course was not explicitly aligned to the Core outcomes under which it assesses. Making the link between the course and its outcomes and the Core outcomes is crucial in order to demonstrate to students how their curriculum is coherently organized towards a certain set of competencies.

Lower Division Core standards: Does a majority (greater than 50%) of the course content directly align to the Core outcomes for the goal under which the course assesses? (NB: This is calculated by considering course objectives, readings, lecture/discussion, and assignments as indicated by the course syllabus and provided course materials.)

MCOM 1300 is categorized under Goal B (Well-Being) of the Responsible Living category. The outcomes for Goal B are:

Issue Recognition: Recognition of various issues that affect well-being and their interconnections in complex contexts. The interconnections of issues in complex contexts refers to the obvious and subtle connections between/among the sub-parts or situational conditions of a scenario that bring two or more dilemmas/issues into the problem (e.g., relationship of health screenings to increased health care costs).

Analysis of Knowledge: the ability to extend discipline based knowledge to decision making and/or develop a recommended course of action based on discipline specific knowledge.

Impact of Decisions: The consequences—positive or negative—of decisions on the well-being of self, others, society and/or environment(s).

The full rubric can be located here: <http://uca.edu/core/assessment/>

As a lower division Core course, this course ought to provide students with the foundational skills necessary to begin developing the skills indicated under the rubric. In order to provide such an experience it is necessary that students be consistently exposed to these ideas and offered multiple opportunities to develop these skills. The sub-committee found that overall MCOM 1300 as presented failed to align to and promote the learning outcomes of responsible living Goal B (well-being).

There are two issues related to our evaluation. Firstly, the course is designated as Goal B (well-being) which would ask students to think broadly in terms of well-being, impacts of decisions and so forth. There was little indication that this course requires that of students or facilitates engagement with issues so related. However, there is an indication that students engage ethical issues in media studies. However, even if the sub-committee were reviewing the course for its alignment to Goal A (ethics) there would still have been concern given the limited engagement with ethical theory, application, or analysis that this course offers.

With respect to ethics, this course only explicitly deals with those issues in weeks 11, 12, and 13; a mere three weeks out of a 15-16 week semester. In addition, the course work explicitly aligned to ethical reasoning comprises a mere 60 points out of a total 450 for the course. It is clear that less than 50% of course content is directly aligned to Goal A. Which, as noted above, isn't the Core goal under which this course is designated as assessing under.

Courses in the lower division need to provide developmental experiences for their respective competency, that is, provide students with basic, transferable skills that can be leveraged later in their course work and where they can demonstrate mastery of these skills in upper division courses. This course, however, did not seem fundamentally oriented to providing that experience to students, whether with respect to Goal A (Ethics) or Goal B (well-being)

Committee Recommendation: Given that MCOM 1300 as presented fails to align the Core outcomes under which it is designated the assessment sub-committee of the UCA Core Council recommends to the Core Council that MCOM 1300 be asked to pursue one of the following options: a) MCOM 1300 submit revised materials addressing all concerns of the sub-committee as addressed above thus offering an assurance argument as to consistency of its content and delivery with respect to responsible living Goal B (Well-Being); or b) submit revised materials indicating the choice to be assessed under Goal A (Ethics), thus offering an assurance argument as to consistency of its content and delivery with respect to responsible living Goal A ; or c) submit the required paperwork to remove MCOM 1300 from the UCA Core should the requirements necessary to meet Core outcomes be considered too cumbersome.

Specific recommendations:

1. Greater than 50% of course content needs to explicitly align to the outcomes under responsible living goal B (well-being). Use the table in Curriculum Attachment A here: <http://uca.edu/core/forms/> as a guide. In addition, provide course materials such as

copies of assignments, quizzes, tests, writing assignment prompts, and/or detailed syllabus.

2. Revise the course syllabus to demonstrate how the course aligns to and addresses the Core outcomes under which it assesses. Also include required UCA Core language as noted above.
3. All sections of MCOM 1300, regardless of instructor, must offer a consistent experience in terms of responsible living Goal B outcomes.
4. Course assignments needs to align to Core outcomes, and specifically prompt and require that students engage in activities that assist in developing these competencies.
5. In order to better understand Core requirements and respond to the sub-committee's requests it is recommended that the School of Communication consult with a member of the sub-committee in regards to this report before, or while, revising its submission. Your college representative on the sub-committee is Laura Bowles.

Should School of Communication choose to submit revised materials for MCOM 1300, those materials should be submitted to the UCA Core Director. The course materials will be evaluated by the UCA Core Council curriculum review sub-committee. The sub-committee will review the materials and make a recommendation to the UCA Core Council as to whether or not they are adequate in addressing the concerns noted above. Should the sub-committee affirm that they are adequate and the Core Council affirm that assessment, no further action will be necessary. Should, however, the sub-committee deem the revised materials to be insufficient and the Core Council affirm this evaluation, or the sub-committee deem the materials sufficient yet the UCA Core Council reject this assessment, the Core Council's decision will be guiding. In the event of either of these previous two outcomes, you will have one semester to revisit the issues and revise the course materials. The same process will then be followed with the decision of the Core Council regarding MCOM 1300's position in the UCA LD Core being final.

If the School of Communication should fail to act on this recommendation by July 1, 2019, MCOM 1300 will be placed on probationary status for Fall 2019. If no progress is made in rectifying matters by the close of Fall 2019, MCOM 1300 will be removed from the LD Core beginning Spring 2020.