Feedback Report

UCA Core Council Assessment sub-committee

December 2019

Re: Review of LD Core Responsible Living Course Offerings

Thank you for providing the information requested by the sub-committee. The assessment sub-committee is diligently reviewing all courses in the Lower Division Core that assess under the Diversity Core competency in order 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. If you have questions, concerns, or comments please direct those to, Jake Held (jmheld@uca.edu)

**Course Prefix and Number: GEOG 1320**

**Course Title: Human Geography**

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

The course syllabus did not have the required language.

In addition, the syllabus did not list course learning objectives. These are a good opportunity to integrate UCA Core language into a syllabus, and in general are good form syllabi. In addition, the syllabus lacked point values for graded work. Although we are not reviewing courses in an effort to offer editorial suggestions on syllabi, we did wish to note that all elements of the course relevant to a student’s potential success should be perspicaciously presented in the syllabus, including point values for assignments, learning outcomes/expectations, etc.

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

GEOG 1320 is categorized under Goal A (Own) of the Diversity competency. The outcomes for Goal A are:

**Cultural Self-awareness**: Knowledge of how experiences have shaped one’s own cultural rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.

**Empathy**: The ability to imagine one’s self as another, with another’s interests and emotions, and within another’s cultural rules, biases, and perspectives.

**Openness**: Desire to interact with culturally different others. Interactions with culturally different others should be interpreted broadly, and can include experiences with texts, creative works, or individuals.

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 a foundational experience to begin developing the skills indicated by the outcomes 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 committee was ambivalent as to whether GEOG 1320 met the criteria. The ambivalence stems from the confusion regarding the relationship between GEOG 1300 and 1320. The courses seem quite similar, as indicated in the report for GEOG 1300. Yet 1320 assesses under Goal A, whereas GEOG 1300 assesses under Goal B. And although 1300 touches on elements under Goal A, it is a much more natural, and easy case to make that it is properly Goal B.

Goal A requires students engage material that promotes the learning outcomes of Openness and Empathy. These outcomes require a specific type of engagement, namely, asking questions and thereby demonstrating curiosity, as well as engaging the experience of the other (empathy) through reflection on cultural experiences and adopting another’s worldview/framework. The materials we were provided did not clearly indicate that students were receiving this type of experience. However, it is clear that they are doing all that is demanded under Goal B.

Therefore, the committee offers the following recommendation:

1. Change GEOG 1320 from assessing under Goal A to assessing under Goal B **or**
2. Given that GEOG 1320 as presented failed to align to and promote the Core outcomes under which it is designated, the Assessment sub-committee of the UCA Core Council recommends to the Core Council that: 1) GEOG 1320 be returned to GEOG and asked to pursue one of two options: a) offer an assurance argument for GEOG 1320 as a member of the LD Core in Diversity in World Cultures addressing all concerns of the sub-committee, or b) submit the required paperwork to remove GEOG 1320 from the UCA Core should the requirements necessary to meet Core outcomes be considered too cumbersome.

Specific recommendations:

1. Greater that 50% of course content needs to explicitly align to the outcomes under Diversity Goal A (Own). Use the table in Curriculum Attachment A here:<http://uca.edu/core/forms/> to demonstrate alignment. In addition, provide course materials such as copies of assignments, quizzes, tests, writing assignment prompts, and/or detailed syllabus. All materials should be provided as a singular pdf file.
2. Revise the course materials (syllabus) to demonstrate how the course aligns to and addresses the Core outcomes under which it assesses.
3. Course assignments needs to align to Core outcomes, and specifically prompt and require that students engage in activities that assist in developing these competencies.
4. In order to better understand Core requirements and respond to the sub-committee’s requests it is recommended that the department consult with a member of the sub-committee in regard to this report before, or while, revising its submission. Your college representative on the sub-committee is Ellen Hostetter.

Should you choose to submit revised materials for GEOG 1320, those materials should be submitted to Jake Held. 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 determinative. 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 GEOG 1320’s position in the UCA LD Core being final.

If you should fail to act on this recommendation by May 15th, 2020, GEOG 1320 will be placed on probationary status for Fall 2020. If no progress is made in rectifying matters by the close of Fall 2020, GEOG 1320 will be removed from the LD Core effective Fall 2021.

**However, as noted above, the sub-committee was confident given the material provided that GEOG 1320 is well-positioned in the UCA Core as a Diversity in World Cultures course assessing under Goal B (Other).** Thus, the most prudent move would be simply to switch GEOG 1320 to assessing under Goal B.

We thank you and your faculty for providing all the requested materials and for assuring that the courses your department offers promote the learning outcomes of the UCA Core.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Jake Held (jmheld@uca.edu)