



St. Olaf College General Education Curriculum Literary Studies (ALS-L) Requirement

Description:

A course intended to develop appreciation and understanding of literary forms – their essential elements as well as their various functions in human life and culture.

Intended learning outcomes:

Students will demonstrate:

1. the ability to identify, analyze and evaluate the formal properties of primary work in literature (poetry, prose, drama).
2. an understanding of the relationship between a work of literature and its cultural context.
3. an understanding of the distinctive intellectual and aesthetic experience provided by literature.

Course guidelines with Curriculum Committee comments:

1. Literary forms include the genres of poetry, prose, and drama as text.
2. Courses must help students achieve an informed appreciation of the aesthetic and formal properties of the literature being studied, and an understanding of the place of the literature within the broader context of human life and culture.

Comment: Insofar as "informed appreciation" will be expressed in written form (it could also emerge in class discussions and oral reports), it might appear in either critical or creative writing. Critical writing explores literature from the outside, creative writing from the inside. The "broader context of human life and culture" refers to the contexts and circumstances in which literary forms arise and the effect and influence they have upon readers. More generally, it refers to the role literature, as against other forms of human expression, plays within human life and culture, and the distinctive kinds of experience or knowledge it offers.

3. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be either in creative writing or in literature.

4. Creative Writing courses:

- a. Courses must give equal attention to creative writing and to the reading of primary works.
- b. The writing and the reading may be in one or more genres.

Comment: To fulfill this requirement, creative writing courses must provide more than a workshop setting in which students practice and improve their own writing. They must require students to read, analyze and discuss examples of work within the chosen genre or genres in which they are writing. The reading and creative writing should be designed to work in conjunction to achieve the ends of the course.

5. Literature courses:

- a. The reading must concentrate on primary rather than secondary or critical texts.
- b. Texts may include works in translation.
- c. The scope of the course must be broad; it must include texts by several writers; it may contain works in one or more genres.

Comment: In order to be suitable for and attractive to the general education student, courses should offer a broad selection of literature. These cannot be single author courses. They should include work by half a dozen or so writers, but faculty are free to justify a lesser or larger number in light of the aims of the course.

Information for instructors proposing ALS-L credit for a specific course:

The St. Olaf Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving proposals to designate individual courses as meeting the Literary Studies requirement. Instructors may seek ALS-L credit as part of a proposal for a new course, or may seek to add ALS-L credit to an existing course. ALS-L credit is attached to the *course*, not to the instructor or to the specific term in which the course is offered. A proposal for ALS-L credit must show how the course meets each of the ALS-L course guidelines; the comments following a guideline provide additional information about how the Curriculum Committee interprets and applies that guideline in reviewing proposals. Instructors are encouraged to consider the comments as well as the guidelines themselves in preparing proposals. Forms and additional instructions for submitting proposals electronically are available on the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#).