



St. Olaf College General Education Curriculum Multicultural Studies–Domestic (MCD) Requirement

Description:

A Multicultural Studies course with a domestic focus.

Administrative guideline: The Multicultural Studies–Domestic course completed by a student must be from a different department or program than the Multicultural Studies–Global course.

Intended learning outcomes:

Students will demonstrate:

1. deep, contextualized knowledge of how race and ethnicity manifest themselves in U.S. institutions and intersect with other forms of structured inequality such as gender, religion, sexual orientation, and social class.
2. not only a familiarity with cultural differences and their contributions to a multicultural society, but also a clear understanding of how these differences have been shaped by power, privilege, and inequality.
2. the ability to use concepts and tools of inquiry from at least one discipline to critically analyze race and ethnicity in the United States.
3. the ability to reflect critically on how race, ethnicity, power, privilege, and inequality shape their own experiences and the experiences of others.

Course guidelines with Curriculum Committee comments:

1. The course must focus explicitly on helping students develop a deep, contextualized knowledge of how forms of structured inequality such as gender, sexual orientation, class, and religion intersect with race and ethnicity in the United States.

Comment: Comment: MCD courses will differ in terms of emphasis, structure, and approach, but all must address race and ethnicity in the United States and the intersection of race and ethnicity with other forms of structured inequality. For example, an MCD course on Asian American literature cannot address race and ethnicity in isolation, but must also devote attention to the intersection of race and ethnicity with other forms of structured inequality such as gender and sexual orientation. Conversely, an

MCD course on the history of feminist thought might devote more time to gender than to race and ethnicity, but it must also give attention to the intersection of gender with race and ethnicity. Not all MCD courses will have a form of structured inequality as their central focus. For example, a course on the history of theater in the United States could merit the MCD attribute provided that it satisfies all four of the course guidelines.

The bulk of the material used to justify the MCD attribute in the rationale should concern the United States; however, such courses need not confine themselves to the U.S. exclusively.

The Curriculum Committee welcomes proposals to attach the MCD attribute to courses taught by members of any of the five faculties of the college.

2. The course must give special attention to power, privilege, and inequality.

Comment: In order to merit the MCD attribute, a prospective MCD course cannot merely address cultural differences. As is specified in the above course guideline, such courses must give “special attention to power, privilege, and inequality.” Racial inequality in the twenty-first century United States is the result of a long history of investment and disinvestment in particular communities on the basis of race, overt acts of discrimination, and more subtle processes of discrimination that have a cumulative impact over time. An MCD course should equip students to discern the persistent and often unacknowledged impact of racism in the contemporary United States.

“Privilege” refers to the advantages and benefits enjoyed by members of a dominant group, advantages and benefits that come at the expense of others. In some cases, members of a dominant group may view these privileges as earned. It is important to note that these privileges are not earned, but are granted to all members of the group regardless of whether individuals desire them or not. The status of being privileged and all that it involves may be invisible to members of the dominant group. Because the values, beliefs, and experiences of this group are generally accorded normative status, they may see themselves as simply persons rather than as members of a distinct group.

3. The course’s critical analysis of race and ethnicity in the United States must engage students in the use of tools of inquiry considered appropriate within the disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus of the course.

Comment: Both disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods and tools of inquiry are appropriate. In making proposals for the MCD course, faculty are encouraged to describe the most appropriate way, in their own discipline, to engage students in inquiry, observation, and analysis.

4. The course must engage students in reflection on their place in a complex, racially and ethnically diverse United States, structured by power, privilege,

and inequality.

Comment: Regardless of its subject, temporary emphasis (historical, contemporary, or a combination of the two), and disciplinary or interdisciplinary location, a course with the MCD attribute must engage students in reflection on their own experiences of race and ethnicity within the United States and those of their contemporaries. As part of this effort, such a course must involve reflection upon the relationship between these experiences and power, privilege, and inequality.

Information for faculty proposing MCD credit for a specific course:

The St. Olaf Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving proposals to designate individual courses as meeting the Multicultural Studies—Domestic requirement. Instructors may seek MCD credit as part of a proposal for a new course, or may seek to add MCD credit to an existing course. MCD credit is attached to the course, not to the instructor or to the specific term in which the course is offered. A proposal for MCD credit must show how the course meets each of the MCD 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](#).

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