

Working Draft of the OLE Core Curriculum: Requirements
3/18/19

Through the OLE Core, students explore three Open, Linked, Enduring (OLE) Questions. This exploration begins in a two-semester, First-Year Seminar or in one of St. Olaf's signature First-Year Conversations programs -- discussion-based learning communities that provide foundations in reading, writing, critical thinking, speaking-and-listening, and collaborating in a diverse group.

Students undertake coursework in three broad areas:

- Question 1. In what ways can I understand the world and my role in it?
 Religions, Faith, and Values; Power, Inequity, and Race; Historical Perspectives;
 Natural Sciences; Social Sciences
- Question 2. What skills do I need to live a meaningful and purposeful life in community?
 Writing in Context; Quantitative Reasoning; World Languages and Cultures;
 Creativity
- Question 3. How can I live responsibly and prepare for challenges in a dynamic, global society?
 Experiential Learning in Context

As students explore these areas, they learn and practice quantitative, qualitative, creative, communicative, and analytical skills. Through experiential learning, whether on campus or in other contexts, students engage with the world and reflect on their role in it. We envision and will encourage opportunities for students to reflect on their own development and learning as they progress through the new core curriculum.

❖ **First-Year Seminar: 2 courses**

- 2-semester linked seminars, in which a cohort of students stays together, with a different instructor each semester.
- Common elements are discussion-based introduction to the OLE Questions, writing, reading, critical thinking, speaking-and-listening, learning about inequity, and collaborating in a diverse group. Each instructor will customize the seminar in light of their areas of expertise and interest. First-Year Conversations programs will also incorporate these elements.
- Rationale: To create a common entry experience for all students in their first year in order to foster a sense of belonging and community; introduce and begin reflecting on the OLE Questions; introduce and practice foundational academic skills for the liberal arts, including communicating and collaborating in a diverse group.
- Who supports this: Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U); Ad Hoc Groups 2 and 3; Staff Consulting Group; Student Survey

Question 1. In what ways can I understand the world and my role in it? (6 courses)

❖ **Religions, Faith, and Values: 2 courses**

- 1 course: **Critical Understanding of Religions, Faith, and Values**
- 1 course: **Theologies in Dialogue**

- Typically offered through the Religion Department but present across the curriculum
 - Rationale: To continue St. Olaf College's commitment to the study of religion and expand the goals of the OLE Core to reflect the needs of a changing world. The proposed requirements reflect consideration of research on pedagogy and religion, and attention to innovations in undergraduate education in religion and theology. The proposed requirements are also aligned with the goals of the new Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community, created to encourage the interreligious exploration of faith, values, and vocation in ways that enrich relationships within and beyond the St. Olaf community.
 - Who supports this: Ad Hoc Groups 1, 2, and 3; Student Survey
- ❖ **Power, Inequity, and Race: 1 course**
- Introduced as a component of FY Seminar
 - 1 additional course in any department or program, taken after completion of the FY Seminar
 - Rationale: To affirm and continue the 2016 St. Olaf faculty commitment to a revised Multicultural Studies-Domestic (MCD) GE requirement. This requirement, renamed for the OLE Core curriculum, is also aligned with the goals and work of the Council on Equity and Inclusion.
 - Who supports this: AAC&U; Ad Hoc Groups 1, 2, and 3; Staff Consulting Group; Student Survey; Council on Equity and Inclusion; Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion
- ❖ **Historical Perspectives: 1 course**
- 1 course engaging historical inquiry to explore OLE Questions, offered across the curriculum
 - Rationale: To enhance understanding of how historical processes have resulted in the construction (and deconstruction) of hierarchies of power, identities, traditions, and ways of knowing.
 - Who supports this: Ad Hoc Groups 1, 2, and 3; Staff Consulting Group; Student Survey
- ❖ **Natural Sciences: 1 course**
- 1 course using natural science tools to explore OLE Questions, with or without a full laboratory component, offered across the curriculum
 - Rationale: To enhance understanding of the world using the approaches of the natural sciences.
 - Who supports this: Ad Hoc Group 1
- ❖ **Social Sciences: 1 course**
- 1 course using social science tools to explore OLE Questions, offered across the curriculum
 - Rationale: To enhance understanding of the world using the approaches of the social sciences.
 - Who supports this: Ad Hoc Groups 1, 2, 3

Question 2. What skills do I need to live a meaningful and purposeful life in community? (up to 7 courses)

❖ **Writing in Context: 1 course**

- One 200-level, writing-intensive course in any department or program, taken after completion of the FY Seminar and before senior year
- GE Task Force encourages at least one additional writing-intensive course in the major
- Rationale: To build on the skills and knowledge acquired and practiced in the FY Seminar, this requirement provides students with focused practice in writing connected with a literacy or literacies, such as data or visual, appropriate to a writing situation.
- Who supports this: AAC&U, Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA); Ad Hoc Groups 1, 2, 3

❖ **Quantitative Reasoning: 1 course**

- 1 course, typically offered in the Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science, but present across the curriculum
- Rationale: To allow students to use numerical data and apply quantitative or abstract reasoning to explore a broad range of topics across the curriculum.
- Who supports this: Ad Hoc Group 2

❖ **World Languages and Cultures: 3-4 courses**

- Completion of a fourth semester course (or beyond) in French, German, or Spanish; completion of a third semester course (or beyond) in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian or Russian; or proficiency examination; or transfer credit.
- Rationale: To foster cross-cultural engagement through direct interaction, knowledge, and interpretation of cultures expressed through languages other than English. The requirement seeks to provide equity for students studying less commonly taught languages, while promoting a level of proficiency necessary for metalinguistic awareness and the acquisition of skills needed to understand and interpret cultural narratives, beliefs, historical perspectives, and cultural artifacts produced by and for users of the language.
- Who supports this: AAC&U; Ad Hoc Group 1 (ILOs 3, 7, and 9); Ad Hoc Group 2 (ILOs 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6); Ad Hoc Group 3 (ILOs 1, 2, 4, and 5)

❖ **Creativity: 1 course**

- One course in creative inquiry in context, integrating cognition and application
- Rationale: To foster in students the ability to confront ambiguity, to respond to constraints and improvise, develop iterative processes that integrate failure and build resilience, and design embodied experiences and applied solutions for a communal good.
- Who supports this: AAC&U; Ad Hoc Groups 1, 2, and 3; Staff Consulting Group; Student Survey

Question 3. How can I live responsibly and prepare for challenges in a dynamic, global society?**❖ Experiential Learning in Context: 1 course**

- Internships, ACE courses, Research, Off-Campus Study
- 1 course, usually completed through Internships, ACE courses, Research, or Off-Campus Study
- Rationale: To offer students the opportunity to integrate academic and experiential learning by applying classroom theories and ideas in a practical setting and draw upon experiential learning to advance their understanding in an academic setting. Participation in these immersive activities is already high: since 2015, 93%-95% of all St. Olaf graduates have completed at least 1 internship, ACE course, research experience, or off-campus course (only 33 of the 692 students in the Class of 2018 did not complete any). Given that graduates who do not complete an internship, ACE course, research experience, or off-campus study are disproportionately first-generation and low-income students, the proposed requirement is aligned with institutional goals for equity of participation, in this case, for all St. Olaf students to benefit from the mentoring, guided inquiry, and reflection that characterize these experiences. The proposed requirement is aligned with the Strategic Plan and is likely to support the work of the Retention Task Force, given research linking immersive experiential learning to student retention.
- Who supports this: AAC&U; Ad Hoc Groups 2 and 3; Staff Consulting Group

Total of 11 requirements, up to 16 courses