

Curriculum Committee Resolution 23/24-08

Date: March 7, 2024
To: St. Olaf Faculty
From: Curriculum Committee
Re: Proposed New Courses

At the March 2024 Faculty Meeting, the Curriculum Committee will move that the faculty approve the following new courses.

ART 257 - The Expanding Renaissance

Course description: This course examines visual art created in Europe between 1300 and 1650, a time when Europe's colonial and economic power in the world was growing. The course considers how Europeans visualized the people and geographies of their world, how religious belief and conflict shaped visual traditions, and how works of art reflect conceptions of sex and gender.

Prerequisite: None

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: ALS - A - Artistic and Literary Studies
HWC - HHistorical Studies in Western Culture
OLE Core: GHS - Global Histories and Societies

DegreePath Bucket Info: Art History (major) - Select five art history courses - two must be survey courses bucket (this is a survey course); Studio Art (major) - Select two elective art history courses bucket

Counts toward: B.A. in Art History
B.A. in Studio Art

Rationale: This course was taught as a Topics course (ART 278) in fall 2023. In the past, the only course taught on the Renaissance focused on Italy (ART 254). It is time to broaden this curriculum, and there are new, exciting teaching resources that make this possible.

This is the only course like it in the college curriculum. It offers students (majors and non majors) a comprehensive overview of the early modern period in Europe and a deep dive into recent scholarly ideas about and approaches to the art of the period.

No courses will be withdrawn from the catalog with the addition of this new course.

BUS 266 - Business Modeling in Excel

Course description: Students develop the skills to translate business concepts into practical financial models using Microsoft Excel. They gain a strong foundation in fundamental Excel functions, formulas, and techniques, and learn how to apply them to real-world business scenarios. The course provides aptitudes that are important for upper-level business courses, as well as internships.

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing or above, or permission of instructor

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: None

DegreePath Bucket Info: Business and Management Studies (concentration) - Electives

Counts toward: Concentration in Business and Management Studies

Rationale: Most students graduating from St. Olaf will need to have some proficiency in Excel that they will use in their employment or graduate school. Currently some courses may include some aspects of using Excel but there are not any courses devoted to a full knowledge of what this powerful tool can do and be used for. It is particularly important for students interested in a finance or business career.

This course will be offered alternating years with BUS 231: Personal Finance so there will be no need for additional resources or removal of classes.

CHEM 363 - Environmental Chemistry

Course description: Human demands place immense pressure on finite energy and material resources. This course focuses on concepts and tools employed by environmental chemists to understand the chemical processes and phenomena associated with earth's compartments, chemical fate and transport, toxicity, chemical ecology, energy resources, and life cycle assessments. Through use and discussion of the primary literature students generate a research proposal that attends to the interplay of chemical cycles and systems while considering solutions to contemporary challenges.

Prerequisite: Any level II course in biology, chemistry, and physics, or a level II or level III natural science course in environmental studies.

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: None

DegreePath Bucket Info: Chemistry (major) - chem_elective bucket; American Chemical Society (emphasis) - chem_acs_elective bucket; Environmental Studies - Natural Science (major and emphasis) - envst_envsci_level_3 bucket and “at least one course must be in the ENVST subject code”; Environmental Studies - Social Science and Arts and the Humanities (major and emphasis) - envst_natural bucket; Environmental Studies (concentration) - envst_natural bucket

Counts toward: B.A. in Chemistry
B.A. in Environmental Studies
Concentration in Environmental Studies

Rationale: This proposal arises from two previous offerings of the course via the CHEM 391 topics area option. The two departments wish to make this course a recurring option within their curricula. Historically it has enrolled between 10 and 14 students, and each year the proposer receives inquiry from students in both environmental studies and chemistry about opportunities for advanced study in this area. The course design offers students an opportunity to engage in focused study of environmental chemistry, pursue guided exploration of the peer-reviewed literature, connect with and hear from professionals working in the area, and develop their own ideas for a fundable environmental research project with chemical inquiry at its core.

Within environmental studies, students in the natural science emphasis find it challenging to complete a level III elective due to the irregular offerings of special topics courses, and courses no longer being taught due to retirements. Formalizing this course into its own number - to be offered in alternating years - helps to allay this concern to some degree. Chemistry majors have expressed concern about the limited number of timely and topical advanced level courses that connect their study to contemporary environmental problems and solutions. By moving to its own number, this course will enable chemistry majors to augment and integrate knowledge from the traditional five areas of the discipline (organic, inorganic, analytical, physical and biochemistry) with attention to environmental processes and systems intersecting with chemical inquiry and practice. Moreover, all students have agency to select a line of inquiry they wish to pursue as long as they can connect it well into the methodologies and approaches of environmental chemistry, which is rich with opportunity.

No courses will be withdrawn from either department as part of this proposal.

CHEM 381 - Biophysical Chemistry

Course description: This course introduces fundamental topics in biophysical chemistry with an emphasis on the structure, stability, and dynamics of nucleic acids and proteins. Students develop an independent research project agreed upon by the instructor. Possible research topics include

enzyme kinetics, protein-ligand binding, biopolymer unfolding or structural change, particle sizing, and computation. Students give oral and poster presentations throughout the semester.

Prerequisites: CHEM 371 or concurrent registration in CHEM 371

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: OEP - OLE Experience in Practice

DegreePath Bucket Info: Chemistry (major) - select at least one additional course from the following courses; Biomolecular Science (concentration) - select at least two level III electives from the following courses

Counts toward: B.A. in Chemistry
Concentration in Biomolecular Science

Rationale: Given the large number of chemistry majors that have an interest in bio-related fields, biophysical chemistry offers these students the opportunity to see how physical chemistry can inform biochemical and biological topics. Biophysical chemistry also emphasizes a subfield of physical chemistry that can not be covered in CHEM 371: Physical Chemistry because of time constraints. The course provides students an opportunity to pursue a research topic of their own interest, rather than joining a project already sponsored by a faculty member. Finally, the course counts towards the American Chemical Society emphasis as an elective in depth course in physical chemistry while satisfying the necessary additional lab hours and the biochemistry topic lab component.

The course satisfies the three ILOs for the OLE Experience in Practice. The course also helps develop student analytical and critical thinking skills, quantitative skills, and oral presentation skills.

Students in biophysical chemistry use many of the spectroscopy and thermodynamics topics developed in CHEM 371: Physical Chemistry to investigate biochemical or biological research projects. Additionally, many of the tools developed in Biophysical Chemistry can be used to enrich the learning for students that have already had CHEM 379: Biochemistry, although CHEM 379 is not a prerequisite. Based on experiences in CHEM 391 taught as biophysical chemistry, several students in each class will not have had CHEM 379 and will learn biochemistry topics for the first time as part of their research project.

Biophysical chemistry has been taught numerous times since the early 2000s under CHEM 391: Selected Topics in Chemistry. Biophysical chemistry will be given its own course number while CHEM 391 will remain as a vehicle to trial potential new chemistry courses.

GSS 175 - Introduction to Trans Studies

Course description: This course covers a wide range of approaches to trans (from gender identity, gender expression, to trans as a method and a theory). Students examine a number of topics including: definitions and language; the binary gender system and its effects on trans life; the history of the trans movement; the legal, social, and medical aspects of transition; transnational perspectives of trans experience; decolonial approaches to trans experience; and socio-political issues of trans life.

Prerequisites: None

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: PWR - Power and Race

DegreePath Bucket Info: Gender and Sexuality Studies (major) - select a minimum of seven other approved courses, taken in at least three departments or programs; Gender and Sexuality Studies (concentration) - select four other approved courses taken in at least two departments or programs; Race and Ethnic Studies (major) - select a minimum of six other approved courses taken in at least three departments or programs; Race and Ethnic Studies (concentration) - select four other approved courses taken in at least two departments or programs

Counts toward:

- B.A. in Gender and Sexuality Studies
- B.A. in Race and Ethnic Studies
- Concentration in Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Concentration in in Race and Ethnic Studies

Rationale: "Introduction to Trans Studies" is a course that explores trans experience, focusing on cultural and social theories and concepts. The course covers a wide range of approaches to trans* (from gender identity, gender expression, to trans as a method and a theory). Students will ponder what trans as an experience of life and a category of analysis offers us to understand the importance of visibility, representation, and progress, while also showcasing the unfortunate persistent violent consequences experienced by trans peoples through (hyper-)visibility and narratives of trans "progress." The course examines definitions and language; the binary gender system and its effects on trans life; the history of the trans movement; contributions of trans peoples throughout history; the legal, social, and medical aspects of transition; transnational perspectives of trans experience; decolonial approaches to trans experience; and socio-political issues for and against trans life. Course materials will range from academic theory, interviews, documentaries, poetry, films, literature, and performance art to introduce students to a range of perspectives on and approximations of trans communities as mediums of survival, joy, care, and ensuring existence in a colonial, racialized, and gendered society. Students will study the ways that trans peoples center their bodies as sites of knowledge and politics to make sense of injustice and to collectivize towards racial, gender, queer, disability, and economic justice. The course

uses an interdisciplinary approach and interweaves queer and trans of color studies, critical ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, and performance cultural studies.

Given this description, Introduction to Trans Studies offers unique contributions to the department of Race, Ethnic, Gender, and Sexuality Studies as well as the overall college curriculum. While an "Introduction to Gender and Sexuality" course already exists and serves as a required course for the major and/or concentration in GSS, this new course dives deeper into the academic interdisciplinary field of Trans Studies. The specificities will allow students and the college to pay crucial attention and offer direct material investments in the protection, support, and inclusion of trans experience on and off campus. St. Olaf College student body comprises many non-binary, genderqueer, gender diverse, and trans students among many others who will benefit from being seen, perceived, and accepted in their journey to belonging.

GSS 255 - Hip Hop Feminism

Course description: Hip Hop Feminism combines Womanist Thought with Hip Hop. Hip Hop Feminism engages with the contradictions of identifying as feminist while still enjoying misogynistic aspects of Hip Hop. This course discusses aspects of Hip Hop culture that relate to Black womanhood and girlhood, such as double-dutch, hair braiding, twerking, and playground games. Students engage with core Hip Hop Feminism concepts such as “the personal is political,” respectability politics, intersectionality, Black Girl Magic, and radical self-love.

Prerequisites: None

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: CRE - Creativity

DegreePath Bucket Info: Gender and Sexuality Studies (major) - select a minimum of seven other approved courses, taken in at least three departments or programs; Gender and Sexuality Studies (concentration) - select four other approved courses taken in at least two departments or programs; Race and Ethnic Studies (major) - select a minimum of six other approved courses taken in at least three departments or programs; Race and Ethnic Studies (concentration) - select four other approved courses taken in at least two departments or programs

Counts toward:

- B.A. in Gender and Sexuality Studies
- B.A. in Race and Ethnic Studies
- Concentration in Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Concentration in Race and Ethnic Studies

Rationale: Hip Hop Feminism, as a course, helps to solidify the connection between the Race and Ethnic Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies programs. Currently, there are very few Hip Hop Studies courses offered at St. Olaf College, so this course fills a necessary gap. Hip Hop Literature is currently taught, which focuses on Hip Hop's literary history and theory and analyzes Hip Hop's rhetorical power. It is taught as an English course with a strong Literary Studies emphasis. Hip Hop Feminism, however, is grounded in Race and Ethnic Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies, and this course is for students who want to discuss Hip Hop in those specific fields.

HIST 111 - History of Witchcraft in Europe

Course description: Students investigate notions of witchcraft, magic and the supernatural in Europe from the medieval period to today, survey beliefs and practices around the globe, and dive deep in the 17th century witch trials in early modern England. In addition to studying instructor-provided case studies, students prepare a "teach-in" day in pairs on a topic of their choosing, participate in a trial simulation, and examine written and visual primary sources.

Prerequisites: None

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: GHS - Global Histories and Societies

DegreePath Bucket Info: History (major) - Two additional courses; GSS (major) - Electives; GSS (concentration) - Electives

Counts toward:

- B.A. in History
- B.A. in Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Concentration in Gender and Sexuality Studies

Rationale: This is already a popular topics class; it has been offered three semesters in a row as a topics course (Fall '22, Spring '23, Fall '23) and it has filled with seniors each time.

In terms of unique contributions to the department and program, History currently offers few courses that cover late medieval and early modern European history. The course is a unique approach to investigating historiographical debates in the field, with a focus on the different ways that historians have conceived of and debated the origins of witch panics in the past, which makes the concept of "historiography" clear to non-majors. The course also incorporates a range of learning techniques, including a role playing game that I wrote, student-ownership of the course through "teach-ins" on topics they choose, and a variation on contract grading. For GSS,

the course joins a handful of others across the college that contributes to early modern understandings of gender and sexuality, though with a specific focus here on witchcraft and witch hunts between 1400-1800, which gives students an opportunity to think about historical modes of power and identity, belief and religion, and state violence.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, magic is a popular topic! Tim Howe offers a 200-level "methods seminar" on Ancient Magic, Witchcraft and Sorcery, but in addition to covering a later time period, this course is intended for non-majors interested in the topic.

So far the course has been run as HIST 188 (topics) course, so no course numbers or courses will be withdrawn.

HIST 233 - Sexualities & Empire

Course description: Students interrogate the systems and experiences of sex and sexuality and its intersection with empires from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first. By examining primary sources, engaging with secondary sources, and producing original research, students develop an understanding of sex practices and ideas about sex in the past and the systems of oppression and categorization that shaped relations between the colonized and colonizers.

Prerequisites: None

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: GHS - Global Histories and Societies

DegreePath Bucket Info: History (major) - Two additional courses; GSS (major) - Electives; GSS (concentration) - Electives

Counts toward:

- B.A. in History
- B.A. in Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Concentration in Gender and Sexuality Studies

Rationale: This will be the first permanent History course focused explicitly on the history of sex and sexuality. Though the department has a long tradition of offering courses on gender, women, and the body--topics that necessarily touch on sex and sexuality--those on the books are currently explicitly continental European in focus. This course, with empires as the "geography," will engage with the broader histories of sex and sexuality across cultures, and where those cultures meet through imperialism. The course thus expands the department's gender and sexuality offerings beyond Europe, to touch on places like India, the Caribbean, Nigeria, Canada, and Australia, foregrounding the voices and experiences of indigenous, Black, and otherwise marginalized peoples. As a 200-level course, the course contributes to the departmental ILOs by helping students grapple with historiographical debates in the newer field of sexuality history,

work on source analysis and contextualization through the guided primary source analysis, and build their skills in writing and research through the independent research project.

A version ("Global Sexualities") of the course was taught as a topics course in Fall 2022, and it filled--evidence that courses on sex, sexuality, and especially LGBTQ+ history are needed and wanted at St. Olaf. As a GHS course in the Ole Core, this course contributes to the broader St. Olaf concerns about diversity, inclusion, and belonging, in providing a safe space for people to think about and grapple with challenging issues, and to potentially find their "elders" and "ancestors" in the studied past.

KINES 291 - Topics in Kinesiology

Course description: The field of kinesiology is constantly expanding into new frontiers. This course provides an in-depth study of advanced topics that are chosen with attention to student interest and available staff. Class work depends on the topics and instructor, but is consistent with the amount and level of work in other 200-level kinesiology courses. May be repeated if courses are different. Counts as an elective toward the kinesiology major. May count toward other majors or concentrations if approved by the chair of that major/concentration.

Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: None

DegreePath Bucket Info: Kinesiology (major) - Electives - select two of the following courses.

Counts toward: B.A. in Kinesiology

Rationale: This survey course will cover selected topics in kinesiology, based on the specific interests of the instructor, that will add meaningful depth and breadth to the current offerings in our department. Students will have the opportunity to explore the basic principles of kinesiology within fascinating sub-disciplines that have never before been formally offered by our department. The flexibility of a topics-based course at the 200-level will give students a chance to pursue areas such as motivational/ habit-developing strategies, motor learning and motor control, movement psychology, wellness across the lifespan, obesity, and injury mechanisms/prevention.

These courses are intended to complement existing course offerings by covering material that is of broader scope and more accessible to beginning majors.

A topics-based 200-level course could breathe life into faculty research programs, offering basic coursework in specialized areas to students who have not yet completed the anatomy sequence.

This should spark interest in upper division classes and allow student discernment of possible career paths earlier on.

Also: A syllabus from KINES 199 Technology, Health, and Wellness was included as a sample. We have taught this class twice now and we love the format (a combination of lecture, speakers, field trips, final project). When we are able to offer a topics class, we will move KINES 199 from a regular offering to a topics course. We have many, many ideas for topics classes and it will be great to rotate topics and instructors. We have never been able to do this before so we are pretty excited!

REL 268 - The Ethics of War

Course description: Can war ever be morally justified? If so, what are the criteria for determining war's just initiation, just conduct and just termination? Students consider topics from a range of normative perspectives in a variety of religious and secular expressions (possible examples: principled and pragmatic pacifism, just-war theory, realism, crusader ethics, utilitarianism, Kantianism, communitarianism, natural law theory, rights theory).

Prerequisites: None

Fulfills the following requirements:

GE: None

OLE Core: ERC - Ethical Reasoning in Context

DegreePath Bucket Info: Religion (major) - Religious Thought bucket

Counts toward: B.A. in Religion

Rationale: There is currently no course in the Religion Dept that deals centrally with the ethics of war. As far as can be determined, there is no course in the current curriculum that satisfies ERC and includes centrally both philosophical and theological normative perspectives on war. No courses will be withdrawn as a consequence. This course is being revived from a version of an expired course now that Professor Santurri has returned to full-time teaching from the Institute. Please note that the syllabi included in the proposal are two versions of the earlier course. These syllabi are offered as examples of the kind of content that will be offered in the revived version. But these very likely will be revised with different readings given new materials that will be available.