

# COMMON LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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The Common Learning curriculum includes ten carefully selected courses in five areas where students can sharpen their skills and develop essential knowledge needed for thriving in the knowledge age. The common learning courses are a set of interdisciplinary courses for people who have been in the working world and are highly motivated. Interdisciplinary simply means that the perspectives and materials of several disciplines have been brought together in the design of each course. These courses provide a common foundational experience for instruction in advanced courses. The Common Learning Experience will help students learn how to learn, think critically, and improve communication skills, which will serve them in their future academic and professional careers.

## **CA 2050 Effective Communication (4 Credits)**

In this course, students develop communication competence while applying communication skills that are both effective and appropriate in diverse contexts. The focus of the course is on developing skills that lead to improved collaborations, organizations, and relationships as well as improved presentation of persuasive arguments using credible supporting evidence. By fostering understanding of communication competency, as well as how communication shapes identity, perception, and culture, the course strives to enable students to better navigate complex personal and professional worlds.

## **CA 2100 Creativity and Innovation (4 Credits)**

Everyone has a creative core. It can become hidden or lost, but the ability to recognize one's creative source and tap into it provides an increased range of communication options. This course focuses on analyzing approaches to the creative process, as well as cultivating best creativity practices for use in professional and personal life. Students will learn about the significant creativity theories of prominent creativity scholars. Also, course participants will explore the association between adult playful personality and individual, as well as organizational creativity. The experiences and activities of this course build skills and confidence in using creativity and innovative thought in a variety of disciplines.

## **CA 3050 Media and Society (4 Credits)**

This course provides a critical examination of media forms and their impact on society. The representation of culture through print media (books, magazines, newspapers, and online media) and through various visual media (film, television, Internet) is explored. Students learn how informational, entertainment, literary, and commercial messages are crafted and transmitted. The focus is on messages, the institutions behind the messages, and their impact on society.

## **CA 3100 Cross-Cultural Communication (4 Credits)**

In an increasingly global society and a world of growing international interaction, communicating effectively with people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds becomes a challenge but also an opportunity. The ability to accept and transcend differences has personal and professional transformative powers. This course explores a range of communication concepts and theories such as cultural competency, identity theory salience, and the nature of prejudice and its impact on communication. Students have the opportunity to develop and practice skills and abilities that enhance sincere, sensitive, and effective communication across differences.

## **CA 3150 Effective Presentations (4 Credits)**

Researching and refining ideas and then representing them effectively are indispensable skills. This course focuses on crafting effective written and spoken presentations that employ appropriate organizational, visual, and physical elements. Students have opportunities to select visual elements such as images, graphs, and charts; to address physical considerations such as voice, gesture, and body language; and to relate text, movement, and visuals in effective professional presentations. Students learn to use PowerPoint and other graphic presentation software in crafting and supporting presentations.

## **CA 3200 Art and Interpretation (4 Credits)**

Students will learn to describe, analyze, and interpret visual imagery with a specific focus placed on understanding and examining various forms of contemporary art and digital media. Students will cultivate expanded visual literacy skills for understanding and evaluating digital culture and become critical consumers of visual media. Students will leave this course with tools and concepts for art interpretation and its application that can be applied to new and emerging media, across fields, and in everyday life.

## **CA 3250 Visual & Physical Communication (4 Credits)**

How does body language reveal or conceal true intent? Humans appear to be "hard-wired" to assess, examine, and respond to the physical language of others. Although this process is often automatic or unconscious, people can learn to identify visual signs and employ the elements of physical rhetoric (posture, stance, bearing, expression, and gait) in conscious ways to persuade others. This course will explore the body's physical response to certain triggers like anxiety, anger, and stress and how those triggers manifest outwardly. Students will examine strategies for reading physical signs in others and for managing their own physical and visual language. Students will learn techniques for performing nonverbal language, gaining tools for communicating leadership, power, acceptance, openness, and other nonverbal behaviors that impact communication in professional settings.

**CA 3300 Communication for Challenging Situations (4 Credits)**

This course moves beyond core communication mechanics to applying communication skills in interpersonal and professional settings that reflect a culturally complex and global world. Students will explore communication constructs relative to a variety of audiences and use this knowledge to achieve the desired communication outcomes. In addition, the ability to lead and participate effectively in individual and group conversations requires the knowledge and selection of communication processes including strategies and techniques such as conflict resolution, facilitation, dialogue, debate, and negotiations. Students will become better prepared to manage difficult conversations in multiple settings.

**LOS 1000 Frontline Manager Leadership Essentials (5 Credits)**

The course delivers foundational leadership and management skills necessary to succeed in a first management position and incorporates extensive one-on-one learner coaching. The core concepts for this course include the following: Understanding oneself as a leader, including styles of leadership; strengthening relationships by understanding others, including diversity, equity, and inclusion; professional communication skills (oral, written, listening); delivering and receiving feedback and coaching employees; transitioning from a peer to a leader/manager role, developing a robust and inclusive team culture; building and motivating a high-performance team; and hiring, onboarding, and individual performance management. Practical experience and application of content form the student experience. Students leave with a professional leadership development plan for implementation in their front-line manager roles.

**LOS 2025 Leadership Development in Action (4 Credits)**

Developing effective and successful leadership competencies is a lifelong endeavor that begins with the self and evolves throughout our career journey. In this course, inclusive leaders will be examined, including core leadership competencies and practices that may vary due to the organizational culture and structure. Students will identify core behaviors and practices along with effective communication skills and problem-solving tools to effectively move an organization forward. Students will assess their own leadership competencies and areas for growth to construct a personal leadership development plan.

**LOS 2050 Organizational Behavior (4 Credits)**

Organizations serve as the fundamental building blocks of society. Most people spend hours of time weekly working in organizations. This course focuses on organizational structure and design by uncovering the dynamics of individual, work group/team and corporate behavior. Through reading, case studies and interaction, students learn about decision-making, problem-solving, patterns of interaction and facilitation of change.

**LOS 2100 Leadership (4 Credits)**

What is leadership and how do leaders lead? Can leadership be learned? What skills do 21st-century leaders need? This course provides an opportunity to examine leadership theories, to develop a personal understanding of leadership, and to explore the relations of leaders and followers. The essential skills of effective leaders are explored, such as elaborating a vision, facilitating communication, working with diversity in organizations, shaping an ethical climate, and facilitating change. Students will be encouraged to examine systematically their own leadership potential as they reflect on historical and contemporary examples of effective business and political leaders as well as leaders of causes and social movements.

**LOS 3050 Financial Management (4 Credits)**

All organizations, businesses, governments, and not-for-profits must deal with financial matters. This course provides opportunities to learn how to read and use financial data in order to develop systems for budget creation and control, profit forecasting, and long-range development. Basic principles of accounting, cost analysis and control, revenue and expense forecasting, return on investment, and capital reinvestment are studied and applied to examples. The leader's roles in financial management are examined, including technical, conceptual, and value considerations.

**LOS 3100 Leading with an Entrepreneurial Mindset (4 Credits)**

Many people dream of being their own boss or starting their own business. This course explores the challenges of entrepreneurship, both starting a new business and bringing the entrepreneurial mindset to a large organization. Students examine the basic processes underlying entrepreneurship, including idea generation, prospect assessment, cost analysis, creating buy-in, and launching the product or service. Examples of successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs will be examined to identify common patterns. Students will study and discuss entrepreneurship as a set of skills, values, and attitudes, and are invited to consider how they can apply entrepreneurship as a life skill.

**LOS 3150 Leading Groups and Teams (4 Credits)**

All teams are groups, but not all groups truly function as teams. Successful organizational leaders recognize the differences and are adept at strategically creating diverse groups and teams to accomplish organizational goals. This course offers applied leadership strategies addressing the various types of teams, principles of team behavior, strategies for avoiding team dysfunction, effective team leadership, and leveraging interpersonal strategies and organizational resources to ensure collaboration, synergy, and effectiveness.

**LOS 3200 Cross-Cultural Leadership (4 Credits)**

This course examines the leadership dynamics of culture, including but not limited to gender, socioeconomic status, race, religion, and social values at a global level. The purpose is to allow for the students to understand cultural competencies and give them the ability to manage in a diverse workforce in our twenty-first-century global society. #Because most successful companies recognize the value of workplace diversity and its impact on organizational effectiveness, many invest considerable time and resources into the development of cross-cultural leadership. #This course explores the dynamic subject of cross-cultural leadership from multiple perspectives, using both domestic and international lenses for inquiry. #It examines the related concepts of organizational communication, culture and cultural awareness, conflict resolution, and inclusive business systems. Students will learn about leadership prospects and examine how cooperation among different cultural backgrounds lead to the achievement of common goals. Students will explore best practice models that address cultural differences in the professional and personal space. Additionally, they will learn how to adapt, communicate, and think critically in professional and personal settings.

**LOS 3250 Learning in Organizations (4 Credits)**

Accelerating change in society and in organizations challenges individuals and the organization as a whole to engage in a process of continuous learning. In this course, basic concepts of individual and organizational learning are explored both in terms of their intrinsic value to individuals and as the source of competitive advantage to the organization. How is learning conceived of and structured throughout organizations? How is the return on investment in learning evaluated? This course provides an overview of what organizations do for the training and development of employees, how they structure knowledge sharing, and how they institutionalize within the organization the knowledge of its members through effective knowledge management practices.

**LOS 3300 Project Management (4 Credits)**

Work in organizations, or in the collaboration among organizations is often structured as projects. Almost any individual in an organization can be called upon to participate in or lead a project. Projects have deliverables that must be met within an agreed-upon time frame and budget. In this course, students learn the basic concepts and processes of project management including how to establish standards of performance, allot time, calculate costs, develop work-break-down structures, and delineate critical pathways. Students also learn about software tools available to plan and track successful projects to completion. Work in organizations, or in the collaboration among organizations, is often structured as projects. Almost any individual in an organization can be called upon to participate in or lead a project. Projects have "deliverables" that must be met within an agreed-upon time frame and budget. In this course, students learn the basic concepts and processes of project management: how to establish standards of performance, allot time, calculate costs, develop work breakdown structures, delineate critical pathways, enlist people and resources, and motivate accomplishment.

**LOS 3325 Applied Project Management II (3 Credits)**

This applied project management course is a continuation of concepts learned in LOS 3300 Project Management and focuses on project management strategies and tactics, including understanding data, tracking, and software used to manage projects. A project will be managed from conceptualization to evaluation. Students must register for a corresponding lab section. Prerequisite: LOS 3300.

**LOS 3326 Applied Project Management II Lab (1 Credit)**

Taken in conjunction with LOS 3325 Applied Project Management, this course provides students with hands-on use of project management tools to execute projects related to their major. Students focus on real-world examples, best practices, and have the opportunity to develop, deploy, and evaluate project management tools and technologies. Prerequisite: LOS 3300.

**PPSS 2050 Ethical Decision Making (4 Credits)**

Ethical decision making is essential for values-based leadership. Most decisions have ethical implications, but discerning the ethical dimension requires skill and an understanding of how ethical issues are shaped and informed by ethical theory. In this class students encounter theories from the field of ethics such as utilitarian, deontological, social contract, communitarian, and natural law. Students also interact with major philosophical concepts such as principles of non-maleficence; beneficence; justice and respect for persons; and virtues of care, compassion, integrity and courage. Through the use of case studies, students cultivate their capacity for ethical perception, learn to distinguish tough choices from genuine ethical dilemmas, and gain practice deliberating effectively about a variety of ethical issues drawn from both social and professional contexts.

**PPSS 2100 Concepts of the Public Good (4 Credits)**

All societies have to deal with natural and social inequalities, tension between individuality and community, and competing concepts of what constitutes the good society. What are the forces that create differing concepts of the public good and how are conflicts between competing visions settled? Case studies from cross-cultural research as well as historical and current examples from United States culture are used to explore the role of power, class, and group identification in shaping ideas of the public good. An important focus of this course is on understanding how concepts of the public good translate into structures that provide or limit the provision of social services.

**ST 2050 Scientific & Critical Thinking (4 Credits)**

Using scientific topics drawn from the headlines, the following questions will be addressed: What is the scientific method and how is it used appropriately? How are problems formulated, research questions designed, tests, and other measurements constructed, data gathered and analyzed, conclusions drawn, and findings incorporated into theories? In addition, critical thinking processes and models of decision-making and problem-solving will be discussed. The suitability and effectiveness of critical-thinking models in achieving positive organizational outcomes will be emphasized.

**ST 2100 The Digital Age (4 Credits)**

Digitization influences nearly all aspects of life today: how we communicate, conduct business, operate governments, and how we behave as consumers. This course provides opportunities to explore controversies and ethical dilemmas spawned by digitization. Students also reflect on how digital technologies are transforming our world and create a plan for the future.

**ST 3050 Quantitative Reasoning (4 Credits)**

Numbers provide a language for reasoning. Numbers are used to quantify data, analyze trends and exceptions, and establish the reliability of conclusions. Using practical problems from business, health care, social services, and government operations, this course provides the opportunity to learn how basic concepts from mathematics can be applied in organizational settings.