

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 the understanding of essential knowledge needed for thriving in the information age. This is 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, which will serve them in their future academic careers.

Communication Arts Courses

CA 2050 Effective Communication (4 Credits)

Communication is at the heart of organizations, society, and personal life. This course cultivates an awareness of several key aspects of communication: making a well-reasoned argument, locating and using supporting evidence, speaking or writing persuasively, and using appropriate language and visual support. Communicating with different audiences, crafting well organized presentations, and using various media to express one's ideas and feelings creatively are the major focus of this course.

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 at will provides an increased range of communication options. This course focuses on defining creativity and innovation, de-mystifying creativity and learning to cultivate creativity and innovation. We use the "whole brain" approach while learning about the current research showing the neurological pathways of creativity and practice accessing and stimulating these pathways. A critical aspect of this exploration is learning how to keep a mixed media journal and playing with expression that combines both text and visual elements. Students are challenged to solve problems, take risks, and look at themselves and their creative energies in new ways. The experiences and activities of this course build skills and confidence in using one's creativity and innovative thought.

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)

This course examines ways in which meaning is made and communicated through visual imagery. Students learn how to describe, analyze, and interpret visual information, using abundant examples from everyday life, such as photographs, comic books, graffiti, home furnishings, advertisements, buildings, and public art displays. In considering this array of creative effort, students address the difficult question: Is it Art? This course focuses on expanding skills in visual interpretation and developing and using aesthetic standards.

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 Creating Dialogue (4 Credits)

What happens when people speak, listen, and respond? Dialogue can occur between two or three people, in a group, across groups, and within and across organizations and communities. This course focuses on deliberative discussion: how to build and enhance dialogue, and how to repair it when it breaks down. Skills in both participation and facilitation are developed as well as strategies for resolving conflict. The goal of the course is to help students develop skills needed for productive and civil conversation in multiple settings.

Leadership Org Studies Courses

LOS 2050 Organizational Behavior (4 Credits)

Organizations serve as the fundamental building blocks of society. Most people spend a considerable number of hours each week working in or relating to organizations. This course provides opportunities to learn about organizational structures and development, the dynamics of individual behavior within organizations, and how organizations foster and manage 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 groups and teams, overseeing finances, and facilitating change. Students are 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, business, government and not-for-profit, 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 role in financial management are examined, including technical, conceptual, and value considerations.

LOS 3100 Entrepreneurship (4 Credits)

Many individuals dream about starting their own company or being their own boss. This course explores the challenges of entrepreneurship both in starting a new business and in fostering entrepreneurial behavior within larger organizations of all types. Students examine the basic process needed for entrepreneurship, such as idea generation, vision building, cost projection, and outcome delineation. Examples of successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs will be examined to determine common patterns. Students study and discuss entrepreneurship as a set of skills, values, and attitudes and are invited to consider entrepreneurship as a life skill.

LOS 3150 Working in Groups and Teams (4 Credits)

Teams carry out the majority of organizational activities across all sectors of society. Principles of team behavior and effectiveness are explored in this course along with the roles of effective leaders of teams and team participants. Various types of teams will be discussed, such as cross-functional, tactical, problem-solving, and virtual teams. Factors leading to high performance and dysfunction will be explored and applied to real-life examples or teams in organizational settings.

LOS 3200 Cross Cultural Leadership (4 Credits)

In a complex domestic and international society, leaders or organizations are challenged to manage diversity, establish standards of desirable behavior, and draw out the strengths of all members of the workforce. How do leaders create a climate of cultural sensitivity and openness that encourages diversity and fosters collaboration that transcends diversity? What do leaders do in hiring, supervision, and the use of recognition and reward structures to encourage diversity? An important focus of this course is on developing strategies to face and resolve workplace conflict through processes that ensure fairness, civil discourse, and the integration of diverse perspectives within the organization.

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: how to establish standards of performance, allot time, calculate costs, develop work-break-down structures, delineate critical pathways, enlist people and resources, and motivate accomplishment. Students also learn about software tools available to plan and track successful projects to completion.

Public Policy Social Service Courses

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 major philosophical concepts and theories from the field of ethics, utilitarian(consequentialist), deontological (duty based), social contract, communitarian, and natural law theories; 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.

Science and Technology Courses

ST 2050 Scientific Method (4 Credits)

What is 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? Using scientific topics drawn from the headlines –evolution, ecology, stem cell research in genetics, astronomy, and neuroscience–this course provides an overview of basic science, emerging technologies, and lingering questions.

ST 2100 The Digital Age (4 Credits)

Digitization influences nearly all aspects of life today: how we communicate, conduct business, operate governments, and employ other technologies. This course provides opportunities to learn the fundamental processes of digitization and how hardware, software, and human uses of digital technologies are transforming life across the globe. Students also explore the controversies and ethical dilemmas spawned by digitization, including organizational change, privacy, security, online relationships, and globalization.

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.