

Proposal to the University Curriculum Committee
Freshman Inquiry Course

I. Cover Sheet

Course title	<u>“Ways of Knowing”</u>
Date first offered	<u>Fall 2007</u>
Sections per year	<u>6</u>
Statement of theme/topical area	“Ways of Knowing” introduces students to the ways in which the three broad areas of academic inquiry “know” the world. This course provides introductions to major questions and concerns in the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences.

Proposal to the Freshman Inquiry Curriculum Advisory Committee/ University Studies Council/ University Curriculum Committee

II. Course Narrative

A. Statement of theme/topical area (no more than 200 words):

How do artists, scientists, writers, social scientists know and also shape their knowledge of the world? This course explores the foundational questions in three major areas of academic inquiry: the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. Each quarter will closely examine the ways in which people create knowledge in these areas and the ways that “disciplines” shape the questions we ask. There will be a particular emphasis on the investigative methods used in these three areas and the ways that these methodologies animate the subjects in question. Students in this course will travel the year together but work with three different faculty members, each of whom represents a particular area of disciplinary expertise. This is a rotational course, students in different sections will take the introductions in different sequences. However, faculty will collaborate across the three quarters to ensure that readings and discussions are connected. Additionally, faculty will collaborate on developmental goals of freshman inquiry: particularly writing and numeracy in order to assure that students experience of the assignments are both progressive and integrated.

B. Learning objectives specific to this theme:

Students will become familiar with the foundational questions and modes of inquiry and research that inform the three broad interdisciplinary fields. In the introduction to the humanities, students will learn “close reading” methods alongside contemporary approaches to history, theater, art history, and architectural theory. Students will also become familiar with the major debates that shape humanistic debate today, particularly

investigations into the relevance of the humanities and “post-humanism.” By reading a range of primary texts—like Plato’s Socratic dialogues and Tom Stoppard’s *Arcadia*—as well as secondary sources, students will learn how to read and write critically and they will learn how different artistic, literary and philosophical modes structure and affect how people think about and understand the world around them. In the “introduction to the social sciences” students will become familiar with qualitative and quantitative research methods that inform work in sociology, urban studies, anthropology and history. They will become familiar with some of the central questions and debates in social science such as Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Nationalism, Positivism. In the “introduction to natural science” students will be introduced to basic scientific methodologies and to the unique concerns of scientific inquiry and the work of the hypothesis and experimentation. Additionally, students will engage in mock debates around some of the central concerns on modern-day science.

C. Assessment of student learning (specific to theme):

Students will be assessed in their ability to articulate and practice different research methodologies. They will engage in small-scale independent research projects designed to help them understand the power and the effectiveness of various modes of inquiry. Faculty will use a variety of assessment methods to gauge student learning: quizzes, essays, the development of research projects, performances, artistic creations and evaluations, class debates and close readings.

D. Description of methods to ensure coherence of theme across participating faculty:

Faculty participating in this theme will work in teams across and between the areas of inquiry. For example, three faculty members (one from the social sciences, one from the humanities, one from the natural sciences) will work with the same groups of students throughout the year. They will meet with their mentors on a regular basis to insure that there is coherence, particularly around student skills being honed throughout the year. Particularly during quarterly transitions, faculty will work together to be certain that they are familiar both with the individual students and the character of the class. Having learned from the previous rotational model, faculty will all have digital copies of students’ photos and names as well as a brief description of their skills and learning needs. In addition to these team meetings, faculty from each of the disciplines will meet periodically with their counterparts (the faculty teaching the section in the humanities will meet with the other faculty in the humanities) to discuss the development of the curriculum and the relative continuity between sections so that students are required to do approximately similar types of reading and writing assignments, for example.

E. Interdisciplinarity of theme:

Interdisciplinarity in the course will work in two ways: as disciplines within a particular area of concern interact: for example students in the introduction to the humanities section might consider the relationship between history and literary studies. Additionally, students will experience the same basic research question, “How is knowledge created” from the perspective of three different disciplines, thus being exposed to the difference discipline makes as well as the relationship between disciplines. In introducing students to research methodologies as the major debates in three distinct areas of academic knowledge today students will be prepared to work both in their future disciplines and will complete the course with a truly broad understanding of the challenges of academic and public inquiry in the 21st century.

F. Relation of course to other University Studies offerings (cohesion, ties to future learning):

As a foundational course, Ways of Knowing theoretically offers a pathway to all the interdisciplinary clusters currently being offered by the University.

G. How this theme will address the University Studies Goals:

University Studies Goal	Representative Assignments
Communication: Writing	Writing assignments including short essays, in-class essays, short stories, statistical reports, mock experiments and lab reports.
Oral Communication	Students will do oral presentations every quarter, group presentations of short research assignments, debates, as well as poetry readings and short dramatic performances.
Numeracy	Numeracy assignments will also be a feature of every quarter but particularly in the social sciences and natural sciences quarter when students look at quantitative research methods.
Visual Communication	Students will work with graphs as well as learning to evaluate the types of graphs that work best for demonstrating different research methods and in different disciplinary modes. Edward Tufte's work on visualizing quantitative literacy will play an important role in the year.
Group process	Students will work on joint research questions in small groups in each quarter.
Computer Literacy	As students work to build their end of year portfolios, they will all become familiar with Frontpage. In the day to day work of the class students will work with Excel, Word, PowerPoint, email programs

	and Webct.
Inquiry and Critical Thinking	Inquiry and critical thinking skills are central to the entire course as students learn to utilize and navigate various research methodologies.
Diversity and Human Experience	The diversity of the human experience will be explored each quarter as students examine the ways that diverse perspectives and peoples have studied (and been studied).
Ethics and Social Responsibility	Finally, students will become familiar with the central ethical principles of the three major areas of study, with regard to both research ethics and the ethical questions that inform people's investigations.

III. Course Schedule and Topics

Term	Topical Outline
Introduction to Social Sciences	This section of the course explores the ways in which the major fields of the contemporary social sciences analyze, create and perceive knowledge. Students will ask how anthropologists, economists, and sociologists, for example, go about asking and answering questions. How does a social scientist explore the relationships between human beings and their environments? Quantitative and qualitative research methods will inform the students' inquiries.
Introduction to the Humanities	This section of the course is focused on the ways that the humanities shape the ways we see the world and the questions we ask of one another. Brief introductions to the major fields that comprise the modern humanities, the debates around the demise of the humanities and the field of "post-humanist" studies. Forays into the methodologies of humanistic research: archival research, close reading, poetic form and a familiarity with the

	principles of critical theory.
Introduction to the Natural Sciences	Scientific inquiry is a method of investigating nature, not just the collection of facts. This quarter focuses on ways that scientists perceive the world and how they create knowledge. This section creates a learning context within which students consider relevant problems, pose hypotheses, subject them to test, and seek to persuade others of the strength of their findings and interpretations. The emphasis in this section is both on the way scientific investigation works and on the way that science frames the way that we understand the world around us.

NOTE: This topical outline will change with the addition of new faculty.

IV. Preliminary Reading List: selections from the following may be assigned:

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (selections)

Angier, Natalie. *Natural Obsessions: Striving to Unlock the Deepest Secrets of the Cancer Cell.*

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture.*
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Appleby, Joyce, et al. *The Truth about History*

Blum, Deborah. *Ghost Hunters: William James and the Search for Scientific Proof of Life After Death.*

Bolles, Edmund. *Galileo's Commandment: An Anthology of Great Science Writing.*

Bronowski, Jacob. *Science and Human Values.*

Carey, Stephen. A Beginner's Guide to Scientific Method.

Chambers, Iain. Culture After Humanism: history, culture, subjectivity

Chandler, Jim, Arnold Davidson and Harry Hartounian, eds. Questions of Evidence

De Beauvoir, Simone. The second Sex (selections)

Donne, John. Selections from Complete English Poems.

Dickinson, Emily. Selections from Final Harvest.

Eliot, T.S. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

Etlin, Richard. In Defense of Humanism: Value in the Arts and Letters.

Freeland, Cynthia. But is it Art? An Introduction to Art Theory

Freud, Sigmund. The Civilization and Its Discontent

Geertz, Clifford. The Interpretation of Cultures

Giere, Ronald. Understanding Scientific Reasoning

Greene, Brian. The American Science and Nature Writing 2006.

Haraway, Donna. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the
Privilege of Partial Perspective. Feminist Studies.

Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Objects of Ethnography" Exhibiting Culture

Klee, Robert. Scientific Inquiry: Readings in the Philosophy of Science.

Marx, Karl. The Communist Manifesto

Oppen, George. Of Being Numerous

Plato. Euthyphro

Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. Writing Analytically

Rumi, selections from The Essential Rumi.

Stevens, Wallace. "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird."

Stoppard, Tom. *Arcadia*.

Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Tucker, Amy. *Visual Literacy: Writing About Art*.

Tufte, Edward. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*.

Weinberger, Eliot. *Selections from New Directions Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry*.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (selections)

Weiner, Jonathan. *The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time*.

Weiner, Jonathan. *Time, Love, and Memory: A Great Biologist and His Quest for the Origins of Behavior*.