

# UNIFI Committee Course Proposal Packet

## Table of Contents

Introduction & Directions	2
Course Proposal Form	3
Appendix A: General Education Structure	4
Appendix B: Guidelines for Course Proposals	5
Written Communication	5
Oral Communication	6
Quantitative Reasoning	7
Human Condition	7
Scientific Reasoning	8
Human Expression	9
Responsibility	10

## Introduction & Directions

Thank you for submitting an application for a course in our new general education program, University of Northern Iowa Foundational Inquiry (UNIFI). This packet provides you with (1) a proposal form for your course, (2) the Faculty Senate-approved structure for the UNIFI, and (3) the Faculty Senate-approved guidelines for course proposals.

-Please carefully read the relevant parts of appendix B: both the general guidelines for all course proposals, and the guidelines for the relevant Learning Area for your course. The GERC will use these guidelines to determine if a course fits in UNIFI.

-Successful course proposals will demonstrate how the course fits within a specific Learning Area and how it addresses the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for that category. For example, if you are proposing a course for the “Human Condition (Domestic)” learning area, please show how it will have students “examine diversity & commonality” (SLO 6) and “analyze ideas, works, or institutions as diverse conceptions of the human condition” (SLO 7). If it is not clear to the GERC how your course fits the category or addresses the specified SLOs, we will return the proposal to you for revision.

-Please fill out the Course Proposal Form for each course that your department will submit. Include enough detail in the form to show members of the UNIFI Committee how your course fits in the new program, but do not include or attach additional documents. Email the completed form to [john.ophus@uni.edu](mailto:john.ophus@uni.edu) by September 20, 2021 in order to be considered for the expected Fall 2022 launch of the new UNIFI program.

If you have questions, feel free to contact any member of the UNIFI Committee:

Brenda Bass, Dean, CSBS (Co-Chair, non-voting)  
Jeremy Schraffenberger (Co-Chair), CHAS, Languages & Literatures  
Mary Donegan-Ritter, COE, Curriculum & Instruction  
Susan Hill, CHAS, Philosophy & World Religions  
Charles Holcombe, CSBS, History  
Lisa Jepsen, CBA, Economics  
Ryan McGeough, CHAS, Communication Studies  
Jeff Morgan, CHAS, Physics  
John Ophus, Undergraduate Studies

## Course Proposal Form for General Education

1. Is this a “revise & resubmit” proposal that was previously submitted in the first call for proposals? If yes, please indicate so here, and highlight changes made throughout the form that address the questions/concerns of the first round of reviews. (You may copy and paste relevant content from the first round application.)

2. Course Title:
  
3. Which Learning Area do you think is the best fit for this course (for example, “Written Communication,” “Human Expression,” etc.)?
  
4. What is the originating department, course prefix, and number (if applicable)?
  
5. What is the predicted or preferred class size?
  
6. What will be the proposed frequency of offering (e. g., one section per year, one section per semester, multiple sections per semester)?
  
7. Please provide a description of the course, including general themes and topics. Depending on the course, you may also include format (discussion/lecture), assignments, readings, and any other elements that will help the committee understand how your course addresses the SLOs for the Learning Area for which you’re proposing it.
  
8. Category-wide SLOs will be assessed in each course. (For example, “Critique claims using the tools of scientific inquiry” will be assessed in all courses in the Scientific Reasoning Learning Area.) In deference to faculty expertise, specific rubrics for assessment will be developed by the faculty members teaching in each category. That said, what would you propose to use as a possible assessment artifact for each of the UNIFI learning outcomes in this course? Please briefly describe the assignment.
  
9. Please explain how the course will be pertinent and thought provoking for students across majors (from Accounting to Theatre):
  
10. If this proposal is submitted from someone other than your department head, please include an email from your department head acknowledging support for this course.

## Appendix A: Structure

# General Education Structure

<b>Engage (Skills)</b>				
Written Communication SLOs 1,2	Oral Communication SLOs 3, 5, 6		Quantitative Reasoning SLOs 1, 4	
<b>Discover (Knowledge)</b>				
Human Condition (Domestic) SLOs 6, 7	Human Condition (Global) SLOs 6, 7	Scientific Reasoning (with lab) SLOs 1, 8	Human Expression SLOs 9, 10	Responsibility SLOs 11, 12
<b>Connect (Habits of Mind)</b> Multidisciplinary Certificate				
Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4*	
Certificate must minimally meet SLOs 1, 2, 3 PLUS at least two others. * = Certificates may be 3 or 4 courses.				
<b>Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)</b>				
1: Critical Thinking 2: Writing	3: Speaking 4: Quantitative	5: Collaboration 6: Diversity and Commonality	7: Human Condition 8: Scientific Reasoning	9: Creativity 10: Artistic Meaning 11: Values 12: Ethics

3.2.21

Students take one course from each yellow tier box (Learning Area), and at least one course from each blue tier box. The certificate is optional, but the additional hours are not. Students who do not choose a certificate will take four additional courses from the blue and/or purple tiers. The total program is 37 hours. Each course is three credits with the exception of science labs, which are one credit.

## **Appendix B: Guidelines for Course Proposals**

*These guidelines are meant to provide an overview of each Learning Area in the UNIFI program's structure (i.e., each "box"). These guidelines are intended for faculty and departments to consider as they prepare course proposals. The UNIFI Committee will continue to provide opportunities this year to propose courses, provisionally accepting some into the program and considering "revise and resubmit" options for those not yet deemed to meet the guidelines. These guidelines are deliberately broad in order to be inclusive, with more detailed rubrics to be developed at a later time with input from faculty teaching in each Learning Area. Future efforts will also create clear and detailed messaging for students and external constituencies.*

### **General Guidelines for course submissions in each Learning Area:**

- All categories potentially include courses from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives.
- Course proposals must show how the course meets the relevant outcome(s).
- Instructors must commit to including assignments in their course and submitting those artifacts to the assessment team.
- Courses may also count as major courses.
- Courses cannot have prerequisites, but ALEKS scores and language proficiency (as determined by relevant faculty members) can be used for placement.
- Courses must be designed to include and be accessible to students in diverse majors, and not aimed at students in particular programs.
- Departments must be willing and able to offer the course regularly.
- The UNIFI Committee will consider experimental courses.
- The UNIFI Committee may ask faculty to resubmit a course or certificate proposal if revisions are deemed necessary.

## **Written Communication**

### **Guidelines for Course Proposal**

**Learning Area Description:** Courses in the written communication Learning Area should be designed to enhance foundational communication skills and habits of mind necessary for success at UNI and beyond. In addition to the process of reading, researching, writing, and revising, written communication courses will also enable students to develop critical thinking skills.

**Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 1 Critical Thinking** - “Engage in effective critical inquiry to address complex topics.”

Critical inquiry can take different forms, depending on the instructor and discipline, but courses fulfilling this SLO will emphasize the thorough exploration of relevant issues, ideas, histories, artifacts, and theories before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Students will also develop skills in collecting and analyzing evidence, including critical assessment of information sources.

**SLO 2 Writing** - “Write effectively.” Courses that fulfill this SLO in the yellow tier must include regular writing assignments that require revision and reflection. Regardless of discipline, writing itself must be one of the emphases of the course, and the conventions of standard written English must be covered. When this SLO is fulfilled in the purple tier, the emphasis need not be on writing, but in both cases, the artifact for assessment will demonstrate the ability to write with clarity, focus, organization, and originality for a specific purpose and audience.

## **Oral Communication**

### Guidelines for Course Proposal

**Learning Area Description:** Courses in the oral communication Learning Area are designed to enhance foundational communication skills and knowledge necessary for success at UNI and beyond. Oral communication courses will also teach active listening, as well as how to engage in civil discourse, especially in diverse groups.

**Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 3 Speaking** - “Demonstrate competent listening and effective speaking skills in a variety of contexts.” To do this, courses fulfilling this SLO in the yellow tier will:

- give focused attention to and instruction on the skills needed to speak effectively in a variety of contexts;
  - offer at least four opportunities for formal oral presentations, one of which should be a group project;
  - give regular and consistent feedback on presentation skills;
- instruct students in the development of engaged and reflective listening skills.

**SLO 5 Collaboration** - “Work with others across differences to achieve common goals.”

**SLO 6 Diversity and Commonality** - “Examine human diversity and commonality.”

Recognizing that working effectively across differences requires knowledge of how human differences and commonalities affect the ways in which communication occurs and how it is received, courses that fulfill this SLO will:

- give focused attention to and instruction on how to communicate effectively in groups, including:
  - an awareness of the ethical responsibilities of communicators;
  - effective group communication skills, so that students can learn and practice strategies for creating and maintaining successful communication in groups;
  - and skills for engaging in civil discourse and intercultural communication.

**Quantitative Reasoning**  
Guidelines for Course Proposal

**Learning Area Description:** This Learning Area may potentially encompass any discipline that uses quantitative methods or formal logic, with an emphasis on courses that demonstrate how such methods can be used to explain reality and achieve meaning. Because these courses address both quantitative reasoning and critical thinking, they should locate mathematical skills and reasoning in a context of explaining or solving complex problems.

**Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 1 Critical Thinking** - “Engage in effective critical inquiry to address complex topics.”

**SLO 4 Quantitative** - “Frame and solve problems using quantitative reasoning.”

**Human Condition (Domestic & Global)**  
Guidelines for Course Proposal

**Learning Area Description:** The aim of this Learning Area is to enlarge students’ understanding of the many possible meanings of being human by urging them to branch out beyond their own specific backgrounds, and to enable them to think about their experiences from that broadened perspective. This category will potentially include courses from a very wide range of disciplines. Students will take two courses in this Learning Area: one with a domestic or U.S. focus, and one with a global or international focus. Please specify which subcategory your course will fulfill.

**Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 6 Diversity & Commonality** - “Examine human diversity and commonality”

- This SLO can be addressed by emphasizing positive, neutral, or negative aspects of human diversity, difference, and commonality; for example:
  - The multiplicity and richness of human experience and practices, historically, culturally, etc.;
  - Disparities or injustices related to race, class, gender, etc.
  - The commonality aspect of the outcome is intended to be broad, referring to those individual and social aspects of being human that are shared across historical, geographical, and cultural differences, and also to structures, practices, and institutions that may be shared within a specific human community.
- The concept of diversity refers to a very wide range of possible content. Courses could be designed broadly, to include such topics within a larger frame, or more narrowly, with a focus on such topics. The following are merely examples (not meant to be exclusive) of these topics:
  - The history of the Civil Rights Movement
  - Theories of sex and gender
  - Literature by underrepresented writers
  - Comparative religions
  - Influence of culture on various human experiences
  - Neurodiversity

**SLO 7 Human Condition** - “Analyze ideas, works, or institutions as diverse conceptions of the human condition.” The focus is on analyzing what it means to be human. It includes:

- Findings and theories in the social sciences and humanities;
- Works of art, literature, and philosophy;
- Historical perspectives.

**Scientific Reasoning**  
Guidelines for Course Proposal

**Learning Area Description:**

Scientists discern basic principles that explain natural phenomena through observation and analysis of the world. Scientists rely on theory and experimentation to test and refine understandings of our human minds and bodies, life on earth, and the physical universe.

Laboratory courses unite hands-on scientific experimentation, inductive reasoning, and deductive analysis with the study of basic principles, for example (but not limited to), the structure of matter, biological evolution, human behavior, and thermodynamics. Courses in this Learning Area are expected to include a laboratory experience (either 4-credit integrated course or 3-credit course plus a related 1-credit lab).

After completing a course in this category, students will be able to critique claims using the tools of scientific inquiry.

**Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 1 Critical Thinking** - “Engage in effective critical inquiry to address complex topics.”

**SLO 8 Scientific Reasoning** - “Critique claims using the tools of scientific inquiry.”

## **Human Expression**

### Guidelines for Course Proposal

**Learning Area Description:** A course in this Learning Area must include the creation as well as the analysis or interpretation of creative works in a medium relevant to the field or domain of the course. Creative work can include any artifact, concrete or ephemeral, newly created or a curation of work, in the arts. Courses should provide relevant instruction for creating such work, as well as analysis/interpretation, which culminates in assessed work for each SLO. The work students create and what they analyze/interpret should be related by general field of practice or medium.

**Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 9 Creativity** - “Engage in a creative process to produce artistic work.”

- The artifact for assessment of creative work should be a reflection on a student’s personal creative process and learning stemming from that process, not the creative work itself. Creative assignments can vary widely in medium, including but not limited to drawing or painting, choreography or performance art, theatrical scene design or acting, music performance or musical curation, poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction.

**SLO 10 Artistic Meaning** - “Interpret creative works and ideas as expressions of meaning and purpose.”

- The analysis/interpretation artifact for assessment could center on one or more pieces from a body of work studied in the course, or student work produced during the course. The goal is to practice analysis and interpretation. Students should demonstrate

understanding and knowledge of the elements and principles of the medium they are analyzing/interpreting.

## **Responsibility**

### Guidelines for Course Proposal

#### **Learning Area description:**

Courses in the Responsibility Learning Area give students the opportunity to develop skills in ethical reasoning as well as gain a greater understanding of their personal responsibilities and roles as citizens. The category aims to enable students to move beyond ideological reactions to questions that require careful normative judgment. It does not aim to inculcate in students a particular moral code, but to help them develop the habits of reasoning based on consistent principles, and judging based on evidence and logic, which they will need as citizens in charge of creating our shared world.

To qualify for this Learning Area, a course should:

- provide students with intellectual tools for reaching reasoned ethical or normative judgment. These tools are not limited to those developed by moral philosophers, but must go beyond the ethical codes of a particular profession;
- prompt students to engage in self-reflection to develop deeper understandings of concepts and priorities that they may value in unexamined ways, such as freedom, patriotism, family, health, security, or fairness. (This list is far from comprehensive);
- apply normative reasoning to real world phenomena. Possible examples could include climate change, capitalism, family dynamics, migration, medical ethics, etc. (This list is far from comprehensive).

#### **Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:**

**SLO 11 Values** - "Analyze the origins and consequences of one's own personal values."

**SLO 12 Ethics** - "Apply ethical reasoning to important issues facing society."