

Description of Foundation Requirements - 2008

Below are the descriptions of the various Foundations, excerpted from the Final Report of the Educational Development Task Force. Where the descriptions below differ from those in the Final Report of the Educational Development Task Force, this document shall take precedence.

The Foundations Curriculum Committee uses these descriptions as the criteria for review of all proposed Foundation courses.

F2: Develop excellence in written communication.

The ability to express concise and methodical arguments in clear and precise prose is essential to success in most courses at Rhodes and in most of the vocations Rhodes graduates pursue. Students will receive significant training in writing during the first two years through (1) one course foregrounding skills of critical analysis, rhetoric, and argumentation, and (2) two writing intensive courses. These three required courses will provide the initial steps in the student's deliberate development as a writer. Courses within each major will ensure that each student continues to refine writing skills over the course of the four years in college.

[This requirement will be satisfied by one writing seminar (taken in the first year) and two writing intensive courses, one of which will be in Search/Life. All three courses are to be completed by the end of the second year. Writing intensive courses and writing seminars may explore material in any discipline or may be interdisciplinary. However, the writing seminars will have as their central focus writing skills.]

Interpretation:

100-level First-Year Writing Seminar: “(1) one course foregrounding skills of critical analysis, rhetoric, and argumentation. . . the writing seminars will have as their central focus writing skills.”

Each writing seminar should focus on the teaching of writing skills. In addition, the course should meet the following criteria:

1. A minimum total of 25 pages/7500 words (not including revisions) of finished work.
2. Normally, at least four formal, graded, separate and substantial essays ranging in length from 3-5 pages/1000-1500 words.
3. One 7-10 page/2100-3000 word research paper.
4. An extensive revision of at least one essay.
5. A minimum of 75% of the final grade reserved for writing assignments.
6. Substantial instruction on the use and documentation of outside sources.
7. Extensive and constructive written feedback on writing skills.

By the end of the semester, each student enrolled in the course should know how to do the following:

1. Determine important questions about a topic or a text on their own.
2. Analyze a writing task and develop a strategy to fulfill it, considering the rhetorical situation and the audience.
3. Assess fairly the arguments of others and develop a critical/analytical response to a written text.
4. Plan and organize a coherent, well-supported argument with a clear thesis.
5. Support the thesis with unified paragraphs that are clearly related and substantially developed. Develop a polished, rational, evidenced argument.
6. Distinguish between kinds of evidence and select evidence that is relevant, sufficiently detailed, and substantial.

7. Summarize, extrapolate, and synthesize material from a variety of sources, giving adequate and accurate documentation.
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to tone, diction, syntax, and figurative language.
9. Express complex ideas in clear and effective prose that has been carefully edited and proofread.
10. Assess their own drafts (drawing on audience feedback when appropriate) and reconceive, restructure, or significantly modify their own arguments.

100 and 200-level “writing intensive” courses:

Each writing intensive course should pay special attention to the writing process (i.e. pre-writing activities and revisions). In addition, the course should meet the following criteria:

1. A minimum total of 20 pages/6000words (not including revisions) of finished work.
2. At least three formal, graded, separate and substantial essays totaling a minimum of 15 pages/4500 words and distributed throughout the term.
3. A minimum of 50% of the final grade reserved for writing assignments.
4. Instruction on the use and documentation of outside sources.
5. Constructive written feedback on writing skills.
6. The syllabus should indicate how the course will incorporate direct writing instruction, which should be focused on the ten skills listed under the “writing seminar” criteria. This instruction may come in the form of, for example, lecture, discussion, small group workshops, student critiques, individual conferences, and drafts and rewrites.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- History 105. Introductory Seminar in History
- German 244. German Fairy Tales
- Music 200. Survey of Music Literature

F3: Understand how historical forces have shaped human cultures.

Investigating the responses of individuals and societies to forces of change helps us understand the processes of transformation that affect all human cultures. It also provides new perspectives on the present.

[This requirement may be satisfied by taking one of a set of designated courses which may be taught in a number of departments, notably History, Art, and Anthropology/Sociology. Because we study the past through, for example, material artifacts as well as texts, a variety of methods are appropriate to the investigation of historical change.]

Interpretation:

Courses that fulfill #3 will involve students in a sustained and substantial investigation of historical change. Processes of change may be investigated chronologically, thematically, or comparatively. This would be satisfied by courses that engage in historical discourse through the study of human creativity, belief systems, cultural practices, or institutions. Courses that do not expose students to a methodological emphasis on broader patterns of historical change would not satisfy this requirement.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- Art 231-232. Survey of Western Art, I and II
- History 233. United States in the 20th Century
- Theatre 280-281. Theatre History, I and II
- Economics 339. Economic History

F4: Read and interpret literary texts.

Literary texts provide challenging and influential representations of human experience in its individual, social, and cultural dimensions. Critical and sensitive reading of significant works refines analytical skills and develops an awareness of the power of language.

[This requirement may be satisfied by taking one of a set of designated courses which may be taught in a number of departments, notably, English, Modern Languages, and Greek and Roman Studies.]

Interpretation:

Courses fulfilling this requirement will introduce students to the sustained and substantive study of literature, focusing primarily on:

1. the particular qualities of literariness (e.g. form, word-choice, verse style, tone, authorial voice, construction of an audience and reader),
2. the specific verbal texture of linguistic art, and
3. the development of abilities necessary to its interpretation and analysis.

Courses fulfilling this requirement should introduce students to specifically literary texts and the principal concern should be on their literary and artistic qualities.

Courses that use literary texts as documents for other purposes would not fulfill this requirement.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- English 210. Interpreting Literature
- Chinese 210. Chinese Literary Heritage
- Russian 300. Dostoevsky

F5: Participate in the analysis of artistic expression or in the performance or production of art.

Humans powerfully express their observations, questions, and emotions in artistic ways. These expressions take various aural, visual, and performative forms including art, theatre, music and film. Creation and analysis are the most effective methods of learning to understand and interpret art.

[This requirement may be satisfied with one of a set of designated courses in art, theater, music, or film. These may be offered in many departments.]

Interpretation:

Courses satisfying this requirement will typically fall into one of two categories, *creation* and *analysis*.

1. The structure of a creation course will be arranged to provide sustained and focused opportunity for students to:
 - a. Develop skills of working with matter, space, and time to attain a desired effect and an aesthetic sense of the quality of the product.
 - b. Demonstrate creativity within the constraints of the particular medium.
2. The structure of an analysis course will be arranged to provide sustained and focused opportunity for students to
 - a. Understand technical aspects of a particular medium or form.

- b. Cultivate sensitivity to aesthetics, categories of artifacts, and methods and motivations of creators working in particular mediums or forms.
- c. Understand connections between a medium or form and its broader cultural and historical context.

Generally a creation course might be the equivalent of a course in studio art (for instance, drawing, painting, sculpture, photography), applied music (for instance, voice, instrument, ensemble), applied theatre (for instance, acting, stage movement, and production design), or film production (there are currently no such courses in the curriculum). The analysis category would likely contain certain art history, music theory, music history, theatre history, and film courses. One essential criterion is that an analysis course must deal in a significant way with the creative process of the art form; a course with a focus on aesthetics, categorization, and interpretation but without consideration of methods, materials, and processes would likely not satisfy the F5 requirement.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- Art 107. Sculpture
- Theatre 120. Acting
- Music 117. Musical Cultures of the World
- French 334. French Cinema

F6: Gain facility with mathematical reasoning and expression.

Some human experiences are most effectively expressed in mathematical language, and important areas of intellectual inquiry rely on mathematics as a tool of analysis and as a means of conveying information. Experience in using the logic, calculation, and precision in mathematics refines an individual’s abilities to evaluate experiences, make judgments, and communicate.

[This requirement may be satisfied with one of a set of designated courses currently offered in mathematics, computer science, logic, natural science, economics, or psychology. Such courses might be developed in other areas, notably sociology, political science, urban studies, international studies, music (advanced music theory), or linguistics.]

Interpretation:

To satisfy F6 requirement, a course at Rhodes should incorporate the following attributes:

1. Students are engaged in a substantial and sustained way throughout the course in **deductive reasoning**, that is, using algebraic, arithmetic, and geometric relationships along with standard logic to make deductions from previously-established results. Students translate problems statements from ordinary language to a mathematical or symbolic form and solve them, interpret and apply theorems and proofs, and write proofs.
2. Throughout the course, at least one of the following is true:
 - a. Students use **statistical inference and inductive reasoning**; they gain an understanding of probability and the development of standard statistical measures, and they employ these to draw inferences from sets of data.
 - b. Students use **geometry, algebra, and transcendental functions**, and they formulate and solve problems in these contexts.
 - c. Students engage in **modeling and simulation**: using such tools as matrices and linear algebra, calculus, difference equations, differential equations, stochastic processes, symbolic logic, and software tools such as spreadsheets, computer algebra systems, and programming languages, they obtain models of physical,

biological, economic, and cognitive phenomena, assess the efficacy of the models, and apply them to draw inferences about the phenomena.

- d. Students engage in **computer programming**: students develop algorithmic solutions to problems such as data inquiry and manipulation, text transformation, computation, and graphical presentation and implement the solutions using a high-level programming language on a digital computer. They subject the resulting code to syntactical, logical, and practical tests.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- Computer Science 103. Computer Information Fluency
- Mathematics 107. Linear Methods
- Philosophy 206. Logic
- Economics 290. Statistical Analysis for Economics and Business

F7: Explore and understand scientific approaches to the natural world.

Our world is profoundly influenced by a scientific understanding of the physical realm of our existence. From every day matters to major questions of public policy, students have a personal and social responsibility to make informed decisions involving science. The ability to make such decisions hinges not simply on knowledge of scientific facts, but also on understanding the powerful methods by which this knowledge is obtained.

[This requirement will be satisfied by taking one of a set of designated courses which may be offered in the departments of Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Physics, and Psychology. These courses must include a laboratory.]

Interpretation:

Courses that satisfy this Foundation Requirement should:

- a. focus on a scientific understanding of the physical and/or biological world,
- b. use contemporary scientific theory and methodology
- c. include a faculty supervised laboratory that normally requires a minimum of 35 hours of student involvement

Examples of Approved Courses:

- Chemistry 111. General Chemistry
- Geology 111. Earth System Science
- Physics 101. Astronomy
- Biology 130-131. Biology I and Biology I Lab

F8: Explore and understand the systematic analysis of human interaction and contemporary institutions.

Human development, thought, and aspiration occur within societies, and those societies are shaped by various social and political institutions. Familiarity with the systematic analysis of human interaction and contemporary institutions is an important component of a sound understanding of the world and is a foundation for responsible citizenship.

[This requirement may be satisfied by one of a set of designated courses offered in many departments, notably Anthropology/Sociology, Economics, Education, History, International Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Urban Studies.]

Interpretation:

The title and description of the requirement stress three things: social and political interaction and institutions, systematic methods of analysis, and contemporariness. All of these

are qualified by the reference to “responsible citizenship.” Therefore: Courses meeting this requirement should engage students in a *substantial and sustained* examination of either human social interaction or social and political institutions; these courses should either focus on contemporary society or have clear applications to contemporary social and political life; the student should leave the course with an appreciation of the systematic methods by which knowledge about social and political life is acquired and presented. As a consequence of this experience, a student should be able to approach other elements of contemporary social and political life with enhanced analytical insight and appreciation for other methods of social and political analysis.

Courses with institutional or social components would not meet this requirement unless those components were a major part of the course and involved students in a sustained examination of social or political life.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- Anthropology/Sociology 105. Introduction to Sociology
- International Studies 100. Introduction to International Relations
- Political Science 151. United States Politics
- Psychology 150. Foundational Issues in Psychology

F9: To view the world from more than one cultural perspective.

In order to live and work effectively in a culturally diverse world, liberally educated individuals cultivate the ability to view and understand issues and events from cultural perspectives that differ from their own. This ability requires in-depth analysis of issues that bring to the forefront similarities and differences in cultural values, beliefs, world views and/or identities.

[This requirement may be satisfied by one of a set of designated courses in a variety of content areas whose mutual reference point addresses how cultural lenses condition one’s understanding, knowledge and interpretation of other realities and perspectives.]

Interpretation:

The purpose of this component is to enhance our students’ ability to respond intelligently and sensitively to people from different cultural frameworks – that is, to provide them with knowledge and skills that will enable them to improve their ability to interact respectfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. The courses that fulfill this requirement should, however, go beyond mere description to include analysis of how cultural frameworks are created, sustained, and/or modified. Courses meeting this requirement must be clearly grounded in the study of a past or contemporary culture that is sufficiently distinct from the dominant culture of the United States, or the dominant European/Mediterranean cultures which have informed it, to represent a truly different worldview. Such courses must reflect the human experience within the cultural context. In examining the values, beliefs, and world views found in other cultures, the courses should also provide students with the opportunity to consider the ways in which their own cultural identities have influenced their particular values, beliefs, and world views.

Courses with a cultural *component* (as opposed to a clear cultural *focus*) would not satisfy this requirement. Also inappropriate for this requirement would be courses that focus primarily on generalized typologies or theoretical constructs, as well as courses that focus on the dominant culture of the United States or the dominant European/Mediterranean cultures which have informed it. It is not enough to state that a past version of the predominant culture is sufficiently different from the current version to present a truly different cultural perspective. As the term “culture” is now ubiquitous across disciplines (e.g., consumer culture, corporate culture, culture of poverty), courses that focus on subgroups whose roots are tied to the dominant cultural world

view – either sympathetically (e.g., corporate culture) or dissentingly (e.g., women’s movements) will not fulfill this requirement.

Examples of Approved Courses:

- Chinese 214. Introduction to Chinese Culture
- History 288. Japanese Civilization
- Music 118. African-American Music
- International Studies 243. Government and Politics of the Middle East
- Theatre 270. Introduction to Asian Theatre

F11: Participate in activities that broaden connections between the classroom and the world.

The goal of a liberal arts education is to enlarge human freedom. Because freedom cannot be fully understood outside a social context, Rhodes students are asked to become engaged citizens, participating in the local community - its politics, its culture, its problems, its aspirations – and in the world community. Students gain skill in connecting knowledge to its uses through educational experience that takes them off campus. Their work may involve them in the arts, human services, politics, or business in the City of Memphis or it may take them to other parts of the country or to other parts of the world.

[Typically, this requirement will be satisfied by one of a set of designated courses which will include service learning courses, the St. Jude research/seminar program, internships, study abroad, and student-initiated, faculty supervised, community-based research (via D.I., honors research, collaborative research with faculty). Non-credit bearing work that may be approved to satisfy this requirement might include Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies projects and Singers international tours.]

Interpretation:

This requirement assumes that the knowledge, skills, and sensibilities gained in course work are essential enhancements of the student’s understanding and appreciation of the wider world. Educational experiences that take them out of the ordinary classroom, therefore, can illuminate that connection. Yet just as the subject matters of our courses differ, so do the ways in which those bodies of knowledge, skills, and sensibilities relate to the intellectual and social world outside of the gates. Consequently, this requirement could be satisfied by a wide variety of credit and non-credit experiences that deliberately make connections between course work and the world. For example: course-based research that involves students with off-campus communities; independent research (e.g., directed inquiries, honors projects) that involve students with off-campus communities; study abroad; service learning courses; supervised service projects; and supervised internships.

(The above interpretation, approved by the Educational Program Committee on October 9, 2007, replaces the interpretation in the Final Report of the Educational Development Task Force.)

Examples of Approved Experiences:

- Archaeology 450. Archeological Field Study
- Business 460. Internship
- Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies
- British Studies at Oxford