UMaine Sustainability Learning Outcomes Description

The University of Maine requires all undergraduate students to complete a general education program. The stated goal of this program is " to ensure that all of its graduates, regardless of the academic major they pursued, are broadly educated persons who can appreciate the achievements of civilization, understand the tensions within it, and contribute to resolving them" (University of Maine Course Catalog). As part of this program, each student is required to complete 18 credits within the *Human Values and Social Contexts* area. One course must be taken within each of five subcategories described below. Together, the learning outcomes of the *Human Values and Social Contexts* areas address sustainability through the integration of social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

Subcategories of the Human Values and Social Contexts area of the UMaine undergraduate General Education Requirements (from https://umaine.edu/upcc/resource/)

1. Western Cultural Tradition

    Preamble: The Western Cultural Tradition involves the historical and/or philosophical examination of the basis of Western culture. Subject areas may include, but are not limited to, artistic, economic, education, historical, legal, linguistic, literary, performative, philosophical, political, rhetorical, scientific, and social dimensions of the Western cultural tradition and its impact.

    Student Learning Outcomes: Students completing the General education area of the Western Cultural Tradition will be able to:

    1. Examine the sources, transmission, development and outcomes among ideas, institution, artifacts, and values within the traditions of the West.

    2. Recognize and explore the complexity and variety among ideas, traditions, institutions, archaeological and historical texts and artifacts and values that inform the cultural traditions of the West.

    3. Analyze and think critically about how societies are or have been defined by such cultural traditions.

2. Social Contexts and Institutions

    Preamble: Courses included in the Social Contexts and Institutions category focus upon the ways in which social contexts shape and limit human institutions (defined broadly to include customs and relationships as well as organizations). The specific focus may be upon ways in which social contacts and institutions interact with human values, the role

of institutions in expressing cultural values, or the social and ethical dimensions attendant upon particular academic disciplines.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students completing the general education area of Social Context and Institutions will be able to:

1. Identify, describe and analyze social contexts and human institutions

2. Recognize and critically evaluate the interaction between social contexts and human institutions

3. Population and Environment

Preamble: Courses included in the Population and Environment sub-category help students to understand how humankind interacts with our finite physical and biological environment. This understanding can be fostered in different ways. Some courses may emphasize technical, scientific problems and solutions. Others may focus on institutional, historical, and political dimensions, and others may focus on the cultural, ethical, and philosophical issues underlying current environmental problems. Courses fulfilling this requirement should address at least one of the following:

1. the role of both local and global environmental change on the quality of human life

2. the pervasive role of human population growth on environmental quality and the quality of life, both in industrial and developing countries

3. the influence of historical, cultural, religious, economic, educational, and political factors on population growth and environmental quality

4. the ethical and philosophical assumptions underlying environmental policies and thinking about nature and the place of humans in nature

5. possible sustainable solutions to the population/environment problems.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students completing the general education area of Population and Environment will be able to do at least one of the following:

1. Recognize and understand the role of both local and global environmental change on the quality of human life

2. Describe the influence of diverse factors, such as philosophical, cultural, religious, economic, educational, and political, on population growth and environmental quality

3. Understand the concepts and principles necessary to evaluate contemporary issues of population growth, natural resource conservation, and environmental protection

4. Interpret diverse types of information about environmental issues, to develop their own perspectives on these issues, and to communicate these perspectives effectively

5. Understand and describe technical and/or scientific approaches for addressing problems that arise in the relationship between human population and the environment.

4. <u>Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives</u>

Preamble: A course included in the Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives category satisfies one or more of the following criteria: (a) it places primary emphasis on the experiences, perspectives, and cultural work of one or more groups who are not dominant within a particular culture; (b) it has a primary goal encouraging students to become aware of the diversity of American culture and to discover their roles within that diversity; or (c) it places primary emphasis on the relationships among or within different cultures in the past or present; (d) it introduces students to a culture other than their own through an intermediate or advanced course in the language of that culture.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students completing the Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives general education area of will be able to do at least one of the following:

1. Recognize the experiences, perspectives, and cultural values of one or more groups who live within a culture different than their own.

2. Describe the diversity of American culture and reflect on their personal roles within that diversity.

3. Identify and assess how different cultures have related to each other either in the past or the present.

4. Achieve intermediate or advanced mastery of a language other than English.

5. <u>Artistic and Creative Expression</u>

Preamble: Courses included in the Artistic and Creative Expression category engage the student in creative thinking and processes. A primary objective is to develop skills and

intellectual tools required to make artistic and creative decisions, and to participate in, evaluate, or appreciate artistic and creative forms of expression.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students completing the general education area of Artistic and Creative Expression will be able to:

> 1. Participate in, identify or evaluate artistic and creative forms of expression.

> 2. Develop skills and/or intellectual tools central to the artistic and creative process or its critique