General Education Plan

As Amended through and Adopted on
May 11, 2011 by the Faculty
and revised by the
General Education Committee (October 30, 2016)

The General Education Committee is charged to, among other things, “implement and reconcile the goals and policies of the general education curriculum as approved by the faculty” and “to recommend to the appropriate committee any additions or changes deemed necessary for the implementation of and reconciliation with existing goals and policies.” It periodically submits to EPC the General Education Plan as amended for review and approval, and some items go to the full faculty, at the discretion of the EPC and FEC.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MODEL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPOSITION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOREIGN LANGUAGE</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUNDATIONS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONNECTIONS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYNTHESIS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTEGRATED EXPERIENCE EVENTS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: GOALS STATEMENT PREPARED BY THE GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 2006</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B: COMPARISON OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER FORMER VERSUS CURRENT MODEL</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM MAP AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Albright’s General Education Curriculum: 
Overview and Introduction

Liberal education requires that we understand the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis, and expression; that we cultivate a respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship, and service to our communities. . . . In centering education upon these qualities, liberal learning is society’s best investment in our shared future.

AAC&U “Statement on Liberal Learning”

Introduction

In fall 2005, the general education program was reviewed as part of the Educational Policy Council’s ongoing periodic review of all academic programs. The faculty discussed the general education curriculum during a series of workshops in fall 2005, at the end of which they were asked to indicate whether revision of its requirements was desired. The vast majority of the faculty voted affirmatively. To respond to that request, the EPC created a faculty committee to oversee this revision (GEAC or General Education Assessment Committee) and appointed faculty members to that committee, including a representative from EPC and two representatives from each academic division. The Provost has served on the committee on an ex-officio basis, joined later by Dean Thomas and Dr. Melissa Nicolas (at that time, Director of the Writing Program).1

GEAC began the process by educating themselves on the national conversations and research on general education, attending several conferences and immersing themselves in the current literature. Next, a series of dean’s seminars occurred over the 2006-2007 academic year, at which possible goals and components of the program were discussed. In spring 2007, the EPC proposed a set of goals that the faculty unanimously approved (see Appendix A). Based on this faculty input, GEAC developed a preliminary model of a new GE curriculum and presented it to the faculty at a retreat in August 2007. Based on feedback about that model, GEAC worked to revise it and add greater detail. Further discussion has been held with the faculty as a whole and in smaller groups, the EPC was regularly updated and given input into the work, and minutes of GEAC meetings were posted to the Provost’s web pages, as were workshop and reference materials. In fall 2008, the faculty approved the first component of the revised curriculum—the First-year Seminar—to begin in fall 2009, and the Board of Trustees approved the seminar at its winter 2009 meeting. In the spring 2009 semester GEAC brought a draft of a full proposal to the FEC, EPC, and full faculty. Based on faculty feedback in meetings and through an online survey, GEAC made further revisions. The completed proposal was brought

1 The original General Education proposal was prepared by Al Cacicedo, Karen Campbell, Andrea Chapdelaine, Dan Falabella, Jennifer Koosed, Irene Langran, Melissa Nicolas, Kennon Rice, and Joe Thomas.
before the full faculty in the fall of 2009. The faculty, through the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years, discussed and amended each component of the proposal. The proposal was then approved by the full faculty in May 2011. What follows is the General Education Plan as amended and approved by the full faculty, with editorial adjustments for presentation to the board in May 2011, and with further editorial adjustments and annotated changes approved by the General Education Committee. The General Education Committee (GEC) is comprised of one member from each of the three academic divisions serving two year terms (voting members), the experience event coordinator (a voting member), the committee chair and director of general education (a voting member), the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (non-voting ex-officio), and three student members (sharing one vote).

Context
The current national climate of opinion regarding higher education, especially liberal education, includes a degree of skepticism and even outright ignorance. Liberal education is viewed as expensive, dated, and increasingly irrelevant. However, the mission of Albright College reflects the belief that a liberal education is the most valuable postsecondary education, today more than ever. This belief is reinforced by various professional bodies such as the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), national organizations whose mission is to foster and promote liberal education both within American institutions of higher education and to the public at large. In recent years, AAC&U has launched the “Liberal Education and America’s Promise” campaign, which has been an important touchstone for this revised curriculum because, as the epigraph to this document suggests, LEAP promotes the critical importance of a liberal education to achieving both the ideals upon which our nation was founded and the competencies needed to thrive as a thoughtful participant in the twenty-first century.

Albright’s faculty has revised its general education model in a way that reflects this national conversation and builds upon practices, many of which we already have in place, that research identifies as having significant positive impact on students’ learning and persistence to graduation, including the least well-prepared students. It is within this larger context of our existing strengths and opportunities for improvement that the revised model of general education has been built. The revised general education model strives to achieve the learning goals for general education adopted by the faculty in spring 2007 and incorporated in Albright’s Strategic Plan—to foster in our students full engagement with their learning and an understanding of the importance and value of that learning in a wider community.

The Model
The three overarching general education goals approved by the faculty are summarized below and described in more detail in Appendix A:

---
2 Recently, AAC&U published a report entitled “High Impact Practices” by George D. Kuh (see www.aacu.org/LEAP/hip.cfm for excerpt), which presents results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) demonstrating a strong relationship between certain educational activities and student engagement.
- **Knowing the World** - Students will learn about different disciplines, their objects of study, and their approaches to knowledge, thereby establishing a broad foundation of knowledge upon which to build understanding and engagement.

- **Engaging with the World** - Students will understand cultures as well as the differences within and among them. They will learn different perspectives on ways of living and relating to the world and recognize the importance of social and ethical engagement in a local and global context.

- **Understanding the World** - Students will learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems creatively, by acquiring intellectual, practical, and integrative skills. They will examine the different questions and methods of the arts, humanities, and natural and social sciences. They will gain skills in verbal and nonverbal methods of communication. Students will learn to interpret, synthesize, and adapt knowledge and skills to different situations, thus preparing themselves for an informed engagement with the world.

In order to achieve the liberal education goals the College values, students must be able, first, to **reflect** on what they are learning, because reflection will help them become conscious of how their general studies courses are reframing the way they perceive the world. Second, students must be given the opportunity to **integrate** their learning over time. General studies cannot simply be a smorgasbord of options that may or may not cohere. A revised general studies curriculum should give students the opportunity to see how disparate areas of learning are necessary to each other in filling out their understanding of the universe they inhabit. Third, the curriculum must foster in students the skills necessary to **communicate** their perceptions. And, finally, as a consequence of reflection, integration, and communication, students must be able to **self-assess** their learning—a higher order of reflection in which they can recognize the new and more comprehensive ways in which they have learned to perceive their world.

For these opportunities to occur, the curriculum must be rigorous, engaging, developmentally progressive, inclusive of the essential learning outcomes, and coherent. The curriculum must also be dynamic, with continual and clear feedback mechanisms that allow its structures and processes to adapt and improve. The general education curriculum is viewed and supported as an element of the Albright experience that is owned by the faculty as a whole and is acknowledged as an educational element that is equal and complementary to the major, both of them parts of a larger whole that develops over the student’s four years. Finally, the general education curriculum shall be given primary focus in the larger campus context, supported and enhanced by campus life and co-curricular activities.
The revised general education model is summarized in the outline below:

**Components of the Revised General Education Curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. First-year Seminar</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Composition</strong></td>
<td>1 course minimum with standardized placement procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. English 101 (Some students will be exempted and others will be placed in sections offering supplemental support)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English 102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Foreign Language</strong></td>
<td>1-3 courses with standardized placement procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Elementary I and II (101 and 102) and Intermediate I (201/203)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Elementary II (102) and Intermediate I (201/203)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intermediate I and II (201 and 202)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Advanced (301)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Foundations</strong></td>
<td>(All required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Social Sciences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Humanities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fine Arts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quantitative Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Natural Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E. Connections</strong></td>
<td>(Requires 2 courses that engage difference and value, with at least 1 of these 2 dealing substantively with global issues and at least 1 of the 2 courses being from the Humanities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F. Synthesis</strong></td>
<td>(Junior capstone, IDS course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G. Integrated Experience Events</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of courses for General Education is 11-14 (compared to the current requirement of 13-16) (see Appendix B for chart comparing old and new curriculum).

This model reflects three major developmental groups of courses. The first includes the First-year Seminar and the composition courses. The seminar is made central to the student’s academic focus rather than being treated as preliminary or superadded. The First-year Seminars are intended to introduce students to what it means to engage an academic discipline as a way to know the world and to develop their ability to do so. It is also meant to transition students into the arena of college-level academic discourse and practice in the liberal arts and begin their work of finding a place in that arena. The same could be said for the composition requirement of ENG 101-102, which more particularly responds to the need for more sustained writing instruction and intentional development of information literacy skills.

Second, there are the sophomore and junior courses in Foundations and Connections and the co-curricular Experience events. These are different but complementary ways to engage students in general education courses during those two years of their tenure at Albright. The intent is both to introduce content and to exercise the disciplinary and interdisciplinary imaginations of our students. The Foundations courses do this in the disciplines,
students’ understanding the world and of intellectual endeavor. The Connections courses focus on cultivating an understanding of cultural difference and ethical responsibility, giving students more tools to engage an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. The Experience events are meant to broaden and deepen student’s reflective engagement with these liberal education goals through programming outside the classroom.

Foreign language instruction has a special place between the two aspects of general education discussed above, since foreign language instruction serves a foundational linguistic and cognitive function while at the same time contributing to the Connections goal of cross-cultural understanding and engagement. We will continue to recommend beginning language study as early as possible in the student’s curriculum.

Third, also at the junior level, is the Synthesis capstone, which has an explicit interdisciplinary focus. This capstone will provide a venue for students to integrate and reflect on their learning to date and thus lend greater significance to that learning. Further detail on each curricular component is offered below.

**First-year Seminar**

**General Description**
The First-year Seminar, required of all first-year students, engages 15-18 students in a course of study that pursues a topic chosen by a faculty member, typically from a disciplinary perspective. These seminars are designed to introduce students to academic discourse, to be both reading- and writing-intensive, and to promote analysis and understanding that are contextualized—historically, culturally, and socially. First-year Seminars are structured to achieve the student learning outcomes associated with the stated general education goals of the College. The topics of study vary and reflect the creative and intellectual diversity of the faculty.

**Goals**
The purpose of the First-year Seminar is to:
1. Invite students to experience and value higher education and its academic expectations
2. Cultivate intellectual curiosity as well as creative and critical thinking
3. Introduce disciplinary ways of knowing and their permeable boundaries
4. Develop a sense of the historical development of ideas
5. Cultivate the written, oral, research, communication, and information literacy skills necessary for a productive and educated life.

**Outcomes**
Students will meet the goals of the First-year Seminar by:

---

3 The seminars are intended to fulfill the first developmental goals associated with “Knowing the World:” “Students will learn about different disciplines, their objects of study, and their approaches to knowledge, thereby establishing a broad foundation of knowledge upon which to build understanding and engagement.”

4 “Information literacy” refers to the ability to gather and assess relevant information and use appropriate technology to do so.
1. Reading texts and showing competence in comprehension, analysis, reflection, and critique
2. Dealing critically with complex texts and using language successfully as a tool for both thought and expression
3. Addressing issues and ideas by situating them within their appropriate contexts and applying appropriate concepts in interpreting and understanding texts
4. Producing written and oral work that show competence in standard written English and demonstrate the ability to construct and support a thesis; and conducting at least one substantive project that will evidence information literacy skills
5. Participating in co-curricular and extra-curricular learning such as Experience events, lectures, panels, or other activities.

Course Characteristics

- Regardless of topic, the course should be based upon close reading of texts, a range of writing about that reading experience, and understanding through contexts—social, historical, political, and/or economic (among others). 5
- Each seminar should incorporate a variety of pedagogical approaches including but not limited to lectures, discussions, presentations, and workshops.
- Seminars should be designed with multiple opportunities for students to write, in both informal and formal contexts. Examples of informal, low-stakes writing include: response papers, journals, and free writing. Formal writing assignments include multi-draft papers that require students to construct a cogent thesis and develop their argument by providing textual support and writing in coherent, standard written English. Formal writing assignments should receive repeated feedback from instructors. Sequenced assignments—assignments that critically engage previous readings/assignments—are encouraged.
- Reading assignments should train students in comprehension and analysis, and instructors should explicitly address the process of academic reading.
- Instructors are encouraged to integrate, via integrated or co-curricular assignments, learning opportunities provided by units like the Library, Information Technology Services, the Academic Learning Center, the Writing Center, Student Affairs, etc., as part of the students' successful transition to Albright College.
- Instructors are strongly encouraged to integrate into class assignments the learning opportunities offered through Experience events and to consider developing such events on their own. 6

5 These academic reading and writing skills will reinforce what students will be learning through the English composition requirement. During training and/or preparation sessions, seminar instructors will receive an overview of composition course content and objectives.
6 Preliminary ideas for the goals (and not content) of first-year Experience events include: 1) the liberal arts; 2) disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity; 3) difference, diversity, otherness, and critical self-reflection; 4) ways of knowing—research, fact checking, data collection, experimentation, and contextualization, etc., and distinguishing between truth, belief, opinion, and ideology; 5) various modes of artistic and cultural expression and creativity; and 6) cultural and artistic figures, achievements, and characteristics across historical period and geography.
• First Year Seminar faculty must have taught, full-time, at Albright for one complete academic year. Eligibility also includes full-time employees in or beyond their second year at Albright with contractual, for credit, teaching responsibilities. Eligibility requires approval of relevant academic chair.
• The First Year Seminar cannot be used to satisfy the requirements for the major.

Composition

General Description
Writing in the academy and for academic audiences is a skill that requires much training and practice. For students to become fluent in academic writing, they need a strong and thorough introduction to academic discourse. Therefore, it is required that all students take two courses in composition, English 101 and English 102. Some students will be exempted from English 101 based on their academic record; some students who take 101 will be placed in sections offering additional support, based on demonstrated need. English 101 introduces students to academic argument by focusing on writing thesis-driven essays. English 102 continues students’ introduction to academic writing by focusing on research writing.

Goals
The composition requirement attends primarily to two major goals identified by the faculty as important during the 2004-2005 academic year: communication skills and information literacy skills. English 101 and 102 constitute the first crucial step in building students’ critical writing abilities by focusing on argumentation and support. This requirement also attends to critical thinking skills, particularly skills involved in reading and analyzing texts and in the synthesis of ideas and arguments in response to reading. English 101 and 102 work with the First-year Seminar to educate students about academic honesty and information literacy.

Outcomes
As a result of the composition requirement, students will be able to:
1. Write thesis-driven essays supported by appropriate evidence
2. Construct essays that are coherent, logical, and organized
3. Identify and produce the type of writing required by an assignment
4. Recognize the importance of audience and respond appropriately
5. Utilize instructor and peer feedback to make substantive revisions to their work
6. Understand that academic writing is a recursive process
7. Use library and internet resources to conduct research
8. Incorporate multiple sources (primary and secondary) in their work using a recognized citation style
9. Read analytically and critically
10. Recognize and avoid plagiarism
11. Edit and proofread their work
12. Employ the conventions of standard written English
Logistics
All students will take English 101 and 102 (or their equivalent at another institution), except those exempted from English 101. Honors sections of 102 will be offered. Students will be placed in sections of English 101 with supplemental instruction as needed.

Foreign Language

General Description
A liberal arts education is not complete without a familiarity with another language that is meant as a gateway to another culture and history. Achieving a level of proficiency in a language other than one’s own enables a student to acquire a greater understanding of the world in which we live. Undergraduate students should be introduced not only to practical experience in a second language but also to an understanding of another culture through the study of that culture’s language.

Goals
In keeping with the College’s General Education Goals, the foreign language requirement enables students to know the world more fully and become more engaged with it. In addition to gaining the inherent linguistic and intellectual benefit of learning a second language, students must prepare to live as citizens of an increasingly interdependent world. Foreign language courses and experiences help students to do this by providing the foundations for a more intensive exploration for understanding international issues, other peoples and other cultures, and the nature of responsible, engaged global citizenship. To this end, students need to demonstrate an informed understanding of at least one other culture.

Outcomes
As a result of the foreign language requirement, students will be able to:
1. Express themselves at an appropriate level in the target language
2. Read text at an appropriate level in the target language
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the linguistic structure of the target language at the appropriate level
4. Explain their own cultural perspectives and make meaningful comparisons between them and the target culture

Logistics
Students complete 101, 102, and 201 if they have very limited or no exposure to the foreign language they wish to take; 101 counts for elective credit. Students complete 102 and 201 if they have some preparation in the foreign language they wish to take. Students complete 201 and 202 if they have significant preparation in the foreign language they wish to take. Students complete 301 if they have exceptional preparation in the foreign language. Note that a given major/combined major may require students to take more foreign language courses.
Placement:
The Department of MFL&L will assign students to the appropriate language course.

Native Speakers:
Native speakers are exempt from taking a foreign language if they can demonstrate advanced proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in their language.

Foundations

General Description
Foundations courses fulfill the first set of Albright College’s general education goals, “Knowing the World”: “Students will learn about different disciplines, their objects of study, and their approaches to knowledge, thereby establishing a broad foundation of knowledge upon which to build understanding and engagement.” Students will take courses in their first two years that introduce them to the following five foundational areas of study: the natural sciences, social sciences, quantitative studies, humanities, and the fine arts. Students are required to take one qualifying course in each of these five areas.

Goals
Through the particular subject matter of the course, Foundations courses introduce students to an area of study and its way of approaching knowledge. For example, a student in biology would learn not only about the processes and objects on which the course is focused, but would become familiar with the scientific method. It is up to departments and instructors to characterize and represent the “ways of knowing” that typify their area of study.

Outcomes
While outcomes for each Foundations course will reflect the particular topic, as a general proposition students should also:

1. Show general familiarity with the larger area of study which the course represents;
2. Employ effectively some of the concepts, language, and methods that characterize this area of study;
3. Show an understanding of how this area of study represents a valuable way of knowing the world.

Logistics
The review and approval of Foundations courses fall under the purview of the Educational Policy Council or its designated faculty committee. A course cannot be offered as both a Foundations and Connections course. Instructors of Foundations courses are encouraged to make them writing intensive. Courses that qualify for this requirement can be adapted from existing courses, or departments may wish to develop new courses. When the Curriculum Development committee considers a Foundations proposal to have come from outside that foundational area’s usual divisional or departmental affiliation, the committee will consult with other departments as it deems appropriate to assure the course meets Foundations goals. Foundations courses can be used to satisfy the requirements for the major or tracks within the
major unless prohibited by the major department. Foundations courses may be used to satisfy requirements for minors.

**Connections**

**General Description**
Connections courses respond to the third set of Albright College’s general education goals, “Engaging the World”: “Students will understand cultures as well as the differences within and among them. They will learn different perspectives on ways of living and relating to the world and recognize the importance of social and ethical engagement in a local and global context.” This goal includes exploring the history, creative products, beliefs and ideas of different cultures in the United States and around the world.

The Connections portion of the GE curriculum asks students to connect the range of knowledge they have acquired in the Foundations courses to the wider contexts of difference and interdependence within which knowledge is constructed and used. Students will also learn to situate their understanding and their actions within an increasingly interconnected world that routinely puts them into relation with other persons, communities, and nature, both local and global. By fostering an understanding of these issues among our students, we prepare them for their lives beyond Albright—making informed choices in their jobs and in their roles as responsible citizens.

**Goals**
A liberal education attempts to teach students to acknowledge, be knowledgeable about, and understand the sources of difference, whether within their own society or in another, and to understand that difference also entails a web of relation that may or may not be readily apparent. Students in Connections courses will explore critically a historical or cultural group and recognize how this exploration contributes to their broader understanding of values. The term “group” will be defined in the context of the particular course – involving, for example, race, ethnicity, nation, ideology, gender, social or economic class, sexual orientation, religious faith, medical status, human-environment relations, etc. Because knowledge of global issues of difference and interdependence increasingly define the liberally educated person, at least one of the Connections must deal substantively with global issues. The humanities Connections requirement ensures exposure to non-empirical approaches to "ways of knowing" that have a strong tradition at the liberal arts college.

**Outcomes**
As a result of these courses, students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of other groups, broadly defined, including different perspectives on ways of living and relating to the world.
2. Identify how this understanding of different traditions and values contributes to a broader understanding of values.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical context for difference as defined in the course.
4. Demonstrate, as a component of the global course requirement, an understanding of a significant global theme, problem, interdependency, or other interactions across different countries or regions or an understanding of a non-US culture or society in significant depth.

Logistics
Students will take two Connections courses, at least one of which is in the Humanities and at least one of which deals substantively with global issues. Both can be simultaneously achieved in one Global Humanities Connections course followed by a second Connections course of the student’s choosing. The First Year Seminar and three of the five Foundations courses must be completed before enrolling in a Connections course, except for students studying for a full time semester in residence abroad, who may enroll in Connections concurrently with their third Foundations course during their study abroad experience, since study away often offers excellent opportunities for meeting Connections goals. Completion of two semesters of MUS 103, or of 104, or of 105 will count as a Foundations course for the purposes of the Connections pre-requisite. The intent is that Connections courses be at the 200-300 level and be taken after the completion of the majority if not all of the Foundations courses, so that students will be familiar with foundational areas of knowledge and those “ways of knowing.” Courses that qualify for the Connections requirement can adapt existing courses, or departments may wish to develop new courses. The review and approval of Connections courses fall under the purview of the Educational Policy Council or its designated faculty committee. A single course cannot be approved for both Connections and Foundations credit. Students must take the two Connections courses from two different departments, one of which must be within the Humanities discipline.

Connections courses and major/co-major requirements: Connections courses cannot be used to satisfy requirements for majors and co-majors when used for General Studies credit.

Connections courses and minors: Connections courses may be used for both minor and general studies credit.

Prerequisites for General Education Connections courses: Connections courses will not normally require prerequisites. Instructors may require prerequisites in special circumstances for Connections courses, but only with one pre-requisite and only if it is an introductory course not itself requiring a pre-requisite (e.g., PSY100, SOC101, ACC101). Instructors are encouraged to construct a course that allows students without the prerequisite to take the course with their permission and succeed. Connections courses are intended to be accessible and available to the widest group of students possible.
**Synthesis**

**General Description**
This course is designed to serve as a synthesizing experience for the general education program. It will provide an opportunity for students to integrate and reflect on their learning and thus lend greater significance to that learning. Junior or senior status is required to enroll in a Synthesis course. It will address primarily the “understanding the world” goal of the general education curriculum. The function of this course is to move beyond disciplinary boundaries to a new understanding of a theme or topic. In other words, the course will encourage students not only to see the relationships among the disciplines but to pull out of these relationships an understanding of the subject that no single discipline offers. The emphasis is less on how two or more disciplines can each provide a perspective on an issue or object of study and more on how the issue or object itself requires us to combine perspectives for a more holistic understanding. Such understanding is achieved by addressing contrasts and perhaps even contradictions in methods and ways of knowing. *The primary distinction between the Synthesis and current IDS requirement is that the former makes interdisciplinarity an explicit course topic.* That is, instructors not only model the process of synthesis for a single topic but will also be explicit about how this process reflects interdisciplinary understanding generally.

Instructors are also encouraged to do the following:
- ask students to reflect on their general education coursework to date, including experiential learning undertaken through courses or the Experience program and internship or study abroad
- ask students to reflect on the connection between their general education learning and their own particular major (so that students recognize the interrelation among the two major branches of their undergraduate education)
- require one or more graded public speaking exercises where class size permits
- offer problem-based subject matters
- offer writing intensive course sections

The course will have at least one major assignment in which students use an interdisciplinary approach to understand a particular topic.

**Goals**
The Synthesis course requirement engages the student in critical and creative thinking. One particular goal is to adapt knowledge and skills from other components of the general education curriculum. Other general education goals served by this course include: comparing different fields; interpreting and conveying information; demonstrating information literacy; and critiquing, adapting and applying ways of knowing.

**Outcomes**
As a result of this course, students will:
1. Demonstrate appropriate written communication skills, with frequent and diverse writing assignments.
2. Demonstrate appropriate oral communication skills.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationships among the disciplines encountered in this course and between these disciplines and their own major.
4. Reflect on their general education coursework to date, including experiential learning undertaken through courses, the Experience Program, internships or study abroad opportunities.

**Logistics**

Courses that qualify for the Synthesis requirement can adapt existing courses, or departments may wish to develop new courses. Synthesis courses are restricted to juniors and seniors who have completed at least one Connections course.

Cross-divisional discipline pairings are especially encouraged in course topics.

The review and approval of Synthesis courses fall under the purview of the Educational Policy Council or its designated faculty committee.

Synthesis courses will almost always be team-taught by two or more faculty members (but are not required to be so in cases where a single faculty member can demonstrate sufficient expertise to represent multiple disciplines). In all cases, instructors are encouraged to make ample use of guest speakers from within or outside the campus community or draw on the students’ own expertise as ways to better convey the relevant disciplinary perspectives.

Synthesis courses and major/co-major requirements: Synthesis courses cannot be used to satisfy requirements for majors and co-majors when used for General Studies credit.

Synthesis courses and minors: Synthesis courses may be used for both minor and general studies credit.

Prerequisites for General Education Synthesis courses: Synthesis courses will not normally require prerequisites. Instructors may require prerequisites in special circumstances for Synthesis courses, but only with one pre-requisite and only if it is an introductory course not itself requiring a pre-requisite (e.g., PSY100, SOC101, ACC101). Instructors are encouraged to construct a course that allows students without the prerequisite to take the course with their permission and succeed. Synthesis courses are intended to be accessible and available to the widest group of students possible.
**Integrated Experience Events**

**General Description**
As stated in its current guidelines, the Albright Experience Program’s mission is to offer programming that highlights the linkages between the liberal arts as embodied by Albright’s general education curriculum and the scholarly, intellectual, cultural, and political life of the world outside the walls of the College. Instructors of all courses are encouraged to use these experiences to supplement the knowledge gained in their courses and require students to demonstrate an understanding of these linkages.

**Goals**
This requirement promotes ongoing participation in the rich cultural and intellectual life available outside the classroom. This requirement is linked to the general education goals of knowing the world, understanding the world, and engaging the world.

**Outcomes**
The outcomes for Experience participation follow from general education goals in support of a liberal education. Current Experience Program guidelines call for events that significantly enrich the academic, intellectual, or cultural life of the college community. Typical events for Experience credit include the presentation of the results of research or inquiry of some kind (though not exclusively scholarly); the performance of a scholarly, cultural, or artistic production; or the critical engagement of some facet of the liberal arts. The Experience Committee broadly interprets these categories, but events must support the Albright Experience mission. Students should present evidence not only of attending the requisite number of events, but also are encouraged toward reflective engagement with the event.

**Logistics**
Under the current system, students must receive credit for 16 events by the end of their sophomore year. Students must fulfill this requirement in order to graduate. As in current policy, sophomore transfers must complete a total of eight events in order to graduate, and junior transfers are exempt from this requirement.
Appendix A

Goals Statement Prepared by the General Education Assessment Committee
November 2006

The goal of the Albright College curriculum is to prepare graduates who are self-motivated, reflective, creative, and engaged members of society and of the world. Albright College strives to foster a life-long commitment to integrative learning, critical thinking, creative expression, and ethical engagement.

Knowing the World
Students will learn about different disciplines, their objects of study, and their approaches to knowledge, thereby establishing a broad foundation of knowledge upon which to build understanding and engagement. This goal includes:

- learning the basic elements of knowledge, including objects, events, processes, and contexts within different areas
- identifying similarities, differences, and complementarities among different fields of study and practice
- appreciating the diversity of theories, interpretations, and creative expressions within disciplines

Understanding the World
Students will learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems creatively, by acquiring intellectual, practical, and integrative skills. They will examine the different questions and methods of the arts, humanities, and natural and social sciences. They will gain skills in verbal and nonverbal methods of communication. Students will learn to interpret, synthesize, and adapt knowledge and skills to different situations, thus preparing themselves for an informed engagement with the world. This goal includes the skills of:

- reading, interpreting, analyzing, contextualizing, and evaluating information
- writing, speaking, presenting, and expressing forms of organizing concepts and effectively communicating them to others
- understanding and employing quantitative and logical reasoning and literary and artistic expression
- developing information literacy
- critiquing, synthesizing, adapting and applying established ways of knowing and of understanding

Engaging with the World
Students will understand cultures as well as the differences within and among them. They will learn different perspectives on ways of living and relating to the world and recognize the importance of social and ethical engagement in a local and global context. This goal includes:

- exploring the history, creative products, beliefs and ideas of different cultures in the United States and around the world
• exploring intensively at least one other culture through the study of a foreign language
• fostering discernment and making informed choices between alternative positions and perspectives
• developing an understanding of ethical values and social and global responsibilities that will inform their engagement with self and others
• reflecting on the impact that their actions and choices have on the world
### Appendix B
Comparison of General Education Requirements under Former versus Current Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMER GEN ED MODEL</th>
<th>CURRENT GEN ED MODEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(13\text{-}16) courses</td>
<td>(11\text{-}14) courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FYS</strong> – reading and writing intensive</td>
<td>FYS – reading and writing intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENG 101 and/or 102; some exempted from 101</strong></td>
<td>ENG 101 and/or 102, with 101 supplement if so placed; some exempted from 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FL – 1-3 courses, with beginners in 101</strong></td>
<td>FL – 1-3 courses, with beginners in 101 or 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION REQ’T:</td>
<td>Foundations requires 1 course in each:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4 humanities (in 3-4 disciplines)</td>
<td>• humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 lab science</td>
<td>• lab science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 quantitative</td>
<td>• quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 social science (in 2 disciplines)</td>
<td>• social science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 fine arts</td>
<td>• fine arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDS – 1 course</strong></td>
<td>Synthesis IDS, moved to junior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>--</strong></td>
<td>Connections – 2 courses, at least one in the humanities and at least one with global focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience events: 16 by sophomore year</strong></td>
<td>Experience events: 16 by sophomore year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C

### Curriculum Map and Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Goals</th>
<th>ENG 101</th>
<th>ENG 102</th>
<th>FYS</th>
<th>FL</th>
<th>FOUNDATIONS</th>
<th>CONNECTIONS</th>
<th>SYN</th>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the concepts, language, and methods of the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, quantitative reasoning, and fine arts</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recognize an understanding of how different disciplines approach a single topic; evaluate, and integrate the students’ learning in both general education courses, major courses, the Experience, and co-curricular activities</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M, I, D *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explain their own cultural perspectives and make meaningful comparisons between them and other cultures</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I, D *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of how regions and societies influence each other in a global setting</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>I, D *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical context for difference</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I, D *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Recognize social and ethical considerations in local and global contexts</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>M, I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Express themselves and read texts at appropriate levels in a language other than English</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Demonstrate critical thinking skills</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Demonstrate effective written communication skills</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Demonstrate informational literacy skills</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Student learning outcomes in the Experience will vary according to the range of selected activities and events selected by the student.*

*Introduced = I, Developed/Reinforced = D, Mastered/Integrated = M*