

**Queens College
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**

Proposal for an Upper-Level Requirement in Integration and Synthesis Academic Senate Meeting November 13, 2008

Rationale (from the General Education Task Force Report)

Upper-Division General Education –Integration and Synthesis.

At the upper-division level, general education courses that cross various areas of knowledge will enable students to draw on a broad range of knowledge and skills acquired throughout their undergraduate training. These courses will present opportunities for students to integrate general education in a broad, cross-disciplinary way and to demonstrate their mastery of the core critical abilities. Building on the foundation of faculty research, the life and work experiences of alumni, as well as initiatives of community organizations, upper-division integration and synthesis courses will allow students to integrate a Queens College liberal arts education into their lives as active citizens of the nation and world. The integration and synthesis courses are designed to offer upper-level students unique opportunities to probe deeper into cultural, philosophical, scientific, artistic, political, and other issues. To this end, such courses will introduce students to a significant subject, problem, or activity that will broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of the nation and world. Such courses are intended to provide a means to sharpen students' critical thinking, as well as their analytical and communication skills. Second, students learn to put different areas of knowledge and experiences together and draw connections across domains of knowledge. Third, these courses enhance students' understanding of their own location in space and time. Fourth, they present an opportunity for students to experience significant intellectual challenges and satisfactions in their junior and senior years. Fifth, they serve as a link between academic learning and practical experience that may be attractive to prospective employers. Sixth, they facilitate the integration of curricula content across disciplines. Finally, they foster a sense of self-actualization, empowerment, and citizenry among students.

Criteria.

To qualify for the *Synthesis and Integration* category, a course must be an upper-division (300-level*) course where the content intentionally crosses areas of knowledge (i.e., majors or those defined in the PLAS requirements), has content appropriate for non-majors (although potentially also appropriate for majors within the department.), allows students to integrate general education in a broad, cross-disciplinary way and to demonstrate their mastery of the core critical abilities, as well as to offer upper-level students opportunities to probe deeper into cultural, philosophical, scientific, artistic, political, and other issues while sharpening their critical thinking, analytical and communication skills

** The College Bulletin (2003-2005, page 65) describes a 300-level course as "Advanced or upper-level courses not usually taken before the junior year. They may have prerequisites or corequisites at the intermediate level or above, but in general students are expected to have or to provide themselves with the background information implied by the course title and description. These courses also require more responsibility, initiative, and independence than lower-level courses, and students must use the scholarly skills they have been introduced to in earlier courses."*

Requirement:

After completion of at least 60 credits, all students are required to complete at least one course at Queens College designated as "Integration and Synthesis." [Effective Fall 2009]

Implementation:

Departments may submit existing, reworked or new courses for consideration by the UCC as integration and synthesis courses. The UCC will use the criteria as presented in this proposal. Courses may be taught by one instructor or be team-taught, and no course model (e.g., lecture-discussion, seminar, internship, individual research project) is necessarily preferred or excluded.