TO: Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UGCC)

FROM: Dr. Lisa Perdigao, Humanities Program Chair and Professor of English
      Dr. Robert Taylor, Associate Dean, College of Psychology and Liberal Arts

DATE: November 14, 2016

SUBJECT: Proposal for the Modification of the General Education Core: Humanities Courses

The Humanities Program and its offerings at the Florida Institute of Technology have been shaped by the needs of the university. Our faculty members have degrees in individual disciplines (History, Literature, Philosophy, Art History, Political Science, Music, etc.) that collectively constitute the humanities. **Interdisciplinarity** is the core of our program at Florida Tech, and it is reflected in the core courses that establish foundations in the humanities. These core courses serve as extensions of the freshman-level writing courses and precursors to the specialized electives in individual disciplines and topics.

Historically, the Civilization sequence was designed to perform a specific function in the General Education Core and the **introduction**: **reinforcement**: **mastery** triad outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC), Florida Tech’s regional accrediting body. HUM 2051: Civilization 1 and HUM 2052: Civilization 2 constitute a 6-credit sequence that builds upon the students’ introductory studies in COM 1101: Composition and Rhetoric and COM 1102: Writing about Literature by reinforcing reading, writing, and critical thinking and preparing the students for studies in 3000- and 4000-level Humanities electives that require mastery in reading, writing, and critical thinking. The Civilization 1 and 2 courses cover history, literature, philosophy, art history, political science, and music, providing students with core competencies and foundations for upper-level Humanities courses.

In 2011, the Humanities Program offered changes to the Gen Ed Core requirement of Civilization 2, offering alternatives in HUM 2331: American History: Pre-Columbian to Civil War Era and HUM 2332: American History: From Reconstruction to the Present, HUM 2212 and HUM 2213: British and American Literature 1 and 2, and HUM 2142: World Art History 2. Last year, Humanities faculty started discussing alternatives to HUM 2051: Civilization 1, and the current proposal reflects the substantial work that our faculty has done to reshape our contributions to the core.

HUM 2051: Civilization 1 and HUM 2052: Civilization 2 will continue to be options for satisfying 6 credits of the Gen Ed Core; however, we are proposing the addition of four sequences, each representing one of the disciplines that constitute the Humanities Program at Florida Tech (History, Literature, Philosophy, and Art History):
- American History: Pre-Columbian to Civil War Era & American History: From Reconstruction to the Present (2 courses)
- British Literature and Culture (new); British and American Literature 1 & British and American Literature 2 (any 2 of 3 courses)
- Survey of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy & Survey of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy (moved from 3000-level to 2000-level) (2 courses)
- World Art History 1: Pre-History to Early Global Awareness & World Art History 2: Early Modern to Post-Colonial (2 courses)

The sequences that we are proposing open up the core to allow students to focus on a discipline within the humanities. These courses were designed to complement the Civilization courses in the breadth and depth of coverage—as surveys—and equivalent coursework. As with the Civilization sequence, students are required to gain discipline-specific knowledge, competencies in reading and written communication, and critical-thinking skills, for which we have assessable measures. The upper-level (3000- and 4000-level) Humanities electives were designed to be the next tier (mastery level) of courses in the program. Students are able to take these electives after satisfying the prerequisite course that provides the foundation for upper-level, specialized courses, consistent with practices across disciplines at Florida Tech and other institutions. The reinforcement and mastery of reading, writing, and critical-thinking skills in the 2000-level surveys and 3000- and 4000-level Humanities electives are essential to students’ success in upper-level courses in their respective disciplines, particularly senior research projects, graduate studies, and careers.

The proposed sequences reflect the “coherent rationale” required by SACS-COC, avoiding the situation where students migrate between topics and fields, losing the foundational aspect that is reinforced in the Civilization sequence. The sequences are attractive options for both our current students and transfer students, as the courses are consistent with those offered as Gen Ed and program core courses at other universities. We plan to offer a variety of courses each semester (1 and 2 concurrently) so that students will be able to follow their program plans. If a student is not able to take the second course required in the sequence due to scheduling or if he/she realizes that the sequence is not a good fit, the student will be able to take a Civilization course to complete the sequence, as the Civilization courses offer the most comprehensive coverage to satisfy the “coherent rationale” requirement.

We believe that these options will be attractive to our students and faculty for a variety of reasons. They open up what has been perceived as an overly restrictive core, allowing students a selection of courses to take and transfer in, and, additionally, they offer students the possibility of adding one of the Humanities minors. With the approval of UGCC, we introduced a new Literature Minor last year. We hope to add a Philosophy Minor this year and are currently refining our History Minor. These sequences serve as required courses for the minors. Students pursuing Humanities minors will be able to further develop their reading, writing, and critical-
thinking skills, skills that make them attractive candidates for graduate programs and to prospective employers.

Our Humanities faculty has discussed plans for additional sequences to be added in the future. This proposed list reflects our current depth and breadth of coverage within the Humanities Program and ability to meet these needs immediately.

Finally, we propose that the remaining three-credit Humanities course be at the 3000- or 4000-level. In creating these alternatives to the Civilization courses, both in 2011 and in 2016, we dropped 3000-level Humanities courses to the 2000-level. Prior to 2011, our 2000-level courses were mostly restricted to the Civilization courses. Our concern is that without the implementation of a required 3000-level elective, students will not complete the triad by achieving the mastery level, which is a vital component of assessment as mandated by SACS-COC. If students only take 1000- and 2000-level courses, they complete core requirements that are consistent with an Associate’s degree rather than a Bachelor’s degree and do not conform to General Education programs offered at peer institutions.
Summary of Proposed Changes

Humanities (9 credit hours): 3 courses, one of which must be at the 3000- or 4000-level.* Students will be required to take two of these courses as a sequence fulfilling the SACS-COC mandate that the courses demonstrate a “coherent rationale.” The proposed sequences are the following:

- Civilization 1: Ancient through Medieval & Civilization 2: Renaissance through Modern (2 courses)
- American History: Pre-Columbian to Civil War Era & American History: From Reconstruction to the Present (2 courses)
- British Literature and Culture (new); British and American Literature 1 & British and American Literature 2 (any 2 of 3 courses)
- Survey of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy & Survey of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy (moved from 3000-level to 2000-level) (2 courses)
- World Art History 1: Pre-History to Early Global Awareness & World Art History 2: Early Modern to Post-Colonial (2 courses)

*Exception: Foreign Languages taken at the 2000-level or higher may substitute for the HUM course at the 3000- or 4000-level.