IAI GECC Humanities Panel
Course Approval Criteria
Revised Fall 2026

An institutionally approved representative syllabus in electronic format is required by the panel for its review. Institutions should submit an actual and recent instructor syllabus which is not more than three years old. If the course is yet to be taught, a sample syllabus intended for future students is still required.

The representative course syllabus and any additional submission materials must include:

- **Institution Name**
- **Course prefix, number, and title**
- **Course description:** Including the full catalog course description is required. The course description should compare favorably with the proposed IAI course description.
- **Number of credit hours**: For combined lecture and lab/studio courses, please include lecture credit hours, lab/studio credit hours as well as contact hours for lecture and lab/studio components. Indicate if these are semester or quarter hours.
- **Prerequisites and co-requisites**: If prerequisites are required for a course, it is preferred that the course prefix, course number, course name, and when IAI approved, the IAI code, are included in the submitted syllabus. Important note: as a rule, general education (GECC) courses in IAI should not have prerequisites. There are a few exceptions to this rule for sequences such as written composition and calculus; see panel specific information. Major courses may have prerequisites as appropriate. Co-requisite courses should show the credit hour breakdown between the two courses.
- **Textbooks, additional readings, additional course materials**: Please note if different resources are required for different delivery modes. Course materials should reflect content outcomes and requirements, and should be recently produced. For published texts, please include author, title, edition, date of publication, publisher, and the ISBN. If the course utilizes online or OER materials, please include an active hyperlink; hyperlinks cannot be embedded in the LMS nor be blocked by a password because the panel needs to have full access to the resource.
- **Delivery mode**: traditional/nontraditional, in-person/online/hybrid, etc.
- **Course Objectives**: The course objectives should clearly support the course description.
- **Assignment descriptions**: Please include a detailed description of assignments, readings, projects, etc. Assignment details should be clearly evident and referenced, and show connection to the course learning objectives. Assignments should demonstrate the rigor and scope of the course.
- **Methods of evaluating student learning**: The syllabus should state clearly how learning outcomes will be assessed, such as through objective/subjective examinations, quizzes, written assignments, oral presentations, projects, etc.
- **Grading scale and assignment weighting:** Please provide a grading scale and indicate the relative weight of assignments or evaluation categories (e.g., exams, essays, projects, etc.).
- **Detailed course outline, daily/weekly/hourly schedule**: A detailed topical outline and weekly schedule that ***goes beyond chapter numbers and titles from a textbook*** ***(or select readings)*** must be included and it should provide specific details of topics being presented in class. This may include assignments, readings, projects, etc. as appropriate. This could be done using a few bullet points or a couple of sentences. This level of detail is also appropriate for the lab/studio outline in courses that contain a lab or studio component. The lab/studio outline should include similar information but also detail the tools, materials, equipment, and instruments being used and the outcomes or topics that the students will be exploring.

General Coding Practice:
A course can only be assigned to one IAI code/description per panel. Institutions should be clear and careful in determining which IAI code is identified for any syllabus submitted for approval. The institution should also ensure that the course meets the minimum semester credit hour requirement included with the IAI course description.

A student may "count" only one course per code in fulfilling transfer requirements, even though an institution may assign more than one course to a code. In some cases, however, students at schools on a quarter calendar may need to complete two courses to equate to a one-semester course. An equivalency in this circumstance would be three quarter-credits equals two semester credit hours and five quarter-credits equal three semester credit hours.

Panel Specific Requirements:

Note: Explanation of writing component within course content. Successful completion of formal writing assignments is necessary for successful completion of the course. This must be reflected in the grading scale. (See Writing Requirements section below.)

Note: Syllabi, including foreign language courses, should be fully documented in English. Foreign language courses with information in the target language risk being returned if the panel members cannot read the syllabus.

Note: If this course has a prerequisite that has not been approved for inclusion in the IAI GECC, please provide complete catalog copy for that course.

Note: Because critical thinking, investigation, and reflection are necessary to the study of the humanities, these processes--as embodied in writing (essays and essay examinations) -- are a significant component of humanities courses.

Note: The assignment or evaluation categories grade weighting information provides both a sense of the scope and rigor of the course, as well as aiding the panel's evaluation of writing as an integral component of the course.

Prerequisites
- The panel does not generally accept courses with prerequisites, with the following exceptions:
  - If the course is the second in a two-course sequence, the panel will accept the first course in the sequence as a prerequisite.
  - If the course prerequisite is all or part of the General Education Core Curriculum writing sequence (i.e. C1 900/R and C1 901/R) because all humanities courses require writing.
- Multiple prerequisites that indicate a course is an advanced course are unacceptable.
- Courses or prerequisites that are restricted only to majors are unacceptable.

Student Learning Outcomes
- Outcome information may provide evidence of the content and rigor of the course. Evaluation methods should be directly tied to the student learning outcomes.

Assignments
- Information on the nature of all assignments is required. Special attention should be paid to providing clear information concerning the nature and extent of writing assignments (see below).

Writing Requirements

- **Writing assignment descriptions should be detailed and included either as separate document or a clear section of the syllabus.**
- Formal writing must be present in assessed components of the course for IAI approval. Written components must be described in the syllabus and be clearly reflected in the grading scale. **The nature and extent, breadth and scope of the writing required within the course should be meaningful and intentionally integrated with the subject matter.** Writing components may include, but are not limited to: reaction papers, journals, essay questions on exams or class assignments, extended blogs/discussion posts, and research papers. Extended blogs/discussion posts are defined as those that are significant and part of the assessed writing required in the course.
- **Formal writing is defined as writing that articulates and develops an idea in a sustained and critical manner with consideration of the discipline and academic level of the course.**

Discipline Specific Concerns

- **Foreign Language Courses**
  - It is important that courses submitted as fourth semester (or above) foreign language courses to the Humanities must include cultural exploration beyond the everyday, which is intentional and integrated throughout the course. 4th semester and above foreign language courses need to include a significant cultural component (e.g., literature, art, music, theater, film, etc.) to qualify as a Humanities course, as do all other Humanities courses.
  - American Deaf culture is considered an acceptable cultural component for ASL courses, provided it is sufficiently covered and integrated throughout the course. Consistent with the H1900 descriptor, courses must provide a clear and in-depth focus on the humanities and fine arts, incorporating at least three varied components, such as history, literature, visual arts, performing arts, and/or philosophy. Writing assignments must be appropriate to the course level and target language and may be completed in English when appropriate to the humanities and fine arts topics covered.
    Clarification adopted Fall 2026, effective with Spring 2027 course review.
  - This course should develop formal writing and explore aspects of the humanities within the topical outlines.
  - Native and heritage speaker language courses must be at least fourth-semester level and demonstrate appropriate formal writing assignments and meaningful exploration of humanities, fine arts, and cultural components integrated throughout the course and reflected in the topical outline.
    Clarification adopted Fall 2026, effective with Spring 2027 course review.
  - If the course extends beyond a typical fourth-semester level, it should be clearly demonstrated that it remains introductory in nature and continues to focus on the acquisition and practice of the language being studied.
- **Skills based courses**
  - Courses such as those commonly found in Foreign Language that focus on skills acquisition or refinement are generally not acceptable for General Education credit.
- **Topics Courses**
  - Topics courses are generally not appropriate for General Education credit as they lack a broad approach to general topics.
- **Lab Requirements**
  - Humanities courses normally do not require laboratory work.

- **English Literature**
  - Full surveys have traditionally been acceptable in British Literature I and American Literature I descriptions.
- **History Courses**
  - In submitting a history course for IAI GECC approval, an institution shall make its own decision as to whether the proposed course should be submitted to the Humanities or the Social and Behavioral Sciences Panel. The Humanities Panel will normally accept the decision of the submitting institution.
  - Institutions are invited, however, to note the following points:
    - Provision for two-course sequences treating the history of various nations, regions, and civilizations chronologically is more ample under the Social and Behavioral Sciences rubric. The two-course sequences in Western Civilizations and U.S. History and Civilization stress that focus will be on intellectual and cultural development, landmark documents, and artifacts.
    - Neither the fact of chronological sequences nor the presence of political history in a particular course disqualifies it from consideration by the Panel.
  - Chronological span for Western or World civilization sequence must be from the beginning of written documents to the present. The present is defined as within 10 years of the date the course is being offered.
  - U.S. History should begin no later than the Age of Exploration and end in the present. The present is defined as within 10 years of the date the course is being offered.
  - World Civilization courses must be global in scope.

Addition information regarding history courses submitted to the panel. Information suggested/supplied by History Major Panel:

History Course Assessment Criteria

The study of history exposes students to the complexities of human nature and the development of diverse cultures, values, institutions, and major events. Upon satisfactory completion of one or more history courses, students will:

- distinguish between primary and secondary sources as the foundation of modern historical scholarship:
  - interpret primary sources critically by analyzing their historical contexts;
  - formulate historical interpretations, both orally and in writing, and defend them critically with reference to primary and secondary sources;
  - incorporate into historical interpretation, both orally and in writing, an understanding of historical causation reflecting a) knowledge of important figures and events and their chronological relationship to each other and b) an awareness of the contingent relationships among social, political, religious, intellectual, cultural, and economic variables;
  - acquire at one and the same time a comprehension of diverse cultures and of shared humanity, as evidenced both orally and in writing.

We direct both teachers and students of history to the National History Project's delineation of "History's Habits of the Mind" as a guide to the discipline's expectations for "interpretation."

These are Learning Outcomes for the Core History Courses as identified by various sources. See below for references.

History's Habits of the Mind

The perspectives and modes of thoughtful judgment derived from the study of history are many, and they ought to be its principal aim. Courses in history, geography, and government should be designed to take students well beyond formal skills of critical thinking, to help them through their own learning to:

1. understand the significance of the past to their own lives, both private and public, and to their society.

2. distinguish between the important and the inconsequential, to develop the "discriminating memory" needed for a discerning judgment in public and personal life.

3. perceive past events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time, to develop historical empathy as opposed to present-mindedness.

4. acquire at one and the same time a comprehension of diverse cultures and of shared humanity.

5. understand how things happen and how things change, how human intentions matter, but also how their consequences are shaped by the means of carrying them out, in a tangle of purpose and process.

6. comprehend the interplay of change and continuity, and avoid assuming that either is somehow more natural, or more to be expected, than the other.

7. prepare to live with uncertainties and exasperating, even perilous, unfinished business, realizing that not all problems have solutions.

8. grasp the complexity of historical causation, respect particularity, and avoid excessively abstract generalizations.

9. appreciate the often-tentative nature of judgments about the past, and thereby avoid the temptation to seize upon particular "lessons" or history as cures for present ills.

10. recognize the importance of individuals who have made a difference in history, and the significance of personal character for both good and ill.

11. appreciate the force of the non-rational, the irrational, the accidental, in history and human affairs.

12. understand the relationship between geography and history as a matrix of time and place, and as context for events.

13. read widely and critically in order to recognize the difference between fact and conjecture, between evidence and assertion, and thereby to frame useful questions.

Habits of the Mind taken from:
Bradley Commission on History in Schools. Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools. Westlake, OH: National Council for History Education, 1995. p. 9.

National Council for History Education, Inc.

Discipline Specific Concerns *(Continued)*

- **Logic Courses**
  - There is a distinction between logic courses with a humanistic nature and logic courses with a mathematical nature. For consideration by this panel, courses should utilize a humanistic approach to the study of logic.

Specific Course Considerations

- H4 904 Ethics is a broad-based ethics course; applied or professional ethics courses are not acceptable.
- H2 903N Non-Western Civilizations and H4 903N Non-Western Philosophy:

Courses on the history or culture of a single country, such as Japan, generally do not match non-Western courses that require study of more than one culture. To be considered non-European, courses on the history or culture of China, Russia, Latin America, and Africa, for example, must include more than one culture/time period.

- H1 900 Foreign Language IV: 4th semester and above foreign language courses need to include a significant cultural component (e.g., literature, art, music, theater, film, etc.) to qualify as a Humanities course, as do all other Humanities courses.

Common Reasons Courses Are Not Approved

- Course does not match description.
- Course is not lower division.
  - Each institution has devised its own course-numbering system. Some institutions identify as matches courses that appear to be upper-division (generally with 300 or 400 numbers). So long as these courses do not require prerequisites, such courses may be allowed. However, if the course is clearly upper division (for juniors, seniors or graduate students only), the panel generally does not accept it.
- Course is not broad in scope.
  - Special or variable Topics courses are not considered matches to any description since the topic can vary from offering to offering.
- Course has inappropriate prerequisites.
  - Please see section on prerequisites above.
- Course includes skills-based assignments or assumes a skills-based prerequisite.

Common Reasons Submissions Are Returned For Additional Information

- Materials do not contain enough detail, typically:
  - Not enough information about the writing assignments.
    - The panel cannot determine the nature of the writing assignments.
    - The panel is unsure how much writing is required.
    - The panel is unsure how much weight is given to the writing assignments.
  - Not enough detail is provided in the topical outline.
  - There is no indication of the nature and weight of evaluations.
  - Course is a better fit in a different category. In these cases, the panel will usually suggest an alternative category.