

## **General Education Program (GEP) Distribution Requirements**

For GEP, students will complete courses distributed across six broad areas of academic inquiry:

### **English Composition**

English composition lays the foundation for the writing, research, and critical thinking skills that students need to succeed in their coursework and engage thoughtfully with complex issues. This requirement emphasizes strategies for analyzing and composing arguments in a variety of media, and stresses the importance of the context, purpose, and audience for different arguments. Students work extensively with sources, researching and synthesizing information and using it to support and develop their ideas. The goal is to equip students to be clear, persuasive, careful writers and thinkers who use these strategies across disciplines, and use them, as well, in approaching questions in the world around them.

### **Mathematics**

To prepare college graduates for an increasingly complex and technological world it is necessary to develop problem solving abilities, including analytical and logical reasoning skills. Mathematics GEP courses build upon a student's fundamental mastery of high school algebra (as evidenced by the placement exam or equivalent course work) to provide a foundation in mathematical concepts and techniques used not only in mathematics and statistics but also in a wide variety of other disciplines.

#### **GEP courses in mathematics enable students to:**

- Develop a level of mathematical maturity significantly beyond high school Algebra II
- Develop problem-solving ability both in the quantitative and qualitative realms
- Enhance their analytic and synthetic logical abilities
- Become acquainted with mathematical ways of thinking, including concepts and techniques utilized in other disciplines

### **Arts and Humanities**

Courses in the arts and humanities explore the human condition and its cultural expression, past and present. Arts and humanities courses consider the ethical and value systems which form the basis of thought, artifacts and individual and collective life. They examine a wide variety of sources: from literature, philosophy, the visual and performing arts and religion, to popular culture and patterns of everyday activity: to critically evaluate significant intellectual and artistic issues.

#### **GEP courses in the arts and humanities enable students to:**

- Analyze and interpret diverse texts and modes of expression
- Understand important intellectual and artistic concepts, whether from historical or contemporary perspectives
- Discuss, write and conduct research effectively in the arts and humanities
- Additionally, GEP studio or workshop courses in the arts and humanities enable students to:
  - Learn and practice a particular art form
  - Investigate creative modes of expression by identifying motivations, desires and values that inspire them
  - Learn collaborative skills and how to objectively and appropriately evaluate their own work and the work of others

## **Social Sciences**

The social sciences seek to understand attitudes, beliefs and social behaviors of individuals, groups and institutions, and identify factors that influence them, both past and present. Attention is devoted to the complex interactions among individuals, environment and social institutions. Finally, the social sciences seek to develop, implement and evaluate procedures that can change attitudes and behaviors at both the individual and group level and address issues of social inequality/inequity.

### **GEP courses in the Social Sciences enable students to:**

- Critically evaluate research regarding the complex interplay of individuals, groups, and institutions
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of, and be able to apply research methods within, the many fields of social sciences
- Provide insight into the development and implementation of programs and policies designed to improve people's lives

## **Sciences**

The sciences seek explanations for how nature functions at scales ranging from the subatomic to the universal. Courses in the natural sciences foster an understanding of the fundamental principles underlying modern scientific thought. In addition to describing what is currently known, science courses teach skills and methods that facilitate inquiry about the natural world, and provide opportunities for students to test those explanations against current scientific knowledge and to communicate their ideas to others.

### **GEP courses in the sciences enable students to:**

- Apply their knowledge to solving basic scientific problems
- Describe what it means to "do" science
- Distinguish science from non-science or pseudoscience
- Use mathematics as appropriate to present and analyze scientific data
- Discuss socially relevant issues in scientific terms

## **Language and Culture**

The language and culture requirements recognize the global nature of society in the 21st Century, the importance of inter-cultural communication and the need for modern citizens to broaden their horizons. Languages beyond English offered in the UMBC curriculum range from ancient to modern, representing most major language groups of the world. Courses designated for the culture requirement generally focus on subject matter beyond the borders of the United States, while recognizing the multi-cultural perspectives of global experience and the value of inter-cultural and comparative approaches to culture study.

### **GEP courses in language and culture enable students to:**

- Develop skills in languages other than English that are necessary for cross-cultural comprehension and communication
- Explore and understand diverse systems of practices, values, and beliefs
- Think in ways that provide perspectives on international and cultural issues