

**General Education Committee  
Area E recertifications report  
Spring 2007**

**General information.**

In Spring 2007, as part of its general oversight responsibilities of the General Education (GE) program at CSUSM, the General Education Committee (GEC) studied all area E courses on campus. This report recertifies courses for area E credit at California State University San Marcos, or issues directives to departments regarding perceived deficiencies in area E courses.

This report was approved by vote of the General Education Committee in its meeting of May 10, 2007. Courses marked as recertified require no action on behalf of the department, except for the catalog course description modification below. Courses not marked as recertified require action on the part of the departments which offer them before GEC will recertify. For such classes, the GEC solicits a report from departments by **October 5, 2007** to explain how their courses will be modified to fit area E criteria. (Earlier response would be helpful.) In the event that departments do not respond, the GEC will assume that departments are not interested in area E certification and such classes will be decertified for area E credit effective Fall 2008. **Responses from departments are to include a new draft syllabus for each course not recertified by GEC and a memo addressing concerns raised by GEC. The area E approval forms do not need to be resubmitted, but departments might find the official guidelines spelled out there for area E useful.**

**Changes in course descriptions**

All area E courses must have the following sentences added to their catalog course descriptions:

*This course is designed to equip students for lifelong understanding and development of themselves as integrated, physiological, social and psychological organisms. There are also components in the uses of computer technology and application of information literacy.*

**Criteria for recertification**

The committee looked at Executive Order 595, which lays out criteria for area E courses in the CSU system. The committee also looked at the campus area E approval form, which adds a component of information literacy into area E. The GEC used the following excerpts from Executive Order 595 as critical in its judgment of area E:

*"...study designed to equip human beings for lifelong understanding and development of themselves..."*

*"Instruction approved for this requirement should facilitate understanding of the human being as an **integrated physiological, social and psychological organism.**"*

(Emphasis added.)

The committee decided to examine area E courses with an eye to the following: does the course have some sense of self reflection – i.e., some sense of *application of what is being learned to one's own life through the whole life course*. It was decided, to distinguish area E courses from courses satisfying other GE requirements, that an abstract study of the human being was not quite enough to satisfy the Executive Order 595 criteria above.

The committee also looked carefully for the information literacy components in all area E classes. Information literacy was judged to involve an activity which teaches the student how to seek, critically evaluate and use knowledge external to course materials. Examples include library research, interviewing primary sources and using the world wide web. Simply writing a 'research paper' was judged insufficient to meeting this criterion. The library representative to GEC is available for consultation on this matter.

Lastly, it was thought that the more a course speaks directly to physiological, social and psychological issues, the more likely recertification would eventually be approved. The committee felt that all of these needed to be touched on in some way, although not necessarily in the same proportion.

#### **Commentary on individual courses.**

**GEL 101.** This course was recertified for area E credit.

**GEL 110.** This course was recertified for area E credit.

**GEL 120.** This course was recertified for area E credit.

**GEL 200.** This course was recertified for area E credit.

**KINE 306.** This course was recertified for area E credit.

**PSYC 104.** This course needed work with information literacy.

**PSYC 356.** The committee decided to decertify this course for lack of self-reflection. No response from Psychology is expected. (Psychology Chair Sharon Hamill was present when this was done.)

**SOC 203.** This course seemed to lack self-reflection elements, because of the focus on childhood. It also required information literacy. Course scheduled to be decertified (response not expected?)

**SOC 204.** This course was judged to lack information literacy – the students needed to do external research, not just learn from textbooks.

**SOC 303.** The committee judged this course on course for decertification. Information literacy is needed, and the course needs to show how the material affects the students' self-development and lifelong understanding. It was suggested that learning about family crisis organizations would be a good direction to look at. The self-reflection could be partly formalized in the family analysis paper.

**SOC 307.** The committee judged this course on course for decertification. Information literacy is needed, as is the self-reflection component. The committee agreed that this could be difficult in the area of sexuality, but that the course needed to show how the material pertained to students' lives and lifelong development.

**SOC 309.** It was noted that the simultaneous certification for area DD could provide a conflict with area E requirements. This course appears to have weaknesses in information literacy and self-reflection. Also, it was noted that improvements could be made in emphasizing physiological, social and psychological components. The committee thought that the spring 2005 syllabus obtained from Academic Programs was particularly problematic in its academic rigor. The syllabus used for DD certification in fall 2006 was considerably better.

**SOC 315.** This course appears to have weaknesses in information literacy and self-reflection.

**SOC 317.** It was noted that the simultaneous certification for area DD could provide a conflict with area E requirements. Self reflection seemed very limited, and a stronger commitment to information literacy seemed necessary. Because of the emphasis on youth, there was doubt about how this reflected lifelong learning and self-development; most students would be past their own youth. It was thought that a heavy-handed redesign would be necessary.

**WMST 201.** This course lack self-reflection elements – the committee wondered how gender identity could affect reflection. The committee wanted a timeline for topics and a more detailed syllabus. Decertified at the suggestion of the chair of Women's Studies.

**WMST 330.** This course seemed to lack the 'physiological' component discussed above. A clearer statement as to what the information literacy component is would be needed. Also, the department should comment on its vision of the manner in which a course like this would address lifelong learning for men who might take the class.

