

June 8, 2015

Tips for Successful Course Submissions

What are the most common and/or most important problems in course proposals, i.e., what could cause a proposal to be rejected?

General:

- The proposal is missing a syllabus.
- The syllabus has no stated course goals or intended learning objectives.
- The syllabus does not describe how learning is assessed (i.e., the components that lead to the final grade)
- The submitted syllabus includes no weekly plan.
- The syllabus has no readings listed, i.e., refers only to a course pack.
- The syllabus has no course policies (final exams, attendance/absences, learning disabilities, diversity, etc.)
– See ARHU Template!

Additional Gen Ed criteria:

- The syllabus content does not seem to reflect the learning outcomes described in the Gen Ed online submission form.
- The proposal author does not clearly address the prompts for learning outcomes and/or fails to describe how learning will be verified (e.g., assessment – how will instructor know that the learning from the prompt has actually been accomplished?). Note: Each LO starts with “Students will demonstrate...” – this is key, because the emphasis is on *learning, from the student’s perspective*, not what ‘will be taught’ or what students will ‘learn about’. What are the abilities, experiences, understandings they will gain, and through what means?
- No criteria/overarching questions are mentioned that will guide large assignments or examinations – again, the goal is to link in obvious ways to the stated learning outcomes.

For I-Series:

- There is no ‘Big Question’ driving the course design and content. (I-Series are not topical survey courses!)
- The delivery format is too traditional, i.e. lecture/discussion/exam format. The I-Series Faculty Board expects an approach that includes active student-faculty and student-student engagement (group projects, poster sessions, team work, etc.)
- The instructor is a lecturer and has no prior record of teaching effectiveness.

For Scholarship in Practice:

- The course looks like an introduction to a field rather than a hands-on practice of how scholars/performers work in this field.
- There is no evidence of assessment/grades at regular stages across the semester that reflect the progress of the practice.

For Cultural Competence:

- There is no clear focus on actual negotiation strategies and practice that cross cultural boundaries as a fundamental aspect of the course. It is not enough for students to simply learn *about* cross-cultural negotiation; they must experience hands-on negotiation practice throughout course.

For Understanding Plural Societies:

- There is no obvious emphasis on the dynamics of the various groups that comprise a pluralistic society (it cannot be, e.g., one single group’s literature or history unless that group’s interaction with others, and the consequences thereof, is a primary focus).