

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD5121S
Date of Senate Approval 04/29/2021

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 44 (DI): **Revise the Liberal Arts Core requirements, adding an additional**
Revised 4/22/2021 **Diversity Intensive course chosen from AFST 130, AIIS 200,**
 AIIS 305, ETHN 100, and SOC 320.

Effective Date:

1. **Delete:** On page 50, the entry under Liberal Arts Core Requirements:

Liberal Arts Core Requirements

(the minimum number of required hours is listed)

First-Year Seminar	3 semester hours
Academic Writing and Critical Inquiry	4 semester hours
Humanities	12 semester hours
Laboratory Science	4 semester hours
Scientific Perspectives	3 semester hours
Quantitative Perspectives	4 semester hours
Social Science	3 semester hours
Second Language	0-4 semester hours
(proficiency through the second semester)	
Arts and Ideas	3 semester hours
Senior Capstone	4 semester hours
Diversity Intensive	3 semester hours

- Add:** On page 50, in place of the deleted entry

Liberal Arts Core Requirements

(the minimum number of required hours is listed)

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Social Science	3 semester hours
Second Language	0-4 semester hours
(proficiency through the second semester)	
Arts and Ideas	3 semester hours
Senior Capstone	4 semester hours
Diversity Intensive	7 semester hours

2. **Delete:** On page 52, the entry under **Diversity Intensive (3 semester hours):**

Courses designated as Diversity Intensive focus on the process of knowledge, discernment, and awareness whereby human beings make reasoned decisions based on difference. Taught by faculty from various programs, these broadly defined courses include but are not limited to the relationships between difference and inequality, exclusion and inclusion, representation, identity, and social, economic, and political power as it is manifested locally, statewide, countrywide, and across the globe.

Add: On page 52 in the place of the deleted entry:

Diversity Intensive (7 semester hours)

Courses designated as Diversity Intensive focus on the process of knowledge, discernment, and awareness whereby human beings make reasoned decisions based on difference. Taught by faculty from various programs, these broadly defined courses include but are not limited to the relationships between difference and inequality, exclusion and inclusion, representation, identity, and social, economic, and political power as it is manifested locally, statewide, countrywide, and across the globe. Students are required to complete 7 hours of Diversity Intensive courses. Four hours of this requirement must be completed by one of the following courses: ETHN 100, AFST 130, AIIS 200, AIIS 305, and SOC 320. The remaining hours may be fulfilled by completing any 3-4 hour course designated as Diversity Intensive.

Impact Statement:

- **Reference to Concurrences** that have been obtained from departments or programs which are affected by the proposed change(s), describing who was contacted to discuss the proposal and how the change(s) will affect them.
 - Dr. Tiece Ruffin, Interim Director of Africana Studies
 - Dr. Anne Mai Yee Jansen, Director of U.S. Ethnic Studies Program; all of Dr. Jansen's classes in this proposal fall under the Ethnic Studies prefix
 - Dr. Lee Adcock, Director of American Indian & Indigenous Studies Minor
 - Dr. Agya Boakye-Boaten, Chair of Interdisciplinary/International Studies
 - Dr. Marcia Ghidina, Chair, Department of Sociology & Anthropology

Note: A Zoom meeting was held on September 15, 2020 with Drs. Agya Boakye-Boaten, Juan Sanchez-Martinez, Jeremias Zunguze, and some D.I. Committee members (Drs. Sonia Kapur, Jen Rhode Ward, and Tiece Ruffin). All supported full inclusion of their respective courses for this proposal, and worked together to prepare this document. Furthermore, program directors and the Chair of Interdisciplinary/International Studies agreed to concur. A second virtual meeting was held on Sunday, April 18, 2021 with Drs. Trey Adcock, Agya Boakye-Boaten, Juan Sanchez-Martinez, Jeremias Zunguze, and most D.I. Committee members (Drs. Anne Jansen, Jen Rhode Ward, and Tiece Ruffin) to revise the initial proposal per feedback from the April 15, 2021 APC - LAC joint meeting. On Monday, April 20, 2021 Dr. Marcia Ghidina gave verbal approval to add SOC 320, Sociology of Race to the course list.
- **Resource Statement** explaining how the proposed change is likely to affect the submitting department or program's future staffing needs, course offerings, and student needs and interests (e.g. time to graduation).
- **Staffing Needs**

Peoples and Dillard (2020) note that "You will need to have lots of conversations about resources, especially human ones", and we address resource needs within this document. Listed courses are taught by existing UNC Asheville faculty across three departments (Africana Studies, Interdisciplinary/International Studies, and Sociology). Classes are mostly taught by BIPOC

faculty, reflecting larger patterns of labor division across our campus and nationwide (Watson, 2020) rather than a deliberate choice. For instance, Dr. A. Boakye-Boaten was AFST's first permanent hire, more than a decade after the program's establishment, reflecting larger structural issues (e.g., Watson, 2020). Each of the proposed courses is, or is designed to be, taught by multiple faculty, providing flexibility in meeting future student needs (**Table 1**).

This proposal has been co-developed by BIPOC faculty, who have prioritized the expansion of campus Diversity Intensive offerings, sometimes at the expense of other professional and personal obligations. BIPOC faculty recognize that making their classes required rather than optional could be a sacrifice, shifting the audience to one that could include reluctant participants. They are voluntarily undertaking additional, unacknowledged, hazardous work that welcomes potentially-resistant students into spaces in the interest of creating a more broadly educated populace. It is critically important for the university to support these faculty, whose work directly connects to the UNC Asheville Mission & Values of *Diversity and Inclusion*.

- **Course Offerings**

AFST 130 Introduction to Africana Studies
AIIS 200 Introduction to American Indian and Indigenous Studies
AIIS 305 Cultural Expressions from Abya-Yala
ETHN 100 Introduction to U.S. Ethnic Studies
SOC 320 Sociology of Race

Course offerings were chosen based on three main criteria. First, they are offered regularly. Second, they can be taught by multiple faculty. Third, the courses, which use lenses from Africa to the Americas and sociology, center on race, ethnicity, and migration in the United States; race, a social construct, undergirds many of the nation's academic disciplines (Kendi, 2017) and is thus an important foundation upon which to build a liberal arts education (Cuseo & Thompson, 2014). Ethnicity and migration also inform often-marginalized identities within our university community. Increased demand created by a second D.I. course requirement could necessitate addition of a few sections of each listed course per semester. It is also possible that other 100-, 200-, and 300- level D.I. courses could be developed or added to this list.

UNC Asheville students already take one D.I. class as part of the Liberal Arts Core. We recognize that the proposed changes could add up to 4 credit hours (one course) to the LAC. However, we also note that all AFST classes and all SOC classes fulfill the Social Science *Liberal Arts Core* requirement. Thus, depending on the student's course choices, taking an additional AFST race-centric course *might not add* to the LAC. In light of this information, instructors for AIIS and ETHN agree to pursue adding their courses as options in the LAC's Social Science category. Thus, these courses (AFST, ETHN, AIIS, SOC) could also fulfill two different requirements for a student; such a path would avoid adding to the LAC.

If the proposed changes do add credit hours to the LAC, we leave such decisions to the LAC advisory committee. By allowing a delay before implementation (potentially until AY 2022-2023), this document gives that committee ample planning time. We note, as precedent, that the Cal State University System (much larger and less nimble than UNC Asheville) took the forward-thinking step of approving an ethnic studies requirement for all students *before* finalizing all associated logistics (Burke, 2020).

The D.I. Committee and those providing concurrence have discussed Student Learning Outcomes for the second D.I. course, and have crafted the following. We have included this to align with the suggestions of Peoples and Dillard (2020), who state, "You might want to establish learning goals for the requirement upfront". These SLOs focus on *race, ethnicity, and migration*. Approved D.I. courses for this second requirement must engage actively with 5 of the 7 SLOs.

1. Students understand the socially constructed nature of race in the United States.
2. Students understand the significance of individuals' differing relationships to race and power in the United States, and how structural racism undergirds institutions.
3. Students understand how individuals, organizations, and institutions create, perpetuate, or challenge racial inequality in the United States.
4. Students are better equipped to reevaluate their ideas about racial diversity and difference.
5. Students understand the transnational dynamics of race, migration, and ethnicity, and the relationships among history, culture, politics, and race.
6. Students understand social and political histories of migration to, from, and within the United States.
7. Students understand the nature of race and racism, systemic and institutional racism, racial injustice, and what it means to be an anti-racist.

- **Student Needs and Interests**

Students and student-led organizations, including the Student Government Association (SGA), have expressed interest in encountering D.I. materials both more frequently, and earlier, in their UNC Asheville experience. This was reflected in the 2015 Student Government Consent Decree document and more recently in SGA President London Newton's 24 June 2020 email message to the campus community, urging us to "*examine campus issues such as Eurocentric curriculum*". Nationwide demands in the wake of cultural shifts and increased campus activism reflect the microcosm of UNC Asheville (Sleeter, 2011; Peoples and Dillard 2020), with college students at other institutions demanding race- or ethnicity-centered coursework; in some cases (University of Pittsburgh, which has added a 1 credit course on anti-racism; Western Washington University, which added a required course that includes a focus on bias; California State Universities, which now require an ethnic studies class for graduation) those requests have been honored or already existed (University of Michigan; 3 credit required race / ethnicity course since 1990;), but many students have found their petitions delayed or denied because

"Opponents of mandating courses on race argue that information about the systemic oppression of marginalized groups is not essential knowledge, that students have the option to take these classes and that adding more general education requirements will make graduating more difficult" (Stellino, 2020).

We acknowledge these points, reiterate the wisdom of being a student-responsive campus (per Peoples and Dillard 2020) to ensure our institution's long-term viability, and address potential solutions to Stellino's points throughout this document.

While a second D.I. course *may add* 4 credits to graduation requirements, other Liberal Arts Core areas, including Natural Sciences (two courses: Science Perspectives and Lab Science) and Languages and Literatures (proficiency through second semester), also require multiple courses. In many cases students take D.I. courses in their majors; thus, the first D.I. course rarely adds credits to students' graduation requirements. It should be noted that a second (4 credit) D.I. course will comprise 3.3% of the minimum 120 credits required for graduation.

Rationale: The petitioners acknowledge the deep and persistent history of racism in this country, and the roots of that racism in colonialism. We undertake this work as a first step towards addressing this history explicitly in our curriculum, and a means to end our complicity with systemic racism, and a tool to advance understanding of peoples pushed to the margins. We anticipate expansion of these ideas and curricular infusion as our campus becomes more consciously anti-racist. While we recognize that some logistic details require resolution, those are not the burden of this document. It is essential that we take concrete action steps towards recognition of both the national climate and 6 years of repeated student requests. This is a crucial first step in embedding our stated values throughout our curriculum. As Peoples and Dillard note (2020), curricular compromise is a critical component of making these crucial changes.

The Liberal Arts Core currently includes one 3-4 credit D.I. course. The single D.I. course is often taken later in a student’s time at UNC Asheville, after the opportunity to experience much of the curriculum through a diversity-informed lens has been lost. We propose a first step in broadening and creating equity in UNC Asheville’s Liberal Arts Core, adding a D.I. course that follows themes of decolonizing-deimperializing, anti-hegemonic, and actively anti-racist content and pedagogies, giving students an invaluable lens through which to experience their subsequent UNC Asheville courses (e.g., Cuseo and Thompson, 2014). Other categories of courses, including natural sciences and Languages and Literatures, require more than a single class. In many cases, students take D.I. courses in their majors; thus, the existing D.I. course rarely adds credits to students’ graduation requirements.

Table 1. Two Year Curriculum Staffing Table, with Current (7 sections, 135 seats per year) and *Projected* (9 sections, 173 seats per year) Offerings. Courses provide a total of 14 sections and 270 current seats per two year cycle (18 projected sections, 346 projected seats).

Course (Credits)	Faculty	Fall Sections, Seats	Spring Sections, Seats
AFST 130 (4) Introduction to Africana Studies	A. Boakye-Boaten T. Ruffin J. Zunguze	2, 50	1, 25
AIIS 200 (4) Introduction to American Indian & Indigenous Studies	L. Adcock J. Sanchez-Martinez	2, 30	1, 15
AIIS 305 Cultural Expressions from Abya-Yala	J. Sanchez-Martinez	-	1, 15
ETHN 100 (4) Introduction to Ethnic Studies	A. Jansen L. Adcock J. Sanchez-Martinez <i>note: ETHN 100’s course description provides both instructor flexibility and adjunct funding</i>	1, 18	1, 18
SOC 320 Sociology of Race	M. Underhill	-	1, 20
	Total	4, 80	3, 55 5, 93

Options for the proposed additional D.I. course all center *race, ethnicity, and migration*. In response to feedback (04/15/21) from the LAC and APC Committees, we have added upper division courses to meet transfer student needs. This course list could also expand as long as offerings were true to race-centric SLOs described above.

AFST 130	Introduction to Africana Studies
AIIS 200	Introduction to American Indian and Indigenous Studies
AIIS 305	Cultural Expressions from Abya-Yala
ETHN 100	Introduction to U.S. Ethnic Studies
LIT 328	Ethnic Literature
SOC 320	Sociology of Race

and other courses as approved by petition to the D.I. Coordinator. Note that ETHN 100 is not currently D.I. designated, but its application is forthcoming as this APC document is considered. If approved, concurrence would be sought for LIT 328. We also note that the original proposal was submitted in October 2020, and suggested feedback for revision occurred on April 15, 2021; thus, there were only 2 business/working days to revise and resubmit for the April 22, 2021 vote by APC. We appreciate Alicia Shope's additional feedback on April 20, and the opportunity for one more working day of revision.

The current UNC Asheville Course Catalog states, "At UNC Asheville, the DI requirement helps fulfill our mission in facilitating a truly liberating education while offering opportunities for students and faculty to examine their own experiences and values alongside those of others." Despite this, a majority of students leave UNC Asheville having taken only a single D.I. course. Current events demonstrate once again that a single formal classroom opportunity to grapple with diversity through an academic and disciplinary lens is sorely insufficient to prepare students for twenty-first century employment, education, and civic engagement. In June, SGA President London Newton stated that the university needed to show "a true commitment to their students in their individual identities the way that our [core values](#) say we are". This is also aligned with the Chancellor's recent *Racial Justice Roadmap*, which focuses on overcoming curricular and other barriers to create a more equitable university environment. An additional D.I. course requirement drawing from existing course offerings is an effective first step in that direction.

The Liberal Arts Core currently includes one 3-4 credit D.I. course which is often taken later in a students' university experience (all but 111 of the 127 DI courses are 300-level; see [currently approved D.I. courses](#)), after the opportunity to experience much of the curriculum through a diversity-informed lens has been lost. Fortunately, UNC Asheville is distinguished by the presence of robust Africana Studies, American Indian and Indigenous Studies, and U.S. Ethnic Studies programs. By beginning their UNC Asheville educational journeys with a 4 credit D.I. course at the introductory level, students will center diversity, identity, power, inequality, and intersectionality in their university experiences. The proposed AFST 130, AIIS 200, or ETHN 100 requirement aligns with these themes with a focus on the United States, crucial in the current moment of state sanctioned violence and white supremacy. Moreover, these courses all place race in a settler-colonial context - a context that is foundational to formations of race and manifestations of racism in the United States (a settler-colonial project) historically and contemporarily (e.g., Zunguze 2019). Finally, these courses are characterized by their interdisciplinary nature, focus on race, and non-hegemonic pedagogy that de-centers whiteness - characteristics that, while found individually in many courses offered across campus, all feature prominently and operate in tandem in ethnic studies as a scholarly field. By adding a second D.I. class, our curricular requirements will more strongly align with repeated institutional rhetoric around diversity as a core value, give assurances to our BIPOC students (reiterated after the events of 9 October 2020, and again on 20 April) that UNC Asheville is invested in a campus climate that is strongly anti-racist, and promote activities "representative of our commitment to racial justice, diversity and equity" (email from Provost Campbell, 13 October 2020).

This change aligns with the three-pronged UNC Asheville Mission Statement, of which Diversity and Inclusion is one pillar, and disrupts mainstream curricula which are, *de facto*, EuroAmerican studies (Sleeter, 2011). In addition, the Chancellor's June 2020 Call to Action promised "curriculum and co-curricular opportunities of addressing structural racism" in the upcoming academic year; the addition of a first-year D.I. course is one vehicle by which to achieve this long-standing university goal. Later comments also talked about the importance of having graduates who can recognize and define structural racism, and the UNC System Racial Equity Task Force is working to "arrive at an actionable plan forward that will build a culture of inclusion across our institutions" (email September 2020). Adding another D.I. course would make significant progress toward this objective.

The responsibility of education is to be responsive to our times; this is both a moral obligation and a way to ensure institutional sustainability. It is important to note that, although institutional resistance and backlash from some students might be unexpected (in keeping with historic trends; Watson, 2020), adding a second required D.I. course aligns with nationwide trends in secondary (e.g. Iasevoli, 2017; Alejo & Lara 2018; Fensterwald 2020) and tertiary (e.g., Chapman-Hilliard & Beasley 2018; Parry 2020) education. Ethnic and race centered courses such ETHN 100, AFST 130, AIIS 200, AIIS 305, and SOC 320 will help students of all races navigate today's cultural climate (Sleeter 2011, Watson, 2020). For PEERs (persons excluded because of ethnicity or race; Asai, 2020), diversity focused coursework can increase students' sense of belonging (Chapman-Hilliard & Beasley 2018), self-determination (Huerta, 2020), retention (Flannery, 2020), and graduation (Smith, 2018). Such classes are particularly helpful for first generation learners (Ives & Castillo-Montoya 2020), so adding a second course could dovetail with UNC Asheville's AVID for Higher Education work.

Lastly, it is important to note that, in March 2021, Faculty Senate unanimously passed a Sense of the Senate resolution in support of *The Diversity Intensive Committee's Request for Resources*, which includes:

"Exploring the further incorporation of Diversity and Inclusion into our curriculum by the D.I. Committee dialoguing with the Academic Policies Committee, Institutional Development Committee and the Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee in order to bring vetted proposals to the Faculty Senate for consideration and approval" ([Source](#))

References

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