



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Programs

University of Iowa

120 Schaeffer Hall

Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1409

Phone: 319-335-2633 | Fax: 319-335-3192

Email: clas-undergrad@uiowa.edu | Web: clas.uiowa.edu

Directors of Undergraduate Studies Meeting—March 2025

Meeting Notes

Monday, March 10, 2025

12:00 PM-1:30 PM

UCC 2520D

Welcome and announcements

Reminder about [upcoming sessions on AI-related teaching tools and resources](#), facilitated by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Center for Teaching, and the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Technology

- Wednesday, March 12, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 31, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Information and discussion: assessment of the Interpretation of Literature GE CLAS Core area

Naomi Greyser, Associate Professor, American Studies, English, and Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies

David Gooblar, Assistant Professor, English and Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies

The assessment of this General Education CLAS Core area is just beginning, and Professors Greyser and Gooblar are leading the assessment committee.

The charge of the committee

To look into:

- What students are learning
- How they are learning it
- Whether the courses in the GE area are satisfying the area learning outcomes
- Whether any changes should be made to the area outcomes themselves

Highlights from the discussion with DUSs

- Concerns about gaps in students' reading comprehension, students' reliance on AI, challenges related to assessment of writing skills
- Challenges and opportunities around building student skills and confidence in developing their own interpretations, not looking for the "right" answer or relying on others' analyses
- Transferable skills cultivated in Interpretation of Literature include/should include:
 - maintaining attention over long texts and large quantities of content
 - writing both concisely and to capture a thought process
 - annotating readings, extracting the most important ideas from readings
 - transferring interpretive and communication skills across forms and media
 - understanding the value of reading across a variety of genres
 - analyzing and crafting narrative

- revising writing, developing a writing practice that includes revision

Resource highlight: [Office of Scholar Development](#)

Kelly Thornburg, Director

What the Office of Scholar Development does

- Keeps a calendar of external scholarship, fellowship, and grant opportunities in Iowa, nationally, and internationally
- Holds workshops on these funding opportunities and their application processes
- Works with students one-on-one throughout the application process, from the early stages of pre-writing and content generation through application submissions
- Consults with faculty writing letters of recommendation for students applying for these opportunities
- Sees the application process as a valuable learning experience even when students are not awarded the funding they seek, because these students are learning to tell their own stories and pitch their own work, which are useful skills in other settings as well

Reminders and updates: annual assessment of programs of study

Matt Shadle, Academic Assessment Coordinator, CLAS UP

Purposes of assessment

- To reflect on student learning in your programs and identify areas for improvement
- For faculty to collaborate in improving student learning process
- To provide examples of successful assessment methods or assessment-based improvements to other departments and external audiences

June 30 is the deadline for departments to submit reports to matthew-shadle@uiowa.edu.

Tips and ideas

- Look holistically at student learning and where in the curriculum students are meeting the program's learning outcomes
- Use multiple sources of information, and develop processes for ensuring you're not over-weighting any one source of information or small amounts of data
- Include gaps you're identified and your program's responses to them in future plans
- Make sure faculty in your department are aware of assessment processes and outcomes

Program highlight: [certificate in Jewish Studies](#)

Lisa Heineman, Professor, Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies and History; Co-Director, Jewish Studies



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Programs

University of Iowa

120 Schaeffer Hall

Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1409

Phone: 319-335-2633 | Fax: 319-335-3192

Email: clas-undergrad@uiowa.edu | Web: clas.uiowa.edu

Ari Ariel, Associate Professor, History and International Studies; Co-Director, Jewish Studies

Overview of the program

- History and development:
 - Prior to developing the certificate we were the only school in the Big 10 without any kind of Jewish Studies program or center
 - Students, families, and faculty felt the need for Jewish Studies community as well as academic study
- Requirements to earn the certificate:
 - Curriculum brings together many existing courses in this area; goal is to make it easy for students to integrate certificate into their other studies
 - Students may petition to have courses count toward the certificate if a portion of the course focuses on Jewish Studies topics and the students' work for the course focuses on Jewish Studies content
 - Faculty may consult with Professors Heineman and Ariel on having courses approved for the certificate and on student projects appropriate for credit toward the certificate