

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
The Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

**Minutes**

240 SH

May 1, 2025

*Attending:* Cornelia Lang (chair), Asha Bhandary, Rodica Curtu, Megan Gogerty, Liz Lundberg (staff), Emilie Maurel-Destruel, Julianna Pacheco, Sanvesh Srivastava, DeAndre Steger, Amy Strathman, Rachel Young

*Absent:* none

The sole item of business for this meeting was discussing the assessment of the Interpretation of Literature General Education (GE) CLAS Core requirement, which has been underway for the past year and is now in its final phases. The committee welcomed the two co-chairs of the assessment committee, Professors Naomi Greyser and David Gooblar, as well as Matt Shadle, Academic Assessment Coordinator for CLAS Undergraduate Programs. They explained the assessment process and presented their report and recommendations.

Interpretation of Literature is a unique GE requirement in several ways. First, we are one of very few universities to require a GE course specifically focused on interpreting literature, separate from broader cultural study or writing skills. The committee discussed some of the opportunities UI has, as “The Writing University,” home of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, and a UNESCO City of Literature, that make this requirement meaningful and would allow for greater integration of writing and literature throughout undergraduate education here, such as a writing across the curriculum program. Second, Interpretation of Literature is one of the only GE CLAS Core requirements where almost all students take the same course. Although there are several other courses approved in this GE area, ENGL:1200 The Interpretation of Literature comprises the bulk of the GE area.

Proposed changes to learning outcomes

Currently this GE area has six learning outcomes; under the assessment committee’s proposal it will have four. The proposed new outcomes shift emphasis away from expansive knowledge of literary tropes, genres, and time periods, instead focusing on the transferable interpretive skills this area develops. The new learning outcomes address reading comprehension and interpretation, effective analytical writing, and connecting texts to the contexts of both writers and readers. They also highlight the importance of practicing interpretive skills as part of a learning community, a theme that came through in much of the student feedback about the area. UEPCC was supportive of the new outcomes, and the committee discussed ways to communicate and promote the value of this area to non-English majors.

The new learning outcomes will be as follows:

1. Students demonstrate improved comprehension and interpretive skills by applying strategies or “ways of reading” appropriate for different texts.
2. Students can effectively express their interpretation of literary texts through analytical writing.

3. Students demonstrate that they can foster and participate in a reciprocal community, engaging others' ideas and conveying their own.
4. By connecting text and context, students are able to discern how personal experiences shape interpretation and how literature both reflects and influences culture.

#### Proposed change to name

The new proposed name for this GE requirement is "Interpreting Literature." The gerund makes the name more active and matches the construction of Understanding Cultural Perspectives, another requirement in the "Communication and Literary" grouping of the CLAS Core. Because this area and the most commonly taken course within it share the same name, the name change will apply to both the GE area and ENGL:1200. UEPCC approved of this name change, and it is planned to go into effect in fall 2026.

#### Other suggestions and discussion

Additional topics of discussion included a desire for more coordination between the General Education Literature (GEL) program in the Department of English and the other courses approved in this area, and the place of AI in this GE requirement. On the topic of coordination, the committee discussed the need to balance the workload of the GEL director and autonomy of instructors in other departments, on the one hand, with the benefits of standardizing the experience of this course for students, on the other hand. Suggestions included the GEL director staying in contact with the instructors of the other courses in the area, and perhaps requiring that courses approved in this area use a portfolio assignment like the one all sections of ENGL:1200 use.

On the topic of AI, the assessment committee and UEPCC agreed on the value of this course remaining a space where students practice interpretive and communication skills entirely free from the use of AI. While it will not be a skillset to develop in this GE area, AI could and should be a topic of discussion in Interpretation of Literature courses. Instructors will need to work to get students to buy into the prospect of generating their own ideas and crafting and polishing their own written work, including ensuring students have the confidence and lack of pressure on their grades that reduce the likelihood of violating the area's AI policy.

#### Next steps

After revisions, the committee/college will release its full report, along with a two-page digest version. The college will also add a third page to the digest version, specifically about the transferable skills developed in this GE area. The changes to the name will be made in the 2026-2027 General Catalog and in the MAUI course library, effective fall 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Asha Bhandary  
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Secretary, UEPCC