

Seawolf Studies Graduation Requirements

Approved by GERS on October 5, 2018; revised October 22, 2018.

The Seawolf Experience offers students a general education experience that cuts across the entire college career, encouraging students to explore different disciplines and interests and to integrate ideas and knowledge from many parts of their education. As part of that curriculum, these courses fulfill graduation requirements, ensuring that students complete at least one course (or a relevant educational experience) in areas that reflect campus-wide core values as an essential part of our students' education. There are currently four areas (reflecting the core values of SSU's Strategic Plan 2025) with graduation requirements that students must meet:

- Ethnic Studies (1 course)
- Sustainability and Environmental Resilience (1 course)
- Global Awareness (1 course)
- American Institutions (2 courses)

Courses certified as meeting the Seawolf Studies requirements may be upper or lower division, may be in General Education, a major or minor, or may be electives. Courses may "double-count," meeting a Seawolf Studies requirement in addition to another requirement. Individual courses and relevant educational experiences may count for a maximum of 2 of these requirements.

Seawolf Studies Graduation Requirement Areas

1. Ethnic Studies (1 course, 3-4 units)

Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that seeks to address/foster social justice by understanding the ways society is culturally and institutionally constituted by ideas of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. Ethnic Studies at Sonoma State University centers on the histories, lives, and experiences of marginalization/disempowerment by people of color and non-dominant identity within the U.S. and transnationally, specifically defined as African American, Latinx, Asian American/Pacific islander, Native American (the majority of course content must cover one or more of these populations).

2. Sustainability and Environmental Resilience (1 course, 3-4 units)

The need to cultivate more sustainable relationships with our environments is ever more pressing. Courses in this area provide an opportunity to teach and to learn about a wide range of topics related to past, present, and potential future modes of living as citizens of our living planet. Courses may apply a range of perspectives to questions concerning sustainability; science and technology, humanities, and social sciences all offer potential insightful modes of exploration. Classes can focus upon a range of questions focused upon sustainability and environmental resilience exemplified by but not limited to:

- a) Where do ideas about the environment come from? How have scholars and philosophers in Western traditions and beyond interpreted ethical human-environment relations?
- b) How might we measure environmental change, both in moving away from and towards greater resilience?
- c) How do various schools of thought interpret and shape more and less resilient human-environment relations?
- d) How have past and present social groups worked to develop more sustainable ways of living, and how might we apply those lessons to improve our relationships with our environments?
- e) How do expressive, textual, artistic, and cultural projects move us towards insights into our relationships with our environments?
- f) How could new technologies address mitigation and or adaptation to climate change?
- g) How have social movements worked to address environmental injustices?
- h) What insights do less human-centered philosophies offer?
- i) How do human-environment interactions both help determine and are also determined by geographic, historical, and cultural contexts?
- j) What might a sustainable, ethical relationship with nonhuman environments look like?

3. Global Awareness (1 course, 3-4 units)

Our students leave our institution with a clear sense of the value of cultural difference and inter-cultural competence, preparing them to be agents of change and to engage socially, economically, and culturally with rapidly changing globalized communities.

Students will be offered several options to fulfill this one 3-4 unit course requirement in various disciplines. Courses in this category help students to function in an increasingly interdependent and globalizing environment and to develop an appreciation of other cultural perspectives, past or present.

- a) Language Proficiency Option:
 - i) Successful completion of, or credit by examination for, an intermediate level (200-499) 3-4 unit language course.
 - ii) Demonstrated native or near-native proficiency in a language other than English. We recommend that appropriate departments create a shell course for this requirement, analogous to the POLS 151 credit-by-exam state and local government requirement.
- b) Course Option: Successful completion of an approved 3-4 unit Global Awareness course (see definition above).

- c) Study Abroad Option: Spend one academic term outside of the United States, with successful completion of at least one 3-4 unit course.
 - d) Academic Certificate Option: Successful completion of relevant certificate offered on campus, such as the French Competency for Wine Business Certificate or the Foreign-Language Research Certificate in History.
 - e) Internship or Service-Learning Option: Successful completion of an internship or service-learning experience conducted in a location outside of the United States. Internships must meet policies related to the number of service hours per unit (3 units = 135 hours of work)
 - f) We recommend developing an option for international students not covered by any of the above options to certify their global awareness experience.
4. American Institutions (2 courses)

As preparation for engagement in American civic life, Sonoma State University and the State of California require students to study the historical development of American institutions and ideals, the Constitution of the United States and the operation of democratic government under that Constitution, and the processes of California state and local government. Courses certified in this area may be from upper or lower division, may be in GE, a major or minor, or may be an elective, as long as they fit the parameters outlined in the CSU guiding note:

http://www.calstate.edu/app/documents/GeneralEducation/Guiding_Notes_GE_AI.pdf.

At SSU, this requirement has historically been met through two LDGE courses, one History course in American History and one Political Science course on American, state, and local government. Under this plan, other approved courses—including 4-unit major or elective courses, as well as 3-unit GE courses—could be used to satisfy the requirement. Credit by exam, including approved Advanced Placement or CLEP exams, may also be used to satisfy the requirement. Most students will likely continue to meet the requirement through GE courses, but other options would be available, offering students a broader way to meet this requirement.

Implementation of Seawolf Studies Graduation Requirements

1. We recommend that the requirement be implemented in the 2019-20 catalog, but courses can be recertified, added, and approved in the area categories over time.
 - Ethnic Studies: Begin with existing ethnic studies courses
 - Sustainability and Environmental Resilience: Begin with courses listed in the STARS report.

- Global Awareness: Begin with courses in C3, language courses, D2, and D5 courses.
 - American Institutions: Begin with existing AI courses
2. Sufficient courses must be offered in GE so that students can meet these requirements in GE without taking additional units.
 3. To oversee curriculum in these areas, we recommend that the Senate create standing workgroups for each area, reporting to the GE Subcommittee. The workgroups should primarily or entirely consist of faculty with disciplinary expertise and teaching experience in the specific area.
 4. The initial charge of the workgroups will include reviewing the initial body of courses for each area to create
 - Specific guidelines and curricular approval processes for each area.
 - Articulation recommendations for courses offered by the community colleges and universities providing substantial numbers of incoming transfer students.
 - Specific requirements for faculty expertise and training. At a minimum, faculty teaching in a given area must be able to document adequate training in the discipline, as defined by the completion of a Doctorate or Master's degree in an appropriate discipline, publication record in the field, or teaching experience, etc.
 5. Once the initial guidelines and requirements are established, the role of the workgroups will be to
 - Be available to the GE Subcommittee for consultation on course approval and articulation.
 - Support campus recognition for faculty and student work in each area, involve faculty expertise, and schedule events to showcase research and scholarship of teaching related to integration of the work in these key areas.
 6. For at least the first five years of these new requirements, we recommend that the Senate charge the Academic Advising Subcommittee to gather feedback from campus about any difficulties for particular populations of students (specific majors, transfer students, etc.). The Academic Advising Subcommittee should report these difficulties to the GE Subcommittee, which should issue clear criteria for providing waivers for these requirements.

General notes

When we package this for students, we may want to incorporate GWAR as a similar graduation requirement.

Changelog

10-22-2018:

Ethnic Studies and Social Justice renamed to Ethnic Studies

10-5-2018:

Original version