**Recommendations for First Year Curriculum**

The goals for the first year curriculum include building critical reasoning, reading, writing, oral communication and quantitative skills through engagement with the liberal arts. We also aim to develop first year students’ scholarly confidence and identity. One critical aspect to developing scholarly identity is discovering academic strengths and interests. The recommended curriculum gives students early introduction to disciplines they may wish to further explore, major or minor in.

The recommendations also aim to improve Trinity’s approach to developmental and foundational education, based on the committee’s thorough review of relevant research and successful models for advancing underprepared students. Research-based principles that undergird the proposal include:

* reducing “exit points”
* mainstreaming students directly into college-level, rather than developmental, coursework
* providing appropriate support for the specific demands of college-level courses
* offering first year options that align with intended course of study (“meta-majors”)
* integrating reading and writing instruction

**Recommended First Year Foundational Skills Sequence:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Semester** | **Recommended Courses** | **Credits/Gen Ed Status** |
| Fall | MAT 102, 108 or 109  (aligned to major) | 4/ Gen Ed |
|  | CRS 101: Intro to Liberal Arts, Discovering Strength | 4/ Gen Ed |
|  | COM/PHIL: Critical Reasoning & Oral Argumentation | 3/ Gen Ed |
|  | First Year/College Success Seminar: | 1/ Not Gen Ed; recommended |
| Spring | CRS 102: Reading & Writing in Discipline | 3/ Gen Ed |
|  | ENG 107: College Composition  (Argument, support, citation) | 4/ Gen Ed |
|  | TOTAL CREDITS *MAXIMUM* | 19\* |

\*Trinity students must take 16 credits per semester to graduate in 4 years with 128 credits. A student who aspires to take 32 credits in the first year will now be able to use at least 13 credits to make progress on other Gen Ed requirements or explore new fields in search of a major and/or minor.

**Current First Year Foundational Skills Sequence:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Semester** | **Current Courses** | **Credits/Gen Ed Status** |
| Fall | MAT 101S (for 90%) | 4/ Not Gen Ed |
|  | CRS 100S (for 36%) | 4/ Not Gen Ed |
|  | ENG 105 or 105S (for 98%) | 3 or 4/ Not Gen Ed |
|  | COM 110 | 3/ Gen Ed |
| Spring | MAT 102, 108 or 109 | 3/ Gen Ed |
|  | CRS 101 | 3/ Gen Ed |
|  | ENG 107 | 3/ Gen Ed |
|  | CRIT REASONING: BIOL 103, HIS 220, PHIL 103, SOCY 242 | 3/ Gen Ed |
|  | TOTAL CREDITS *MAXIMUM* | 27 |

**Recommended Fall Courses:**

**MATH 102, 108, or 109: Intermediate Algebra, Finite Math, or Foundations of Math. 4 credits.**

**STATUS: These 4 credit courses will be offered Fall 2015.**

All Trinity students will enroll in one of these college-level math courses, based on intended course of study (meta-major.) MATH 102 for STEM students; MATH 108 for Nursing & Education; MATH 109 for Humanities & Social Sciences. Math 108 and 109 will teach quantitative literacy through application to relevant contexts.

*ONE CREDIT SUPPLEMENT:*  Pre-foundational Math 101S is eliminated. A fourth credit gives additional instructional time for providing any review or support necessary for completing the college-level math course. Students with high accuplacer scores may take an “honors” or “accelerated” section. (Approximately 20% of students have placed beyond MATH 101S in recent years.)

**CRS 101 (or CRW 101?): Introduction to the Liberal Arts: Discovering Strength. 4 credits**

**STATUS: Pilot sections of this redesigned course will be offered in Fall 2015.**

This introductory reading and writing course for all Trinity students will develop students’ skills and scholarly identity through the study of rich and relevant liberal arts texts. The committee recommends a “Discover Your Strength” theme; students will study cross-disciplinary texts as well as the values and beliefs relevant to Trinity’s mission. Texts will range from Plato to Sojourner Truth to Zora Neale Hurston. Texts will address topics including:

* Vocation and life purpose
* Intersectional identity: gender, race, class
* Social construction of gender
* Women’s health and wellness

There will be common goals and assessments across all sections, with a core group of common texts to choose from. Standardization will enable a shared student experience, as well as quality-control when the course is taught by adjuncts.

*Goals:* By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Read liberal arts texts with ease and understanding
2. Recognize, respond to and accurately represent textual ideas and arguments in writing
3. Develop and reflect on their own approaches to reading strategies and the writing process
4. Develop scholarly confidence and identity

*Assessments:* Mastery may be conveyed through a series of written responses to prompts as well as through papers emphasizing paraphrasing and summarizing skills. Written assignments and course texts will simultaneously become progressively more challenging.

*ONE CREDIT SUPPLEMENT OR “STUDIO”:* In the last three semesters, 98% of our students have placed into pre-foundational writing (ENG 105/105S); up to 36% have placed into pre-foundational reading (CRS 100S). Given that all writers, at any level, can improve, Trinity students will benefit from the additional instructional time. Since we will eliminate the pre-foundational courses (CRS 100S & ENG 105/105S), we must create appropriately robust support. To that end, we will supplement CRS 101 with a fourth credit, called “studio.” It will be “just in time” support that directly shadows the course texts and writing assignments, and is student-driven. It must be very hands-on and engaging, including everything from read alouds to brainstorming activities, drafting exercises, workshop and revision. ENG 107 will also have a one credit studio.

**COM/PHIL: Critical Reasoning & Debate, 3 credits**

**STATUS: The Communications and Philosophy programs will develop a proposal for CAS CAP. If approved, it will require a faculty vote. Courses would be offered in 2016.**

The first year curriculum should address oral as well as written communication skills. This course will be redesigned to address both the logic and reasoning skills targeted by PHIL 103, and the oral persuasion, argumentation, and public speaking skills that are cursorily addressed in the survey course COM 110. The FYC committee recommends an annual forum for student speeches, panel and/or debate.

**First Year/College Success Seminar, 1 credit (pass/no pass)**

**STATUS: Pilot sections of this course will be offered in Fall 2015. A committee of faculty, CAS and Student Affairs professionals is working on the course design this spring.**

This course will support a successful transition to college and build Trinity community. The key is to make students feel engaged and supported in a small class designed to set them up for college success. The design would include elements that have been found to enhance retention in a host of well-researched national models: study skills support, health & wellness instruction, academic and career planning. It would also connect students to university resources, the resources of DC through field trips or service learning, and alumnae through class speakers or networking events.

**Recommended Spring Courses:**

**CRS 102 (or CRW 102?): Discipline-based Reading and Writing Class. 3 credits**

**STATUS: CAS CAP approved this new course on Feb. 25; it was brought to CAS faculty on March 11th. In April, faculty voted overwhelmingly to adopt this new course, to be offered in Fall 2016.**

These courses will develop students’ abilities to read and write in the disciplines, thus building upon the learning of CRS 101 and supporting the goals of ENG 107.

Faculty members will design sections of CRS 102 to engage students in interesting, important and meaningful disciplinary questions, by guiding them through reading and writing about selected texts. CRS 102 will recapture some of the strengths in the prior “Learning Communities,” giving students a rich intellectual experience, led by a faculty mentor. While each course will have its own disciplinary character, the courses may not cover a large content area as the emphasis is on developing the transferrable skills students will need to advance through their course of study.

Some examples of potential topics:

CRS 102: Literature of Utopia and Dystopia

CRS 102: Philosophy and Women

CRS 102: Of the people, by the people, for the people? How American Government Works

CRS 102: First Do No Harm: Readings in Bio-Ethics

CRS 102: Doing Well by Doing Good: Social Entrepreneurship

CRS 102: Can We End Poverty? Readings in Economics

*Goals:* By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

* Read challenging disciplinary texts with ease and understanding
* Recognize disciplinary questions and approaches
* Recognize, respond to and accurately represent textual ideas and arguments in writing
* Analyze and synthesize textual information in writing

*Assessment:* Mastery may be conveyed through a series of written responses to prompts that demand critical reflection and reasoning, as well as a final “literature review” assignment.

**ENG 107: College composition. 4 credits.**

**STATUS: The English Program will consider this proposal for a fourth credit.**

ENGL 107 will solidify skills taught in CRS 101 and 102, and advance students’ abilities for college composition. The course focuses on constructing and supporting an argument about text(s), with appropriate and correct use of academic sources. STUDIO SUPPLEMENT: 1 credit. Described above.