

“Contemporary World Cultures” (COWC) courses allow students to explore the diverse values, modes of thinking and behavior that characterize cultures in global contexts.

COWC courses will enable students to:

- Understand the diverse nature of contemporary cultures in a global context.
- Analyze the meaning and components of culture according to a specified disciplinary or interdisciplinary framework.
- Create and defend arguments synthesizing elements across cultural groups.

The text above should be included on your syllabus.

SYLLABUS GUIDELINES:

COWC courses should:

- Explicitly address the meaning of culture through readings and in-class discussion
- Examine multiple cultural groupings, with a primary focus on non-Jewish cultures
- Stress both intra-cultural and inter-cultural differences and similarities
- Include a variety of forms of expression, ranging from the literary, political, philosophical, social scientific and artistic.

When preparing your syllabus, please keep in mind the following:

- No more than 50% of the final grade should be determined by exams.
- Attendance in Core courses is mandatory. We encourage instructors to count class participation in some way towards the final grade.

Proposed syllabi should include:

- all formal assignments and tests, and how much each will count towards a final grade
- approximate page numbers for assigned reading; page/word count for written assignments

Reading Range:

Literary texts: up to 150 pages per week

Critical sources/ philosophical or theoretical texts: 25-50 pages per week

OR, some combination thereof

Please keep in mind that Core courses should privilege in-depth study of texts and deep knowledge over coverage of a given body of material. It is more important for students to learn critical thinking skills and tools for reading than to have read a particular corpus in its entirety. We encourage instructors to carefully consider the pacing of their classes with this in mind, with attention to what students can reasonably be expected to

accomplish. While in some cases, reading one novel over two sessions may be possible, a course should not attempt to maintain a one-novel-per week pace over several weeks.

Writing range:

- 2-3 formal written assignments, 10-20 pages total; these assignments should assess different modalities**
- a class presentation requiring outside research may substitute for one of the writing assignments, as may an in-class exam
- Some form of final tool of assessment, in the form of a final exam or culminating paper

**The expectation is that students will receive instructor feedback in the form of multiple graded assignments paced throughout the semester. By mid-semester, students should have had graded feedback on at least one of these assignments.

Please note: while Core courses may address Jewish texts and cultures, they must do so in comparative perspective. Core courses may not have Jewish texts and cultures as their central or exclusive focus.

NOTE: Determination of “Honors” designation for Core courses occurs after a course has been approved in a given category. Designated Honors sections will then be asked to include: more challenging writing assignments, with increased length; additional critical readings; opportunities for revision of written work; increased emphasis on class participation; whenever possible, opportunities to continue the learning outside of the classroom.