

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FORM

REQUEST FOR “AREA A: ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL THINKING” DESIGNATION

**TO:** Amy Parsons, Chair, Curriculum Committee  
**FROM:** Sarah Senk, Chair, General Education Committee  
**DATE:** 12/4/20  
**SUBJECT:** Curriculum Change Request: Proposal for ME to meet A1 in Major

Proposed Course Subject: ENG 112, ME 462, ME 490  
Proposed Course Title: [see below]  
Submitted by: William Tsai  
Date Submitted: 10/4/20 [original version], 11/30/20 [revised version]

**GE COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

*In the space provided, please include the following information: when the committee met, who was in attendance, who was absent (and for what reason), a record of the vote/decision, and a brief summary of the committee discussion (including justifications for decisions and dissenting opinions):*

Background: Over the course of three meetings (10/6, 11/3, and 12/1) the General Education committee discussed the ME department proposal to meet Area A1 “in sequence” (through a sequence of major courses). Across the CSU, high-unit Engineering majors have been granted waivers for GE subject areas. Rather than request a waiver from the Chancellor’s Office, the ME department opted instead to introduce and reinforce Oral Communication outcomes in a sequence of courses – one new 1-unit course on technical communication and two existing courses later in the curriculum. This will allow assessments to run through the General Education Committee as well as the department, ensuring that students are held to the same standards as those in A1 General Education courses.

On Tuesday, December 1, 2020, the General Education Committee met to discuss the ME Department’s proposal to satisfy the A1 (Oral Communication) General Education requirement through a sequence of major courses: ENG 112 – Introduction to Technical Communication, ME 462 – Experimental Methods in Mechanical Engineering, and ME 490 – Engineering Design Process.

In attendance were Sarah Senk (Chair), Katherine Luce, Kathryn Marocchino, Elizabeth McNie, Tom Oppenheim, Julie Simons, Cynthia Trevisan, and Ryan Wade as well as student representative Josh Barlas and ex officio members Graham Benton and Julia Odom. ET Department Representative Mike Strange was absent.

Guests included: Colin Dewey, Francelina Neto, and William Tsai.

**After reviewing the course description, goals, competencies and list of potential texts, the General Education Committee voted 8-0-2 (8 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions) that this sequence of courses would fulfill the A1 General Education requirement.**

When reviewing courses, the GE Committee considers how well a course accords with the description of the subject area in EO1100, and whether or not the course will require that students satisfy the Cal Maritime General Education Learning Outcomes:

EO1100 Description of Area A: Oral Communication (A1), Written Communication (A2), and Critical Thinking (A3)	GE Committee Discussion Notes
<p>“Area A requires 9 semester units or 12 quarter units in oral communication in the English language (A1), written communication in the English language (A2), and critical thinking (A3). Campuses shall not exceed these unit requirements. Students taking courses in fulfillment of Subareas A1 and A2 will develop knowledge and understanding of the form, content, context and effectiveness of communication. Students will develop proficiency in oral and written communication in English, examining communication from the rhetorical perspective and practicing reasoning and advocacy, organization, and accuracy. Students will enhance their skills and abilities in the discovery, critical evaluation, and reporting of information, as well as reading, writing, and listening effectively. Coursework must include active participation and practice in both written communication and oral communication in English. In critical thinking (Subarea A3) courses, students will understand logic and its relation to language; elementary inductive and deductive processes, including an understanding of the formal and informal fallacies of language and thought; and the ability to distinguish matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion. In A3 courses, students will develop the abilities to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas; to reason inductively and deductively; and to reach well-supported factual or judgmental conclusions.”</p>	<p><b>Tsai explained in the 10/6 meeting how ENG 112 (the new 1-unit course based on EGL 120) would focus exclusively on technical presentations and oral communication practices and would retain core elements from EGL 120. Outcomes would be reinforced in two later courses that featured instruction in oral communication (specifically giving delivering presentations). Concerns were raised about whether students were taught advocacy/persuasion skills like they are in EGL 120. Tsai noted that in this sequence of courses ME students would have to “make a compelling case to convince their audience that there’s a need for their design and that they’re taking the right approach.” Tsai noted that “the entire scientific community is grappling with how to explain ideas to non-technical audience, and we will incorporate that into the course goals to make that clearly stated.”</b></p>

Cal Maritime GE Learning Outcomes: Area A	GE Committee Discussion Notes
<p>GELO 1: Demonstrate proficiency in oral communication in English, examining communication from the rhetorical perspective and practicing reasoning and advocacy, organization, and accuracy.</p>	<p><b>Sequence of courses DOES meet this outcome.</b></p>
<p>GELO 2: Demonstrate proficiency in written communication in English, examining communication from the rhetorical perspective and practicing reasoning and advocacy, organization, and accuracy.</p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>
<p>GELO 3: Demonstrate ability to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas; to reason inductively and deductively; and to reach well-supported conclusions.</p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>

The GE Committee votes on whether or not a course should be classified as “General Education” based on the criteria above. However, the committee should preserve a record of any discussion regarding potential impact across the university, overlaps with existing courses, concerns about assessment (including recommendations regarding learning outcomes, assessment plans, etc.), and anything else the committee deems important for the Curriculum Committee to consider in the space below:

Additional Discussion Notes

Chair’s Note: This proposal was the result of over a year of discussion and consultation with the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) Chair. It is an extraordinary proposal that is only applicable for extraordinarily high-unit majors like Mechanical Engineering and should not serve as precedent for other majors at Cal Maritime. Furthermore, any recommendation to meet a Golden Four class in major must be approved by the Chancellor’s office.