

Overview of the Gateway Course

Prepared by Justin D. Barnard

The aim of the implementation committee has been to develop a pilot version of the Gateway course for fall 2009 that captures the substance of the originally proposed course by the Gateway task force. The pilot is an academically rigorous course that introduces students to three major areas of emphasis that are central to Union's core: liberal arts, culture & worldview, and Christian faith.

Recognizing the challenges associated with faculty loads, we have designed a course structure that attempts to maximize the student learning experience while making it feasible for faculty and qualified staff to participate in meaningful ways.

All Gateway students will begin the fall semester by attending a series of four evening sessions in the chapel. Each of these sessions will meet on Tuesdays (beginning August 25, 2009) for about 90 minutes. The specific nature and content of these four opening sessions is still being determined. However, we expect that each will be dynamic and will appropriately set the stage for the remaining nine weeks of the course.

During the remaining nine weeks of the course, Gateway students will attend a *section* that meets twice per week for 50 minutes. Sections will be offered at 4 different times (M/W @ 8:00 and 2:00 and T/R @ 8:00 and 2:00). Each section will have no more than 40 students. Incoming freshman will be able to register for sections during the June 15, 2009 registration.

Each section will be led by a Gateway Preceptor. The Gateway Preceptor will be the instructor of record for purposes of registration. However, the Preceptor will not be responsible for the development of all course content for the nine weeks. Instead, Gateway Lecturers will rotate through different sections every three weeks.

Each Gateway Lecturer will develop a set of three 50-minute lectures that focus on one of the three major areas of emphasis: liberal arts, culture & worldview, or Christian faith. Over a three week period, a Gateway Lecturer will deliver those three lectures to a specific Gateway section (1 lecture per week). After that three week period, the Gateway Lecturers will rotate sections (delivering the same set of lectures in another section). By the end of the nine weeks, students in all sections of Gateway will have had exposure to all three of the major areas of emphasis by three different Gateway Lecturers.

Throughout the rotation, the Gateway Preceptor provides stability and continuity for the Gateway section by leading weekly discussions. These discussions will be designed to help students process material that they are receiving from the Gateway Lecturers.

The grading for this course is divided between the Gateway Preceptor and Lecturers. Lecturers will design and grade a short assignment related to their individual, respective three-week lecture series. They will give this assignment in each of the three sections in which they lecture, and grade it for each section. Preceptors will grade the remaining assignments on the syllabus as well as calculate and submit final grades for their individual, respective sections.

The Gateway pilot attempts to provide a measure of commonality in student learning experience (regardless of section) while allowing room for diversity of perspective. Unity is achieved through the four opening sessions that all Gateway students will attend, the common texts, the common areas of emphasis, and the common assignments and relative grading weight for those assignments. At the same time, each section of Gateway will take on a distinctive character through the complex combination of rotating Lecturers, the leadership of an individual Preceptor, and the content and assignments unique to that section.