**How to Qualify Your Course for the Civic Engagement Requirement of the Core Curriculum (Revised April 2019)**

## Learning Objectives for Civic Engagement

## Please begin by reviewing carefully the learning objectives below. Your syllabus should explain how the course meets these objectives. The readings, assignments, and exercises listed on your syllabus should explicitly address one or more of the learning objectives. To assist the committee in reviewing your syllabus, you might highlight in yellow specific sections that speak to the learning objectives.

1. Students will be able to critically evaluate, and express reasoned opinions about, the role of public organizations (governmental, non-governmental, multilateral, or international) in civic life through both oral and written work. (Civic Life, Communication)
2. Students will analyze and evaluate civic issues by engaging in active and collaborative learning with peers and others through one or more of the following:
   1. Working cooperatively with other students in class;
   2. Actual observation and participation in the contemporary ramifications of various types of civic life or civic discourse; or
   3. Working with civic organizations beyond the walls of the University. (Civic Life, Collaboration, and Civic Engagement)

## Student Learning

Drafting Learning Objectives

Think in terms of measurable learning outcomes. “Students will be able to . . .” + action verb (suggesting measurable activity – “identify,” “classify,” “design,” etc.) + noun (“an action research project for a public agency”).

## Crafting Assignments

What will students do in your course to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes? Are these assignments the best way for them to meet the learning outcomes?

## Drafting Grading Criteria

As you establish grading criteria for class assignments, look back at your learning outcomes. Do the grading criteria for assignments align with your learning outcomes?

**Questions to Ask about Your Draft Syllabus**

*Have I provided opportunities for students to build some basic skills and dispositions needed for civic engagement?*We were trained to teach students knowledge. Have you included any learning outcomes that involve skills: how to run a meeting, how to collaborate, etc.?

*Are there additional opportunities for active learning I could incorporate that would be more effective than what I do now?*If we let go of the idea that it best to use class time to “cover” the material, or illustrate it with examples for the students, we can imagine what are often more effective pedagogies, such as working with students to dramatize, test, research, apply, debate, deliberate, or solve problems posed by the subject matter, rather than covering it.

*Am I doing enough to connect the classroom with the world, including experiences and people who can help me to help students learn?*Internships and community placements can be good ways to do this. But there are other meaningful and less time-consuming ways to bring students out into the world or to bring the world into the classroom: field trips (including to relevant places on campus or within walking distance of campus), guest speakers, mentors, videos, web sites, webcasts and videoconferences, etc. We should also think about how campus issues and student organizations could be a venue for extending learning outside the classroom.

*Am I showing students a range of pathways to participate, including after the course ends?*This means showing students how people influence public life in clear, concrete ways that students themselves could emulate. If we show them a range of possibilities, we do not have to worry about being accused of indoctrinating them. These might include joining or interning with specific student organizations, professional associations, nonprofit groups, government agencies, or companies.

**Sample Learning Objectives**

Here is a sample set of learning outcomes for Civic Engagement from a course on First Amendment law, including the “assessment plan” in parentheses for each learning outcome:

1. Students will be able to critically evaluate, and express reasoned opinions about, the role of public organizations in civic life through both oral and written work, including:
   1. Describing the basic workings of the legal system, such as the roles of trial and appellate courts, federal and state courts, and different kinds of law (assessed through in-class exams);
   2. Applying the law to hypothetical situations and constructing legal arguments on behalf of multiple parties (assessed through in-class exams, moot court written brief and oral argument);
   3. Applying and critiquing theories of the First Amendment (assessed through in- class exams);
   4. Writing opinion articles that defend positions on free speech issues, supported by evidence and ethical principle (assessed through take-home portions of exams).
2. Students will analyze and evaluate civic issues by engaging in active and collaborative learning with peers and others through:
3. Working cooperatively with other students in class
   * Presenting one side of a debate on an issue of media ethics and law (assessed through hand-out outlining team’s arguments);
   * Collaborating in small groups to devise legal arguments in response to hypothetical situations presented in class (assessed through groups’ notes).
4. Actual observation and participation in the contemporary ramifications of various types of civic life or civic discourse
   * Representing a client in a moot court exercise involving First Amendment law (assessed through written brief and video of oral argument).