**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number: SO/AN 287 Culture, Society, & Happiness**

**Home Department: Sociology and Anthropology**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Alan McEvoy, 227-1678

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): Every Fall

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? IN PROGRESS

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC

A. Overview of the Course Content

This course is designed to 1) cultivate students’ critical thinking and interdisciplinary-integration skills and 2) help students to explore and gain a holistic understanding of the nature of human happiness, and the social and cultural factors that contribute to, or detract from, the pursuit of happiness.

From the scope of sociological perspectives, the course examines the complex relationships between micro and macro factors affecting levels of happiness, and integrates multiple approaches (artistic, poetic, religious, philosophical, and scientific).  Core values in American life will be emphasized: the process of status attainment (ascribed vs. achieved); material vs. non-material culture (beliefs, values, norms etc.); effects of physical and different dimensions of mental health (alienation, depression, self-esteem); primary (family, marriage, friends) vs. secondary (task oriented, instrumental) relationships; and the effects of human-nature harmony on happiness. Intensive reading assignments, writing responses, Q & A class discussions, quizzes, and essay exams, and creative mini activities are used to achieve the following Learning Objectives:

* Understand basic concepts and the why(s) & how(s) of the discordant definitions of happiness from ancient thinkers (philosophers, religious figures, poets, artists) to modern scientists.
* Compare and contrast horizontal and vertical cultural differences concerning the nature of human experience in the pursuit of happiness.
* Understand the relationship between subjective well-being and objective living conditions concerning happiness, and the effects of macro/micro factors on status attainment and different dimensions of well-being for happiness.
* Understand the relationship between core values, lifestyles, and a sense of happiness.
* Integrate the exploration of ancient thinkers (philosophers, religious figures, poets, artists etc.) and recent scientific research (by neurologists, psychologists, sociologists etc.) on happiness and well-being.

B. Component Learning Goals

**Critical Thinking Component:** To satisfy the Evidence dimension, SO 287 requires students to gather evidence from the real world (personal experiences or others), and analyze their observations in light of important theories from multiple traditions and modern scientific findings concerning the nature and pursuit of happiness. SO 287 assesses this dimension through creative mini projects (two for each person during the semester on topics of their choice, such as works of art, poetry, music, photo, etc.) and two major essay exams.

To satisfy the Integrate dimension, SO 287 requires students to synthesize abstract concepts and theories, and research findings contained in assigned readings with their own observations of social reality, from both personal experiences and the broader/wider social environment. Two major essay exams (midterm and final) assess this dimension.

To satisfy the Evaluate dimension, SO 287 requires students to evaluate information and ideas in overall course learning, and be able to think critically and synthesize abstract concepts, theories, and research findings contained in assigned readings with their own observations of social reality, from both personal experiences and the broader/wider social environment. The midterm and final essay exams assess this dimension.

**Integrative Thinking Component:** To satisfy the connections across disciplines, SO287 requires students to compare and contrast horizontal and vertical cultural differences related to the pursuit of human happiness. Comprehensive essay exams (midterm and final) assess students’ overall learning and ability in integrating 1) key concepts, discordant definitions, and diverse theories concerning the nature and exploration of human happiness, from ancient thinkers (philosophers, theologians, poets, artists, etc.) to modern scientific research (neurology, psychology, sociology, etc.); and 2) existing knowledge & new information on micro and macro factors contributing to subjective and objective well-being.

To satisfy the Transfer dimension, SO 287 requires students to 1) apply concepts and theories regarding the core issues in exploring and pursuit of happiness contained in course content to deepen their understanding of their observations of social reality, both personal experience and society at large; and 2) to use existing knowledge & new information on micro and macro factors contributing to subjective and objective well-being to understand and be able to explain horizontal and vertical cultural differences concerning the nature and pursuit of human happiness in an era of globalization. Creative mini projects (two) and essay exams (two) assess this dimension.

To Satisfy the Integrated Communication dimension, SO 287 requires students to apply ideas from diverse traditions from ancient thinkers to modern scientific research to their projects of interests concerning happiness. Students pic their own topics for these projects and present to the class in appropriate form of their choice, such as power point , video, performance, etc.. Creative mini projects assess this dimension.

**C & D:** This is a 200 level course that serves the general student population in that it fulfills a Gen Ed requirement. It also is an elective course for Sociology and Anthropology majors and minors. Enrollment is capped at 30 students per section.

**E:** This course is taught by the Sociology and Anthropology faculty.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | ***Task Type, Frequency, & Overall Grading Weight:***  *Creative mini projects (20%):* creative mini projects/activities in class (two for each person during the semester on topics of their choice, such as works of art, poetry, music, photo, etc.) require students to gather evidence from observations of social reality (personal experience or society at large) and relate them to understanding the nature of human happiness.  *Essay exams* (50%): Two comprehensive essay exams (Midterm and Final) to assess students’ 1) understanding of important concepts, discordant definitions, and diverse theories concerning the nature and exploration of human happiness, from ancient thinkers in multiple traditions to modern scientific research, 2) existing knowledge  & new information on micro and macro factors contributing to subjective and objective well-being, and 3) horizontal and vertical cultural differences related to the pursuit of human happiness in an era of globalization.  Expected Proficiency Rates:  The department expects 80% or greater student proficiency upon course completion as the departmental norm. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Comprehensive essay exams will be used to assess students’ overall learning. The midterm and final essay exam questions will test students’ understanding and ability to synthesize abstract concepts and theories, and research findings contained in assigned readings with their own observations of social reality, from both personal experiences and the broader/wider social environment.  Overall Grading Weight: 50%.  The department expects 80% or greater student proficiency upon course completion as the department norm. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | Comprehensive essay exams (50%) will be used to assess students’ overall learning. The midterm and final essay exam questions will test students’ understanding and ability to synthesize abstract concepts and theories, and research findings contained in assigned readings with their own observations of social reality, from both personal experiences and the broader/wider social environment.  The department expects 80% or greater student proficiency upon course completion as the department norm. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*Attainment of the INTEGRATIVE THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Connections to Experience**  *OR* | Connects academic knowledge to experiences |  |
| **Connections to Discipline** | Makes connections across disciplines | *Pop quizzes and writing assignments* (20%) spread throughout the semester, and essay exams(50%) require students to examine and understand ideas of multiple cultural traditions, from ancient thinkers in philosophy, religion, poetry, the arts, and scientific research on the nature and pursuit of human happiness.  Comprehensive essay exams will be used to assess students’ overall learning. The midterm and final essay exam questions will test students’ understanding and ability to synthesize abstract concepts, theories, and research findings from assigned readings with their own observations of social reality, both personal experiences and the broader/wider social environment.  The department expects 80% or greater student proficiency upon course completion as the department norm. |
| **Transfer** | Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations | *Creative mini projects (20%):* completing these assignments will require students to apply concepts and theories regarding the core issues in exploring and pursuit of happiness contained in course content to deepen their understanding of their observations of social reality, both personal experience and society at large.  The two essay exams (50%) will require students to use existing knowledge & new information on micro and macro factors contributing to subjective and objective well-being to understand and be able to explain horizontal and vertical cultural differences concerning the nature and pursuit of human happiness in an era of globalization.  Expected Proficiency Rates:  The department expects 80% or greater student proficiency upon course completion as the department norm. |
| **Integrated Communication** | Communicates complex concepts by choosing appropriate content and form | *Creative mini projects and writing assignments (20%)* spread throughout the semester will require students to apply ideas from diverse traditions from ancient thinkers to modern scientific research to their projects of interests concerning happiness.  Students pick their own topics for these projects and present to the class in appropriate form of their choice, such as power point, video, performance, etc..  Expected Proficiency Rates:  The department expects 80% or greater student proficiency upon course completion as the department norm. |