

Educating for Life

The mission of the General Education Program at the University of the District of Columbia is to provide all students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that will serve them in their efforts to become lifelong learners, community leaders, and fruitfully engaged professionals in rewarding and evolving careers and endeavors.

Quick Facts

- ✓ 10 different courses offered
- ✓ 21 Spring classes
- ✓ 417 students
- ✓ 23 faculty from 11 different academic departments

“Dr. Blagmon-Earl is a superstar!”

Alexander Howe, Professor of English, commenting on his GE colleague, LaVern Blagmon-Earl, after a GE faculty workshop



GenEd Keeps Growing

Launched in Fall 2010, UDC’s new General Education program is reaching new heights this spring. Classes are full, particularly in the Foundation courses, and soon every student on the flagship campus will be part of the new GE. Compared to a year ago, enrollment in GE courses has grown significantly:

- ❖ Foundation Writing I: ↑ 24%
- ❖ Foundation Writing II: ↑ 70%
- ❖ Fdn Quantitative Reasoning: ↑ 33%

Discovery Civics: Just in Time for Election Season

From the Arab Spring to the Tea Party to the 2012 presidential election, democracy is a vibrant, vital topic of conversation – and a source of conflict, contestation, and controversy. Understanding democracy and the rights and responsibilities of living in a free society is fundamental to a liberal arts education. That is why GE requires all students to take a Discovery Civics class during their junior year.

Democracy and freedom have been central to education at UDC since abolitionist Myrtilla Miner challenged the conventions of her time by founding the “School for Colored Girls.” For Miner, education was inextricably intertwined with freedom, and a serious education provided students with the skills and knowledge they needed to participate actively in a democracy. Her students didn’t just study the three ‘Rs – they also read abolitionist literature and engaged in political discussions.

That kind of civic education is just as important today, and UDC is part of a movement to give students more opportunities to engage in democratic learning. In Fall 2012, just as the presidential campaign enters its final stretch, the GE program will offer UDC juniors the first Discovery Civics classes. In these classes, students will learn about democracy not just in the classroom but also out in the community where they will engage in team-based service-learning projects.

Faculty members interested in teaching a Discovery Civics course should contact Chris Myers Asch: casch@udc.edu.



“What is this ‘Discovery Diversity’ class about?”

If you go looking for Prof. Michelle Chatman’s Discovery Diversity class (“D.C. to Dakar”), you may not always find it in the classroom. The students may be on a trip to Little Ethiopia or Anacostia, where they will learn about the diversity of D.C. and the richness of the different people, ideas, languages, and cultures that blossom in our city. In effect, the city is the classroom.

class, so many students have wondered exactly what it is. This unique class helps students understand and appreciate local and global diversity, giving them personal experiences with a wide range of aesthetics, traditions, and practices. These experiences will help them navigate through, excel in, and enjoy our multicultural world, no matter what field of study they pursue.

Spring 2012 is the first time that the GE program has offered a Discovery Diversity

Advising: Where the GenEd Rubber Meets the Road



Mark Rivera stands on the front lines of the GE revolution. As an Academic Advisor, Rivera helps students navigate the new GE program, so he knows firsthand about the challenges and rewards of GE.

Originally from San Antonio, Rivera earned a BA in English from the University of Texas-Austin and an MA in English from Georgetown.

He came to UDC in summer 2010 as an adjunct English professor for the Urban Scholars Summer Program. He enjoyed the experience enough to sign on for a full-time position with the Academic Advising and Retention Center.

Rivera believes strongly in UDC's GE program. "All of the required courses promote critical thinking and writing skills that students will need to excel after college, regardless what career they pursue," he says. "Students often ask me about the relevancy of having not one but three writing classes; they don't realize that most

careers require a graduate degree to be competitive in the job market, and grad school inevitably requires a lot of writing." The GE program's emphasis on developing students' critical thinking skills is "imperative," Rivera insists, because "many students find jobs in fields that are not directly related to their degree." No matter what their field, students will benefit from the skills instilled in GE.

Advising for GE is not always an easy task. Since the implementation of the new GE program in Fall 2010, many students and even faculty members have been somewhat confused about the sequence of courses. Rivera – along with his Advising colleagues Myles Johnson, Engie Merino, and Alison Rubin – helps students figure out which GE classes to take and when to take them. Some students mistakenly think GE courses will be easy. "General education courses can be just as challenging as upper division courses, so students shouldn't slack off," Rivera advises. "If you do better early (which usually involves a lot of GE courses) in your academic career it will be easier to maintain a high GPA later."

With the Advising Center's guidance, more and more students are on their way to completing their GE requirements.

"I always recommend that students foster relationships with professors, beginning with GE. The more vocal students are with their professors, the more likely they are to succeed."

Mark Rivera

GenEd Course Spotlight

Chemistry and Society

(IGED 260: Discovery Science)

Xueqing Song, Department of Chemistry and Physics

"What does chemistry have to do with me?" a GE student may ask. "I am not a chem major..."

To which Xueqing Song might answer, "Everything!" In an age of climate change, energy crises, and terrorism, chemistry is a part of everyone's life. To help students understand these critical environmental and social issues, Dr. Song developed a unique GE course intended for non-science majors. The course enables students to use concepts of chemistry to think critically about current issues in our world. Students learn basic chemical principles, such as stoichiometry, thermochemistry, and molecular bonding, and they conduct lab experiments to apply those principles to real life.

Interested in teaching in GE in Fall 2012? **Syllabus submission deadline: May 1**



Want to Teach a GenEd Course?

1. Attend a faculty training session with Matthew Petti (mpetti@udc.edu)
2. Develop a syllabus for an interdisciplinary course that meets the GE objectives.
3. Submit your syllabus to the GE Review Committee. The Review Committee consists of faculty members from across the campus who review all proposed syllabi and make recommendations – either to accept, accept conditionally, or reject the course.
4. Make revisions and resubmit your syllabus.

Lunch & Learn

"Developing a Culture of Reflective Teaching"
Join us for an informal conversation about how reflective teaching can help us get better at what we do. Bring your lunch and an open mind — all faculty members welcome!

Friday, Feb. 17
12:30 — 1:30pm
38/102

Contact us

Chris Myers Asch
Interim Director
casch@udc.edu
(202) 274-5420