

**Proposal for Changes  
to the  
General Education Category/Flag**

**LIT literature**

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(Write name of category or flag under consideration)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_1-25-2012\_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_Wes Chapman\_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Faculty member who prepared this proposal)

**Names of faculty convened for proposal development:**

Wes Chapman – convenor

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# Literature

(1 course unit)

**Current Category Description:** Courses in this category focus on the critical reading and interpretation of literary texts.

**Proposed Category Description:** No Change.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Current Category Goals</b></p> <p>In keeping with the overall goals of the General Education program, in particular the goals of developing students' capacities for critical thinking, intellectual independence, and imagination, their understanding of cultural relationships, their capacities for expressing and communicating ideas, and their abilities to make judgments and assess value, all in the context of active learning, courses in the "Literature" category seek to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proposed Category Goals</b></p> <p>No Change.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Current Course Criteria</b></p> <p>To achieve these goals, offerings at the 100- or 200-level in this category incorporate the following criteria in a balance appropriate to the course. In addition, courses in this category at the 300- or 400-level have a significant research component involving critical or other secondary material, and involve an advanced level of complexity in the material studied and the interpretive questions raised.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proposed Course Criteria</b></p> <p>No Change.</p>
<p><b>Current</b></p> <p>1. enable students to appreciate the structure and style of a literary text;</p> <p><b>Proposed</b></p> <p>1. help students to recognize and understand the importance of the structure and style of a literary text;</p>	<p><b>Current</b></p> <p>1. Courses examine the style (for example: diction, sentence structure, imagery, rhythm) and structure (for example: plot, sequence of images and ideas, metrics and rhyme) characteristic of literary texts and the relation of one literary text to another.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b></p> <p>1. No Change.</p>
<p><b>Current</b></p> <p>2. encourage students actively to engage their imaginative faculties when they read.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b></p> <p>2. encourage students to engage their imaginative faculties when they read;</p>	<p><b>Current</b></p> <p>2. Courses focus on the literary texts themselves and on the practices of intellect and imagination in the reader that make for active engagement with these texts. Such practices might include close study of significant passages, reading aloud or memorization to appreciate sounds, encouragement of visualizing, enacting of passages or texts.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b></p> <p>2. No Change.</p>

<p><b>Current</b> 3. enable students to connect the literature they read to the cultural and social context in which it was written, or the context it portrays.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b> 3. enable students to connect the literature they read to the cultural and social contexts in which it was written or which it portrays;</p>	<p><b>Current</b> 3. Courses present literary texts in terms of some larger cultural framework--at least one context from which the texts emerge, or to which they respond. This context could be socio-historical or it could be the body of the author's work or movements in literary history.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b> 3. No Change.</p>
<p><b>Current</b> 4. develop students' abilities to make and defend thoughtful, evaluative judgments about literary texts.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b> 4. develop students' ability to interpret literary texts.</p>	<p><b>Current</b> 4. Courses actively involve students in interpretation of texts, encouraging thoughtful judgments which the students express and defend in written essay assignments and orally in class discussion.</p> <p><b>Proposed</b> 4. No Change.</p>

**Rationale:**

All the changes above are clarifications rather than substantive changes. Goals 1 and 4 have been clarified in such a way as to emphasize interpretation (understanding a literary work) over appreciation (liking or not liking a work). It is desirable that students enjoy literature, but taste is not an appropriate grading criterion, and anyway readers tend to enjoy most what they understand best. Goals 2 and 3 have been edited to reduce redundancy and stylistic awkwardness.