

# University Studies Program

## GENERAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

### **Quest II and the Ethical Reasoning Component** *(Excerpted from the Faculty Senate-approved USP proposal)*

**Quest II** is a disciplinary course that integrates content related to one of the three **Signature Questions**. Like their counterparts in **Quest I**, **Quest II** courses contribute to students' intellectual curiosity and support their transition to university life through a learning community.

#### **Liberal Education and Essential Learning Outcomes:**

In addition to furthering the aims of a **Liberal Education** (like all courses in the USP), the **Quest II** course also begins to address the responsibility of "Ethical Reasoning" (with the "Ethical Action" component of that **Essential Learning Outcome** addressed more specifically in **Quest III**). As the **Quest II** course introduces broad disciplinary questions as well as content that emanates from focused study of the selected **Signature Question**, students gain awareness of central ethical issues experienced by practitioners in that discipline. In its description of ethical reasoning, the AAC&U recommends that students "recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings." Likewise, in **Quest II** classes, ethical reasoning can be broadly construed—from the deliberation of issues and claims to engagement with the driving or pressing questions within each academic field. The **Quest II** course exposes students to the process of reasoning within the stated focus of the course.

#### **Signature Questions:**

- Students select a **Quest II** course with a different **Signature Question** from that which they addressed in **Quest I**.
- The **Quest II** course must include "significant engagement" with the **Signature Question** linked to it. "Significant engagement" is defined as an apparent focus and/or integration of the content into a minimum of 30 to 50 percent of the course. (The minimum **SQ** content in **Quest I** is 25 percent; this percentage is lower than **Quest II** and **III** because **Quest I** courses must also incorporate the First-Year Experience elements.)

Evidence of significant engagement with the **Signature Question** content includes relevant student learning outcomes and graded assignments and is intended to be apparent in the course syllabus.

- Each semester, **Quest II** courses are offered in all three **Signature Questions** (with approximately one-third of the courses dedicated to each of the three **Signature Questions**).
- If the **Quest II** course focuses upon the **Intercultural Knowledge Signature Question**, that class is designated as either an Ethnic Studies or Non-Western Culture course (whichever is appropriate), supporting another USP goal of developing students' global learning and their responsibility as citizens of an increasingly diverse world.

### **Class Size and Co-Enrollment**

**Quest II** is paired with whichever **Quest** writing or speaking course the student did not take in the first semester. As in **Quest I**, students' concurrent enrollment in **Quest II** and the **Quest** writing or speaking course in their second semester will form a new learning community. Each **Quest II** course is capped at 50 students, because it is paired with two sections of the **Quest** speaking or writing course (each capped at 25 students) to form the learning community. For **Quest II** lab science courses, a learning community is formed through co-enrollment of the lab section with the speaking or writing course (note that the lecture section for a **Quest II** science course may maintain enrollments of greater than 50 students).

### **Assessment**

The **Quest II** course assesses student learning in terms of ethical reasoning and the understanding of content related to the discipline and the ***Signature Question***. Instructors are free to determine the assessment tools for individual elements of the course, but learning artifacts (papers, speeches, lab reports, etc.) are appropriate for inclusion in students' **ePortfolios**. Rubrics related to the student learning outcomes of **Quest II** are available for use by the USP teaching community on the USP webpage. Case studies are commonly used to teach and to assess students' ability to recognize ethical issues.

### **Outcomes**

1. Students will be engaged in a learning community through their co-enrollment in a writing or speaking course and a paired disciplinary **Quest II** course.
2. Students will develop an awareness of ethical issues and the process of reasoning about them in a specific discipline and/or arena of intellectual inquiry. This introduction to ethical reasoning will serve as a foundation for further learning related to ethical reasoning and action in other USP courses and in courses in students' majors and minors, as applicable.
3. Students will continue to cultivate personal responsibility for their intellectual development by archiving learning artifacts in the **ePortfolio**.

### **Resources**

For instructional support, see the USP Teaching Resources webpage on the CETL website ([www.uwosh.edu/grants/cetl](http://www.uwosh.edu/grants/cetl)).

***QUEST** instructors (**I, II, and III**) are supported by ongoing collaborative professional development to assist with the curricular modification necessary to integrate **Signature Question** content into their courses (if such content is not already present in the proposed course).*