

CLARKSON COMMON EXPERIENCE

GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNING OFF-CAMPUS & TRANSFER CREDIT FOR KNOWLEDGE AREAS AND COMMUNICATION POINTS

(Effective for the 2007-08 Academic Year)

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the responsibilities of the Clarkson Common Experience Committee that is listed in the *Operations Manual* is “reviewing and approving courses proposed to meet various CCE requirements.” The *OM* does not specify the procedure(s) for doing so, but rather leaves this to the Committee itself. During the 2006-07 initial implementation phase, the Committee made detailed course-by-course evaluations of all proposed Knowledge Area courses and all proposed Communication Point courses, but the statement of the Committee’s charge allows it to delegate some of this work as long as it retains final authority. Procedures that delegate portions of the responsibility for assigning Knowledge Areas and Communication Points are described below. Also described below are the guidelines to be followed in these procedures, particularly guidelines for off-campus and transfer courses.

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2 PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING KNOWLEDGE AREAS & COMMUNICATION POINTS

2.1 ASSIGNMENT OF KAS AND CPS TO CLARKSON COURSES

1. Department chairs will make recommendations *re* Knowledge Areas and Communication Points, as appropriate, for existing, revised, and new courses in their departments, and will submit these recommendations to their school's regular curricular process for approval.
At a minimum, these recommendations will be accompanied by:
 - a) a Course Approval Form (available from the SAS web pages at <http://www.clarkson.edu/sas/> or from each school's web page),
 - b) a course syllabus, and
 - c) the appropriate Knowledge Area and/or Communication Point Forms (available from the Common Experience web pages at http://www.clarkson.edu/common_experience/).
2. Knowledge Area and Communication Point recommendations that emerge from the school-level curricular reviews will be transmitted to the Clarkson Common Experience Committee with the signed Course Approval Form and supporting documents.
3. The Common Experience Committee will review and act on these recommended Knowledge Area and Communication Point assignments.

2.2 ASSIGNMENT OF KAS AND CPS TO AP AND OFF-CAMPUS COURSES

1. As is currently the case, evaluations of AP courses for incoming Freshmen and Off-Campus courses for matriculated Clarkson students will be made by the Clarkson department or school that is responsible for the subject of the course.
2. When the AP or Off-Campus course is equivalent to a Clarkson course, the Knowledge Area(s) attached to the Clarkson course will be automatically awarded. However, any Communication Points attached to the Clarkson course will **NOT** be automatically awarded, but instead will be handled under the guidelines for non-Clarkson courses that are listed below in Section 5.
3. When the AP or Off-Campus course is not equivalent to a Clarkson course, the reviewing department or school will make Knowledge Area designations and/or Communication Point assignments as appropriate. Guidelines for this process are given below in Sections 4 and 5. The student presenting the course is responsible for providing the required supporting information.
4. The results from Steps 2) and 3) will be used to build a database listing the Clarkson course numbers and Knowledge Area designators (if any) and Communication Points (if any) that should be used in transcribing AP and Off-Campus courses.
5. The Common Experience Committee will periodically review the Knowledge Area designations and the Communication Point assignments in this database, as well as the set of guidelines, for accuracy and consistency.

2.3 ASSIGNMENT OF KAS AND CPs TO THE COURSES PRESENTED BY TRANSFER STUDENTS

1. As is currently the case, the courses taken by a transfer student at previous school(s) will be evaluated by the program or department in which the student will enroll at Clarkson.
2. When the program or department determines that a Transfer course is equivalent to a Clarkson course, the Knowledge Area(s) attached to the Clarkson course will be automatically awarded. However, any Communication Points attached to the Clarkson course will **NOT** be automatically awarded, but instead will be handled under the guidelines for non-Clarkson courses that are listed below in Section 5.
3. When the reviewing program or department determines that Transfer courses are not equivalent to a Clarkson course, it will make Knowledge Area designations and/or Communication Point assignments as appropriate. Guidelines for this process are given below in Sections 4 and 5, and the database that is developed in connection with AP and Off-Campus courses will also be available to assist transfer evaluators. The student presenting the course is responsible for providing the required supporting information.
4. The Common Experience Committee will periodically review the Knowledge Area designations and Communication Point assignments in selected transfer evaluations, as well as the set of guidelines, for accuracy and consistency.

3 CLARKSON COURSES – CRITERIA FOR KNOWLEDGE AREA DESIGNATORS & COMMUNICATION POINTS

The criteria for assigning KAs and CPs to Clarkson courses are listed in the Common Experience web pages (http://www.clarkson.edu/common_experience/). The forms that should accompany recommendations *re* KAs and CPs for Clarkson courses are also available from these pages.

4 NON-CLARKSON COURSES – GUIDELINES FOR KNOWLEDGE AREAS

The reviews of on-campus courses for Knowledge Area designators are being made in terms of relatively specific lists of expected learning outcomes, and course descriptions have to be supplemented by syllabi and other information in order for a determination to be made. Evaluators of non-Clarkson courses typically do not have this full body of information available, and yet fair and consistent evaluations of these courses need to be made. The following guidelines have been developed to facilitate this process.

Please note that these guidelines are for use during the 2007-08 academic year, and they will be revised and refined on the basis of experience.

4.1 MEETING THE SPIRIT OF THE KNOWLEDGE AREAS

Although the lists of outcomes for each Knowledge Area are relatively specific, there is a general learning goal, or spirit, for each Knowledge Area. If a transfer course is determined to satisfy this, then the Knowledge Area designator may be assigned. The following table lists these general learning goals for each Knowledge Area, and it also lists a few Clarkson Courses in each Knowledge Area by way of example.

Knowledge Area General Learning Goals	Example Clarkson Courses
<u>Contemporary and Global Issues (CGI)</u> – A course that falls within this Knowledge Area helps students develop the ability to critically analyze social, political, and/or ethical issues in contemporary global society.	PHIL200, Business Ethics POL371, Environmental Law PY310, Human Sexuality
<u>Culture and Societies (CSO)</u> – A course that falls within this Knowledge Area helps students understand that all people, including themselves, live within cultures and societies that shape their beliefs, values, and the ways they view the world. The course should help students gain knowledge about some culture or society that is different than their own in time and/or place.	ANTH250, Peoples & Cultures through Film & Fiction HIST210, Ancient History Survey HIST350, History of Nazi Germany LIT251, Understanding Vietnam LIT328, African-American Literature
<u>Economics and Organizations (EC)</u> – A course that falls within this Knowledge Area helps students develop an understanding of economic and organizational concepts and decision-making.	EC150, Microeconomics EC151, Macroeconomics POL350, International Development & Social Change
<u>Imaginative Arts (IA)</u> – A course that falls within this Knowledge Area helps students develop the ability to analyze and interpret works from such artistic fields as painting, music, photography, and literature. The course should also help students gain an appreciation of the role of artistic imagination in understanding human experience.	DA205, Painting and Drawing FILM240, Films From Fiction HIST241, War Literature LIT220, American Literature I LIT221, American Literature II LIT327, American Drama
<u>Individual and Group Behavior (IG)</u> – A course that falls within this Knowledge Area helps students develop the ability to apply appropriate frameworks for understanding and explaining human behavior in contexts ranging from the individual to social and political.	BY340, Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology POL220, American Politics POL301, Political Theory PY151, Introduction to Psychology
<u>Science, Technology, and Society (STS)</u> – A course that falls within this Knowledge Area helps students to understand and analyze the ways in which society influences the creation of scientific knowledge and technological development, and to understand and analyze the ways science and technology affect their lives, communities, and world.	ANTH270, Environment, Technology, and Society BY328, Conservation Biology HIST230, Science and Society PHIL370, The Law and Bioethics

There will be courses that meet the spirit of more than one Knowledge Area. For example, an African-American Literature course would satisfy both Cultures and Societies and Imaginative Arts. In such cases, the course can be given both Knowledge Area designators (in the example, CSO and IA), and as such it also would count as a University Course. Note that it is not appropriate to assign more than two Knowledge Area designators to a course, since the content related to each Knowledge Area would be too dilute.

4.2 KNOWLEDGE AREAS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH DISCIPLINARY FIELDS

In addition to the guidelines above that are constructed around the general learning goals for the Knowledge Areas, there are “standard (that is, blanket) designations” that hold for all courses in several disciplinary fields. These disciplinary fields typically will be reflected in the course number, for example, anthropology courses often are indicated by AN or ANTH. Note that Knowledge Area designators are NOT limited to courses in these disciplinary fields, since a fundamental premise of the Clarkson Common Experience is that Knowledge Area courses can – and should – come from all areas of the University.

Anthropology Courses – CSO.

Art Courses (including studio, art appreciation, and history of art courses) – IA.

Economics Courses – EC.

Film Studies Courses – IA.

Foreign Language Courses – CSO, provided the course is at the second year college level and includes content about the culture and/or literature of the country.

History Courses – CSO.

Literature Courses – IA.

Music Courses (including performance, theory, music appreciation, and history of music courses) – IA.

Psychology Courses – IG, provided the course deals with **human** behavior.

Depending on their content, courses in these disciplinary fields might warrant a second designator in addition to the standard designator listed above. For example, a Film Studies course that examines the ways in which men’s and women’s roles are portrayed in film, especially if this examination extends through time or across cultures, would be CSO in addition to the standard IA. Or, a History course that looks at the interrelations of science and society in Japan would be STS in addition to the standard CSO. As noted above, all dual designator courses count as University Courses.

4.3 ADDITIONAL RULES OF THUMB FOR IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE AREA COURSES

Although courses in the following disciplinary fields do not have standard (that is, blanket) designations, some useful rules of thumb can be formulated.

Communication – Some communication courses are strictly about the act of communicating. Clarkson courses of this type include COMM210, Theory of Rhetoric, and COMM217, Public Speaking. This type of communication course typically does not qualify for a Knowledge Area. However, other communication courses include content that serve the general learning goals of one (or two) Knowledge Area(s). A Clarkson example of this type is COMM428, Public Debate and the Environment, which is a University Course that meets the CGI and STS Knowledge Areas. Course descriptions for communication courses usually will indicate which type they are.

Philosophy – There are courses in this discipline that warrant an IG designator. Two of the learning objectives listed for IG are “demonstrate [the ability to give] an explanation of human behavior using appropriate frameworks” and “analyze philosophical or ethical issues.” Several types of philosophy course would help students meet these objectives, for example, applied ethics courses, introduction to philosophy courses that include topics in political philosophy and moral theory, and history of philosophy courses.

Political Science (aka Government) Courses – Many courses in this discipline warrant an IG designator. Two of the learning objectives listed for IG are “describe political processes” and “evaluate critically the evidence used to influence members of society, such as voters, civic leaders,” and political science courses such as American Politics and Political Theory meet these objectives.

Sociology – Courses in this discipline typically warrant either CSO or IG, depending on the focus. For example, a Race and Ethnicity Course would be CSO, and a Sociology of the Family course would be IG.

Two of the Knowledge Areas – Contemporary & Global Issues and Science, Technology, & Society – can be found in any and all of the disciplinary fields in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, as well as from other areas across the University. When such courses are identified, their CGI or STS designator would be paired with the primary discipline-based Knowledge Area designator. As noted above, all dual designator courses count as University Courses.

It is also the case that Science, Technology, & Society has become a quasi discipline, with many colleges and universities offering courses with STS course numbers, which consequently is a useful indicator for identifying courses that may be given the STS Knowledge Area designator. Note that Clarkson has the STS course prefix available, and such courses can be brought in as STS 002.

5 NON-CLARKSON COURSES – GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION POINTS

5.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The criteria for assigning Communication Points to courses in the Common Experience are specific in terms of both the instructional process and the amount of required work. These criteria are as follows:

C2 courses meet the following criteria:

1. Communication instruction is a part of the course pedagogy, where the instruction can take many forms ranging from in-class activities through supplemental support materials to individual student-faculty conferences.
2. Communication assignments are frequent. At a minimum, communication assignments should be frequent (often one-third to one-half of the weeks) and distributed over the entire term during which the course meets.
3. Communication assignments include regular formative feedback on both content and mechanics from peers and/or instructor. This feedback should facilitate improvement in students' subsequent work, which may involve revision and resubmission when appropriate.
4. Communication assignments require sufficient volume of spoken or written work for the course to be deemed communication intensive. For example, assignments in a writing-intensive course commonly result in 5,000-10,000 words of student writing (without revision, roughly 20-40 pages of double-spaced, typed work). Assignments in a course focusing on oral communication would commonly include five to eight assignments totaling 45-60 minutes of formal speaking.

C1 courses meet the following criteria:

1. Communication instruction is a part of the course pedagogy, where the instruction can take many forms ranging from in-class activities through supplemental support materials to individual student-faculty conferences.
2. Communication assignments are a regular part of the course. Commonly, communication assignments are completed in about one-third of the weeks over which the course meets.
3. Communication assignments include regular formative feedback on both content and mechanics from peers and/or instructor. This feedback should facilitate improvement in students' subsequent work, which may involve revision and resubmission when appropriate.
4. Communication assignments require sufficient volume of work for the course to be communication intensive. An appropriate scaling down from the C2 amounts might be 10-15 pages of written work for a written communication course and two to five oral assignments totaling 15-25 minutes of formal speaking for an oral communication course.

These criteria are specific enough to resist generalization. Courses either meet the criteria, or they do not. Unfortunately, evaluators of non-Clarkson courses typically do not have the information necessary for determining whether or not the criteria are met. Course descriptions do not contain this information. At a minimum, the syllabus and communication assignments are needed, and possibly graded student work. Consequently, evaluators of non-Clarkson courses usually are not in a position to assign communication points, and they should not do so.

In spite of these difficulties, however, two general approaches to this issue are possible. First, guidelines can be formulated for certain types of courses. Second, evaluators can acquire the necessary information to make a determination about Communication Points.

Please note that these guidelines are for use during the 2007-08 academic year, and they will be revised and refined on the basis of experience.

5.1.1 Guidelines for Communication Courses per se

Courses of this type have the teaching of communication as their primary end. The descriptions for this type of course usually make this clear. For example, the description for College Composition at Jefferson Community College states, “English 100 is an introduction to academic writing, research, and MLA documentation. The course is designed to strengthen student skills in college-level writing.... Students complete diverse, predominantly non-fiction reading and writing assignments designed to improve their ability to develop 5 thesis-driven essays directed to an academic audience.”

There are three sub-categories of this type of course.

1. Writing Courses. Representative course titles are: “Expository Writing,” “Composition,” “Technical Writing,” and “Creative Writing.”
2. Speech Courses. Representative course titles are: “Speech,” “Introduction to Public Speaking,” and “Business and Professional Speech.”
3. Mixed Communication Mode Courses. There are a few courses that cover both written and oral communication. For example, BA 324 at the University of Texas is designed “to provide...undergraduates with a conceptual framework and specific tools for communicating in complex environments and accomplishing strategic academic and professional business goals....[The] course provides writing, oral, and team skills necessary for future business courses, internships, and professional positions.”

The key characteristic of this type of course is that the improvement of students’ oral and/or written communication skills is the central course objective, and the course work involves frequent oral and/or written assignments. This type of course may be assigned two Communication Points – that is, the C2 designator.

5.1.2 Guidelines for Communication Intensive Courses at Other Schools

The communication-across-the-curriculum approach to improving student writing and speaking skills has been used by many schools over the past 20+ years. Schools using this approach typically attach designators to the courses that count toward their communication requirement, and, as at Clarkson, the criteria for these designators are clearly defined. This makes it possible to compare the criteria at other schools to Clarkson’s criteria and to determine which non-Clarkson communication designators warrant Clarkson’s C2 and C1 designators.

For example, SUNY Albany’s General Education Program requires students to take both Written Discourse and Oral Discourse courses. Courses that satisfy the Written Discourse requirement have to meet the following criteria:

“[Writing Intensive] courses use writing as an important tool in the discipline studied and are not designed primarily to teach the technical aspects of writing. The emphasis is on using writing as a means of sharpening critical thinking in and understanding of the subject. Approved courses must meet each of the following four criteria:

1. A Substantial Body of Finished Work: This is generally expected to be a total of 20+ double-spaced pages in at least two, preferably more, submissions. It may be in a variety of forms—journal, reports, essays, research papers, etc.—not all of which need to be graded.

2. Opportunity for Students to Receive Assistance in Progress: Such assistance may take several forms, from visits to the Writing Center (HU-140) to conferences with the instructor.
3. Opportunity to Revise Some Pieces: As revision is an essential characteristic of good writing, students should be able to revise some portion of their work.
4. Response to Student Writing: Such response may take several forms—from extended comments from the instructor to peer evaluation in student groups. It is expected, however, that the instructor will respond in detail to some extended work of the student.”

These criteria match well enough with Clarkson’s criteria for one Communication Point that it might be appropriate to award our C1 designator to SUNY Albany’s Writing Intensive Courses.

On the other hand, SUNY Albany’s criteria for courses that satisfy the Oral Discourse requirement probably fall short. These criteria are:

“Approved courses generally have a minimum of two exercises in which oral performance is required and graded. An oral performance exercise can be accomplished in any of the following activities, either live or in a crafted recording:

1. A discussion within a group, where each member will be required to make 3-5 “paragraph-length” contributions in the course of the discussion
2. A question and answer dialogic process where the student fields a succession of questions or asks a succession of questions that build on and comment upon prior answers
3. A rehearsal theatrical presentation or interpretive reading
4. A stand-up monologue presentation of a minimum of 3-5 minutes|
5. A debate where each participant speaks for a minimum of 3-5 minutes”

Some of the activities listed in SUNY Albany’s criteria are not the type of formal speaking envisioned by the Clarkson criteria, and both the frequency and quantity of oral presentation are less than required by the Clarkson criteria.

The Clarkson Common Experience Committee will review and evaluate the communication-across-the-disciplines designators at other schools and then publish the results for use by evaluators of non-Clarkson courses.

5.1.3 Acquisition of the Necessary Information for Course-by-Course Evaluation

Clarkson’s criteria for the C2 and C1 designators are detailed and clear, and evaluators should be able to make a determination about non-Clarkson courses on the basis of the course syllabus, communication assignments, and representative graded work. Students seeking Communication Points for non-Clarkson courses would be responsible for submitting the necessary information.

5.2 SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR FRESHMEN COMPOSITION COURSES AND AP ENGLISH EXAMS

Two categories of student will be presenting Freshman Composition Courses and AP English Exams (note that there are two different AP English Exams) for credit under the Common Experience. The first category is incoming freshmen who are requesting AP credit. The second category is true transfer students who are requesting transfer credit.

Please note that these guidelines are for use during the 2007-08 academic year, and they will be revised and refined on the basis of experience.

5.2.1 *Incoming Freshmen*

Incoming freshmen should take UNIV190, The Clarkson Seminar, because of the way this course initiates first-year students into the University as an intellectual community.

Therefore:

- a. Incoming freshmen who have taken a Freshman Composition Course should be given credit for 3 hours of COMM101, Introductory Writing. This is a C2 course and does NOT have a KA. (Typical titles for this type of course include “Freshman Composition,” “Composition 1,” “Expository Writing,” “Freshman English,” and “Writing and Critical Thinking.”)
- b. Incoming freshmen who have received a 4 or better on the AP English Language and Composition Exam should be given credit for 3 hours of COMM210. Note that COMM210 is a C2 course and does NOT have a KA.
- c. Incoming freshmen who have received a 4 or better on the AP English Literature and Composition Exam should be given credit for 3 hours of LIT200. Note that LIT200 is a C1 course and also has the IA designator. Students can request an increase to C2 through appeal to the Associate Deans Group. The students are responsible for providing any requested supporting information.

5.2.2 *Transfer Students*

In most cases, it is not appropriate for a transfer student to take UNIV190, The Clarkson Seminar, given its particular role in the Common Experience and its exclusively freshman population.

Therefore:

- a. Transfer students who have taken a Freshman Composition Course should be given credit for UNIV190, The Clarkson Seminar.
- b. Transfer students who have taken an AP English Exam should be handled according to the guidelines stated in b) and c) under “Incoming Freshmen,” with the following additional proviso. Transfer students who do not have credit for a Freshman Composition Course at their previous school, but who did receive a 4 or better on an AP English Exam (either the AP English Language and Composition Exam or the AP English Literature and Composition Exam), should be given transfer credit for UNIV190, The Clarkson Seminar.
- c. Transfer students for whom NO transfer credit can be found to satisfy UNIV190, The Clarkson Seminar, may take a substitute course that meets the following two criteria:
 - First, the substitute course must have a C1 or C2 designation.
 - Second, the substitute course must have one of the Knowledge Area designators (CGI, CSO, EC, IA, IG, STS) or be a University Course. During the transitional period between the Foundation Curriculum and the Common Experience, it also is acceptable for the substitute course to have the HUM, SOC, or H/S Foundation designator.

When a student takes a substitute course for UNIV190, the student’s major department must submit a Degree Audit Exception Form to SAS that designates the student’s particular substitute course as counting for the missing UNIV190 course in the student’s degree audit.