

## **SPU General Education: Providing a Path to Wisdom**

A college education initiates students in a life-long journey to wisdom. People of wisdom understand their place in God's world, see life from a variety of perspectives, discern the appropriate use of knowledge, and thoughtfully evaluate ideas and claims. The General Education program at Seattle Pacific helps students pursue the path of wisdom as they seek to engage the culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each component of the General Education program makes a distinctive contribution to this goal.

Tier One: ***Ways of Knowing***

Tier Two: ***Ways of Engaging***

Courses in Tier One guide students in exploring five significant ways of knowing: creative arts, human systems, natural sciences, quantitative reasoning, and the humanities. Courses in Tier Two apply knowledge from these fields to significant social issues, so that students might engage our world thoughtfully, as befits people seeking wisdom.

### ***Tier One: Ways of Knowing (WK)***

***Ways of Knowing*** coursework helps students articulate how disciplines know the world (epistemology) and how disciplinary ways of knowing compare and contrast.

#### **Course Criteria:**

1. Courses will focus on the epistemology of the discipline: how it knows and makes sense of its material.
2. Most courses will likely serve as an introduction to a discipline.
3. While individual courses may range from 1-5 credits, students are required to take a total of 5 credits of WK in the Arts, Humanities, Quantitative Reasoning, and Social Sciences; students are also required to take a total of 10 credits of WK in the Sciences—one Foundational Science class and one Applied Science class.
4. Appropriate off-campus and travel abroad courses are eligible to be considered for WK status.

## ***Tier Two: Ways of Engaging (WE)***

Tier Two of Seattle Pacific University's General Education program aims to cultivate graduates of character and competence who will engage the world thoughtfully. After acquiring a range of intellectual skill sets through Tier One study, students will practice synthesis and application of the methods they have learned in a WE course, in which a selection of specially-designed, problem-based courses will use the broad ways of knowing to investigate specific, real-world problems and needs.

The path of wisdom seeks the appropriate use of knowledge. In addition to providing ways of knowing our world, academic disciplines provide resources for improving human life. Ways of Engaging courses give students opportunity to employ disciplinary learning for practical ends. To achieve these goals, Ways of Engaging courses address clearly relevant social/political issues and engage learners in more participatory forms of pedagogy.

### **Criteria:**

- Students must earn a minimum of 5 credits in WE courses.
- A WE course will have a maximum enrollment of 20-25 students to facilitate the creation of a small learning community.
- Appropriate off-campus and travel abroad courses will be eligible to be considered for WE status.
- WE courses will be offered by both professional schools and disciplines from the College of Arts and Sciences.
- WE courses will be at the 2000 or 3000 level and may have specific pre-requisites (either a particular course or a set amount of college level coursework).
- The same coursework may not be used to meet both the WE requirement and a requirement in the student's first major. A student may use WE coursework to meet requirements in a second major or a minor.

## ***Ways of Engaging Courses***

### **Mission:**

***Ways of Engaging (WE)*** courses focus on engaged inquiry into social issues of contemporary significance. Within a small learning community that encourages active participation with the course material and one another, students will be challenged to apply disciplinary methods to understand the issue and to evaluate responses to it.

### **Goals:**

WE courses involve three kinds of engagement: in topic, in learning activities, and in educational outcomes.

1. WE courses engage contemporary social issues from a disciplinary perspective.
2. WE courses engage students actively in small learning communities.
3. WE courses engage the world by equipping and challenging students to understand the complexities of social issues and to consider the consequences of different solutions or responses to them.

### **Course Objectives:**

At the conclusion of a WE course, students will be able to

1. Articulate and critique a disciplinary approach to a social issue;
2. Describe the complexity and consequences of an issue;
3. Begin to employ disciplinary methods to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various responses or proposed solutions to the issue;
4. Thoughtfully articulate possible ways that Christian values and beliefs intersect with the issue; and
5. Describe the ways in which their own understanding of the issue has changed and/or deepened.

### **Course Criteria:**

1. A WE course will be organized around a single real world issue or issues of contemporary social importance, not a disciplinary subfield or skill.
2. A WE course will use the opportunity of a small class size to promote the development of an active, experiential, participatory learning community. WE courses will emphasize more participatory forms of learning (service learning, critique and revision, field trips, labs, primary source work, studios, etc.).
3. A WE course will incorporate a writing, design, project, or performance component appropriate to the discipline.

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