

# SIGNATURE COURSES IN THE COLLEGE PARK GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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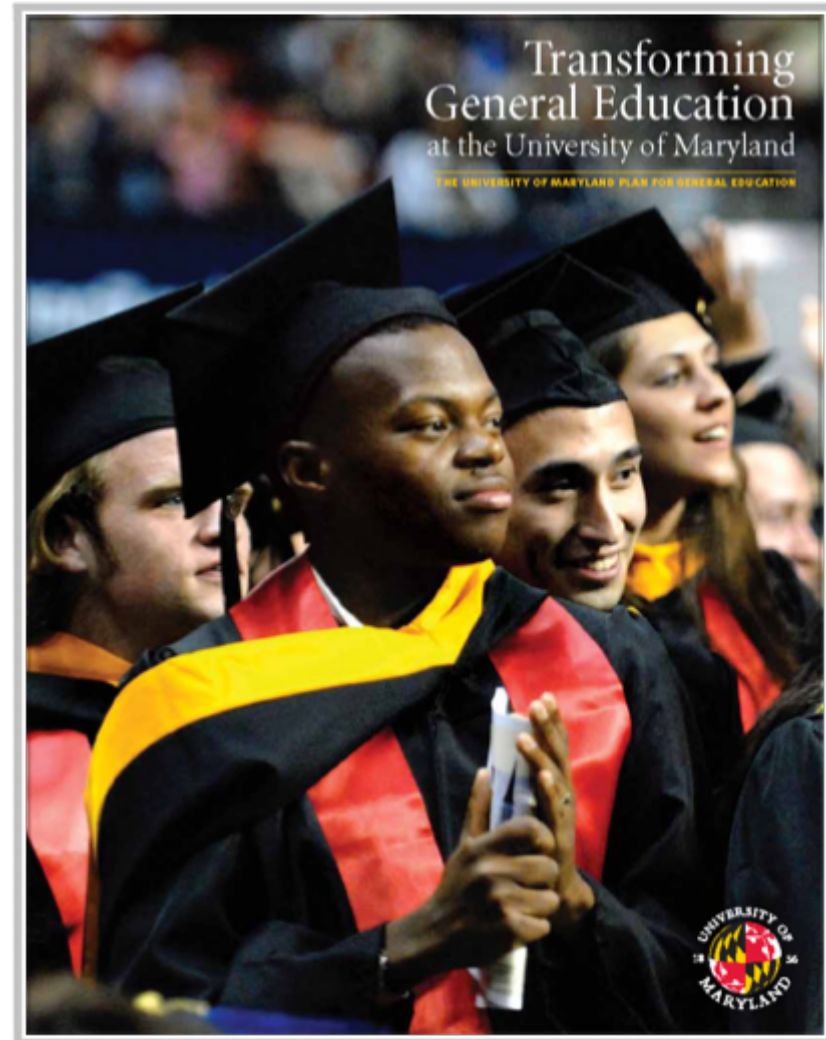


# OUTLINE

- Brief Overview of General Education Program
- Signature Courses
  - I-Series Courses
  - Scholarship in Practice

# MARYLAND'S NEW GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

- The University of Maryland launched a new General Education program in the Fall of 2012
- Details of the program can be found in the document shown at the right



<http://www.gened.umd.edu/documents/TransformingGeneralEducation.pdf>

# OVERVIEW OF THE NEW GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

- There are 4 major areas of the program:
  - Fundamental Studies
    - Academic Writing, Professional Writing, Mathematics, Analytic Reasoning, Oral Communication
  - Distributive Studies
    - Humanities, Natural Sciences, History & Social Science, Scholarship in Practice
    - 2 courses in each of the 4 categories
  - **The I-Series Courses**
    - Minimum of 2 courses that double-count with Distributive Studies courses
  - Diversity
    - Understanding Plural Societies, Cultural Competence
    - 2 courses, typically double-count with Distributive Studies courses



# I-SERIES COURSES



# THE I-SERIES

- Imagination
- Innovation
- Issues
- Implementation
- Investigation
- Inspiration
- Intellect

Something undiscovered is hiding out there, waiting to  
**CHANGE YOUR LIFE.**

Will you eventually be at the mercy of a world  
**RULED BY HAL 2000?**



# I-SERIES CONCEPT

**I** series The I-Series inverts the traditional pedagogical pyramid. Rather than starting with a survey of existing knowledge, the I-Series courses offer Maryland students an opportunity to view large problems from defined disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives (for example, African American studies or cognitive studies) or from the perspective of particular fields of study (for example, education and engineering).

While I-Series courses ask questions, they are not meant to answer them. Rather, they aim to examine the ways in which diverse intellectual traditions and disciplinary protocols address big questions.

# I-SERIES DETAILS

- These courses tackle big issues, big questions, from the perspective of a particular field.
- They are primarily taught at an introductory level with no or minimal prerequisites and for students from all over campus. Limited to 120 students.
- The types of questions are usually reserved for majors at the junior, senior, or graduate (or even professional) level.
  - This requires a serious change to how we teach!
- **Main Goal is to Make Students THINK.**
  - Establish a culture of thinking from the moment students set foot on campus.
  - Do that by dealing with questions to which we don't know the answers.
- The I-Series faculty meet several times during the semester to discuss their courses.
  - What works, what doesn't, common issues, share solutions.

Human Trafficking in the U.S.

Love Me, Hate Me, Use Me, Save Me: Our Conflicting Views of  
Health Care, Animals

Genetically-Modified Humans: Physical Performance in the Post-Genomic-  
Era  
Representation

Spies, Assassins, Martyrs, and Witches: Famous Trials in American  
Beyond Facebooking and Social Media: What's Behind the Hype?  
Religions, Beliefs, and World Affairs

HIV/AIDS in a Global Perspective

# THE COURSES

Started as a pilot in the spring of 2010 with 24 courses.

Currently have over **140** approved I-Series courses.

*These are nearly all newly created courses.*

Offering **~12,000** seats each academic year.



# SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE



# SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE

- Courses in this area teach students how to assess and apply a body of knowledge to a creative, scholarly, or practical purpose.
- The resulting application should reflect an understanding of how underlying core disciplines can be brought to bear on the subject. It should go beyond the traditional survey and interpretation culminating in, for example, a final paper or activity, often used in courses that are designed to be introductions to a specific topic or area of study.
- Basically, we want students to see how what they are learning is actually used by people in that field.
  - Could be applied fields, like Engineering, Business, Architecture, etc.
  - Could be in the more traditional academic disciplines, but with a focus on methodology, research, the things that academics actually do, NOT, an “Introduction to ...” type of class.

# WHY SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE?

- General Education has largely been concentrated in a few areas of our campus.
  - 3 of the 12 colleges on campus offered 90% of the seats in our previous General Education program.
- This is not an accurate reflection of what our University is, what our University does.
- This is an opportunity for other areas on campus to participate in General Education.
  - Business School, Journalism, Engineering, Education, etc.
- Most importantly, it gives students an opportunity to get exposure to these areas early in their academic careers.
  - Could help them choose a major
  - Everyone has to declare a major at the end of their second year. Most of that time is spent taking Gen Ed courses. If they're all in just a few areas, when do they get to see other things?
  - Also, many of these other areas don't traditionally offer introductory courses open to non-majors.

# EXAMPLE: SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- On completion of a Scholarship in Practice Course, students will be able to:
  - Select and critically evaluate areas of scholarship relevant to the practice of the discipline.
  - Apply relevant methods and frameworks to the planning, modeling, and/or preparing necessary to produce a project or participate in the practice in a manner that is authentic to the discipline.
  - Critique, revise and refine a project, or the practice of the discipline, according to the authentic manner of the discipline.
  - Effectively communicate the application of scholarship through ancillary material (written, oral, and/or visual).
  - Collaborate in order to bring about a successful outcome.

# SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE RUBRIC

Criterion	Advanced	Proficient	Beginning	Unacceptable
<i>Selecting and evaluating</i> Relevant areas of scholarship are selected and critically evaluated by the student	Engages in in-depth research and insightful evaluation to determine key resources. Explores a broad range of potential resources including non-standard and cross-disciplinary resources. Critically evaluates credibility, multiple view points, common assumptions, complexities and ambiguities.	Engages in in-depth research. Considers credibility, multiple view points, common assumptions, complexities and ambiguities.	Engages in limited research that results in a superficial selection of resources. Considers credibility of resources but illumination of complexities and ambiguities is limited.	No exploration of resources or selection of irrelevant resources. Does not consider credibility or multiple viewpoints common assumptions, complexities or ambiguities.
<i>Application</i> Relevant methods and frameworks are applied to authentic practice of the discipline by the student	All relevant elements of the methodology or frameworks are skillfully and accurately applied.	Critical elements of methodology or frameworks are appropriately applied although more subtle elements are missing.	Critical elements of the methodology or framework are missing, incorrectly applied or unfocused.	Demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or framework.
<i>Critique / Analysis / Evaluation</i> Project or practice is assessed according to disciplinary standards and project or practice goals by the student.	Analysis of project or practice is deep and elegant. Results are reviewed relative to the goals with thorough, specific consideration of need for further work. Discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Analysis of project or practice is adequate. Reviews results relative to goals with some consideration of need for further work. Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Analysis of project or practice is brief and lacks depth. Reviews results in terms of the goals with little, if any, consideration of need for further work. Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Analysis of project or practice is superficial. Reviews results superficially in terms of the goals with no consideration of need for further work. Presents limitations and implications, but they are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.
<i>Revision and Refinement</i> Project or practice is developed through revising and refining by the student	Synthesizes feedback to productively develop project or practice. Revises and refines project or practice in a focused and systematic manner.	Incorporates feedback directly to productively develop project or practice. Revises and refines project or practice in a systematic manner.	Some feedback is incorporated to develop project or practice. Revises and refines project or practice in an unsystematic manner.	Does not fully understand or incorporate feedback. Project or practice is either not revised or revisions are ineffective.
<i>Presentation</i> Student's presentation is	Revises project or practice directly toward greater depth, clarity and effectiveness.	Revises project or practice somewhat directly toward greater depth, clarity and effectiveness.	Revises project or practice with limited effect on depth, clarity and effectiveness.	
	Purpose, relevance and central point of presentation are	Purpose, relevance and central point of presentation	Purpose, relevance and central point of	Purpose, relevance and central point of



# REFLECTING OUR VALUES

## I-Series

- Critical thinking
- Wrestling with complex problems
- Articulating and defending an argument or opinion

## Scholarship in Practice

- Understanding the methods and practices of our disciplines
- Engaging in these practices
- It's hard work!

While both of these areas of courses are taught from a disciplinary perspective, there is an incredible amount of similarity across disciplines in their methods and high level goals. We are trying to make this more explicitly clear to our students in an effort to help them see their education as a more integrated experience.

# ENGAGING FACULTY



# FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- One mechanism we have found for successful engagement of the faculty in promotion of teaching and learning and development of innovative teaching pedagogies is the formation of faculty learning communities.
- These can take various forms:
  - Finite time scale (typically one year) vs. on-going
  - Across campus vs. within single discipline or college
- Some are competitive selection, some have a defined deliverable
- All have a common mission or theme

# I-SERIES FACULTY COMMUNITY

- The I-Series Faculty Community is an on-going group consisting of faculty teaching I-Series courses that semester
- The group meets 5 times during the semester (we provide lunch)
- Each session has a defined theme
- Discussion prompted by one or two faculty presentations
- Possibly our first group from across campus that works together on undergraduate teaching in an on-going manner