

# Proposal for Changes in the GEC Requirements for Engineering Students

The Core Committee of the College of Engineering has made a number of recommendations for changes in the GEC requirements for Engineering undergraduates, including CSE majors. This is part of the general evaluation of the GEC requirements that was supposed to be undertaken across the university. Here is a summary<sup>1</sup> of the recommendations and rationale for each:

1. Increase Social Sciences requirement to 10 hours (from 9).  
Rationale: Most GEC courses are 5 credits, there being almost no 4 credit courses.
2. Decrease Arts & Hum. (including History), to 10 hours (from 19), one course in History, one in Analysis of Texts and Works of Arts (Literature, V/P Arts, Culture and Ideas).  
Rationale: Most comparable schools only require one course in History. This change will allow a course on Ethics to be required plus reduce the size of the program somewhat. (But not for CSE students since our accreditation requirements dictate 45 hours of GEC courses.)
3. Encourage foreign language courses: A 104-level course can substitute for one Arts & Hum./Soc. Sc. course requirement. A foreign language minor can substitute for two.  
Rationale: "Global economy".
4. Require a 5 credit Ethics and Professionalism course.  
(Tentative list of courses that can meet this requirement: Philosophy 130<sup>2</sup>, 367, 533; Comparative Studies 272,<sup>3</sup> 367.02, 535, 597.01.)  
Rationale: Our assessment results strongly suggest including a course on ethics in the curriculum. This is also an important aspect of the accreditation criteria.  
The idea is a three-pronged treatment of ethics: First in Engineering 181, 183, students get an initial exposure. The second will be this proposed new course that will be a general discussion of ethical issues. The third is in CIS 601.
5. Allow any university capstone course (e.g.: Agr. Env. and Dev. Econ. 597, Animal Sc. 597, Anthropology 597, Biology 597<sup>4</sup> ...) to be used as a Social Sc. course.  
Rationale: These courses deal with issues of relevance to society in general.
6. Review the third writing course (CIS 560).  
Rationale: The importance of written communication is widely acknowledged, especially in the accreditation criteria. There has been no review of these courses since they were instituted.

*Recommendation:* UGSC recommends approval of this proposal by the faculty.

UGSC also recommends that in our approval letter, we should note that the reduction in the GEC hours should not be used to increase the hours in the major; and that attempts should be made to ensure that the ethics course deals with or is based on issues that arise in engineering practice.

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<sup>1</sup>A slightly dated draft of full proposal is at: <http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu/~neelam/ugsc/minutes/GECrpt930.doc>

<sup>2</sup>*Phil 130 Introduction to Ethics U 5*. The nature of right and wrong, good and evil, the grounds of moral choice and decision; the resolution of moral conflicts. (No prereqs stated.)

<sup>3</sup>*Cmp Stud 272 Science and Society U 5*. Critical analysis of the multiple relations of science to society, with emphasis on knowledge, power, authority, values, and ethics. Prereq: English 110

<sup>4</sup>*Biol 597 Biology of Human Diversity: Race, Gender, and Ethnicity U 5*. Historical perspectives on contemporary issues in human biology and biocultural problems. Prereq: 10 hrs of biological course work, senior standing.