

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS FOR LIBERAL STUDIES COURSES

Introduction

This document outlines the requirements and submission procedure for proposals for new liberal studies undergraduate courses.

Objectives and Requirements of Liberal Studies

Liberal studies courses are a core component of Ryerson's undergraduate curriculum. Students in all Ryerson programs must complete liberal studies electives as part of their requirements for graduation.

Liberal studies courses are designed to develop students' capacity to understand and appraise the social, cultural, and scientific context in which they will work as a professional and live as an educated citizen. Liberal studies courses broaden students' horizons; they enable students to look at the world from a variety of perspectives and to pursue ideas and interests beyond their specific career studies. The courses are also designed to develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills as well as their written communication skills through essay writing. Liberal studies courses, to the maximum degree feasible, provide a means by which students from a variety of programs may meet to share perspective on the subject being studied.

All Ryerson Teaching Department/Schools are invited to submit proposals for new liberal studies undergraduate courses. Proposals are assessed annually by the Liberal Studies Curriculum Committee (LSCC), normally in early June. The LSCC makes its recommendations for approval of liberal studies course proposals to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), which then makes the final recommendations for approval to Senate.

All proposals for new liberal studies courses must comply with the objectives and regulations for Liberal Studies, as outlined in [Policy 2: Undergraduate Curriculum Structure \(Section 5.3\)](#).

Every liberal studies course must be classified as an **upper or lower level** course. Lower level liberal studies courses are intended for first- and second-year students. Normally, they will be introductory courses. Upper level liberal studies courses are more focused and intellectually demanding, with the standards of evaluation reflecting those that should prevail at the advanced undergraduate degree level.

All liberal studies courses contain a substantial writing requirement and the quality of student work expected in this component must reflect the level of the course. The writing component is designed to foster critical thinking that:

- Requires the student to carry out an analysis of the assignment's subject and make and justify an evaluative, comparative or explicatory judgment;

- Comprises one or more individually-written assignment(s) that is/are completed out of class and that:
 - Total(s) at least **1200-1500 words at the lower level** and at least **1500-2000 at the upper level;** and
 - Has/have a combined weight of at least **25-35%** of the student's final grade in the course.

Instructors of liberal studies courses are expected to provide commentary on the clarity of organization, logic, syntax, and grammar of student writing, and explicitly indicate that such attributes will form part of the basis upon which the assignment(s) will be evaluated.

Given that a purpose of liberal studies is to develop critical thinking and writing skills, a series of writing assignments is more effective than a single essay. Similarly, short answer and/or essay type questions are more effective than multiple choice tests and exams in developing writing ability. In determining deadline dates for submitting writing assignments, please ensure there is ample time for students to review feedback and to improve their writing skills.

Proposals for Liberal Studies Courses

New liberal studies course proposals must include:

PART 1: Background Information

- ✓ Academic department/school proposing the course
- ✓ Course title and number (obtained from the Undergraduate Publications Editor. The course title that will appear in the calendar must be a maximum of **41** characters including spaces). The title that appears on the transcript and online during the registration process will be no more than **30** characters.
- ✓ Description of the course (no more than one page)
- ✓ An explanation of how the proposed course meets the criteria for liberal studies.
- ✓ Identification as a lower or upper level liberal studies course and a rationale for the designation
- ✓ Course learning outcomes
- ✓ A detailed description of the requirements of the written assignment(s).

Note: Current professional (core) and professionally-related (open elective) courses cannot be submitted as proposed liberal studies courses.

PART 2: Course Outline

- A course outline that conforms to Senate [Policy #145: Course Management](#), Section 4: Course Outlines-Required Information. Refer to the [Guide to Course Outlines and Suggested Template](#) found on the Senate website.

NOTE: The course outline must include a written statement, outlining the designation of the course and directing students to check the liberal studies restrictions (Table A for lower level and Table B for upper level) in the Ryerson calendar. Please do not indicate which program/students cannot take the course. The statement should appear on the first page of the course outline, after the calendar description of the course. Here is the recommended wording:

- *This course is designated as (insert “an upper “or “a lower-”) level liberal studies course. Liberal studies courses **always** have the designation (LL) or (UL) in their course description in the [Ryerson Calendar](#). Courses **not identified** as either (LL) or (UL) **are NOT liberal studies** courses and will not be used towards the fulfillment of a liberal studies requirement for graduation purposes. Please note that **certain liberal studies courses**, due to their close relation to a program’s professional or core studies, **cannot be taken for liberal studies credit** by students in some programs. A list of these programs and the restricted courses is provided in (insert “[Table A Lower Level Restrictions](#)” or “[Table B Upper Level Restrictions](#)”) in the Ryerson undergraduate calendar.*

Part 3: Terms and Conditions for Offering a Liberal Studies Course

- Attach the signed form, “Terms and Conditions for Offering a Liberal Studies Course”. Be sure to include the date of Department/School Council approval.

Prior to Submission

- The Teaching Department/School Council must assess the liberal studies course proposal(s) for academic quality and endorse the course. By endorsing the course, the Department/School Council agrees to abide by the Terms and Conditions for Offering a Liberal Studies Course, as outlined in the attached document.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair/Director of the Teaching Department/School/Program Council to ensure, prior to submitting the proposal to the LSCC, that the course outline complies with the requirements of course outlines (as per Policy 145) and is free of grammatical, punctuation, and sentence structure errors, ensuring coherence and clarity around expectations.

Submission of Proposal for New Liberal Studies Course(s)

The deadline for submission of proposals for new liberal studies courses for inclusion in the Fall 2020 curriculum is **Thursday, May 30th, 2019**.

The Chair/Director of the Teaching Department/School should provide an electronic copy of the proposal(s) to Dr. Stéphanie Walsh Matthews (swalsh@arts.ryerson.ca), Chair of the Liberal Studies Curriculum Committee, cc’d to Elisa Wreford (elisa.wreford@ryerson.ca), Liberal Studies Coordinator.

Assessment and Approval of Proposals for Liberal Studies Courses

The Liberal Studies Curriculum Committee will review the proposal(s) in June and will provide the Department/School with its feedback and a request for revisions to the proposal(s), if required. The

Liberal Studies Curriculum Committee will reassess revised proposals in September and forward its recommendation to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). ASC will assess the proposals and forward its recommendations to Senate. To implement new liberal studies courses for the subsequent fall semester, the proposal must be approved at or before the November Senate meeting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR OFFERING A LIBERAL STUDIES COURSE

Teaching Departments/Schools that propose a liberal studies course(s) must abide by the terms and conditions for offering Senate-approved liberal studies courses, as outlined below. PLEASE READ the below terms and conditions, and sign and submit this form with the liberal studies course proposal.

- The Department/School Council has assessed the academic quality of the proposed liberal studies course and endorses it.
- The School/Department has a RFA faculty or CUPE instructor who will be available to teach the course on a regular basis.
- If the proposed liberal studies course is approved by Senate, the Department/School and faculty member teaching the course accept responsibility for ensuring the course continues to comply with all liberal studies requirements, including the writing requirements, as outlined in Ryerson [Policy 2: Undergraduate Curriculum Structure](#).
 - o The Chair/Director of the Teaching Department/School agrees to send an email reminder each term to all faculty teaching liberal studies courses, reminding them of the liberal studies requirements.
 - o The Teaching Department/School agrees to assess the course periodically to ensure that they remain compliant.

As Chair/Director of the Teaching Department/School, I submit the proposal(s) for the following new liberal studies course(s)

Course code/number	Course Title	Date of Council Approval	Date to be first offered	How often will it run

<p>Indicate the total number of Liberal Studies courses currently being offered by the Department/School and how the Department/School will assure the delivery of all LS courses. Please provide your answer in the space below.</p>
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I understand the terms and conditions for offering a liberal studies course, as outlined above, and agree, on behalf of the Department/School, to abide by them if the liberal studies course(s) is approved by Senate.

Chair/Director		
Print Name	Signature	Date
Faculty Dean		
Print Name	Signature	Date

CHECKLIST (Please submit with proposal)

New liberal studies course proposals must include:

PART 1: Background Information (*please include the following information in addition to the course outline on a separate page*)

- Name of academic department/school and/or faculty proposing the course
- Course title and number (obtained from the Undergraduate Publications Editor)
 - 1) The course title that will appear in the **calendar** must be a maximum of **41** characters including spaces.
 - 2) The course title that will appear on the **transcript** and on **RAMSS** during the registration process must be a maximum of **30** characters including spaces.
- Description of the course (no more than one page)
- Explanation of how the proposed course meets the criteria for liberal studies
- Identification as a lower or upper level liberal studies course and a rationale for the designation
- Course learning outcomes
- Detailed description of the requirements of the written assignment(s)

PART 2: Course Outline

- The course outline conforms to Senate [Policy #145: Course Management](#) (section 4: Course Outlines-Required Information).
- The [Guide to Course Outlines and Suggested Template](#) found on the Senate website was used to create the course outline.
- The course outline Includes a written statement, outlining the designation of the course and directing students to check the liberal studies restrictions (Table A for lower level and Table B for upper level) in the Ryerson calendar.

Part 3: Terms and Conditions

The Terms and Conditions for Offering a Liberal Studies Course (page 5 and 6) is included in the proposal package.

- Decision and Recommendation Information Summary
 - Include Department Council approval date
 - Include the total number of LS courses currently being offered by the Department/School and how the Department/School will assure the delivery of all LS courses
 - Include the date the course is expected to be first offered and how often it will run (i.e. will the course be offered annually, every two years, once every four years, etc.)

Part 4: Administrative Information

- The Teaching Department/School Council assessed the liberal studies course proposal(s) for academic quality and endorse the course.
- The Chair/Director of the Teaching Department/School/Program Council ensured that the course outline complies with the requirements of course outlines (as per Policy 145) and is free of grammatical, punctuation, and sentence structure errors, ensuring coherence and clarity around expectation.