

During Summer 2019, COGE began to review and evaluate syllabi of Connections courses to determine how well they convey to the students what the course is intended to do. The report^[1] produced indicated that most of the sections offered in 2018-2019 have drifted from the stated goals for the Connections category since they were first approved.

COGE is requesting that all Connections instructors review their syllabi and, if necessary, their teaching plans, so that it is clear to students and others how the courses meet the catalog description and the Learning Outcomes established for these courses.

Courses in the Connections category are upper-level courses on topics that emphasize comparative perspectives, such as across disciplines, across time, and across cultures.

As you know, Connections courses are expected to address (teach) the General Education Learning Outcomes of *Written Communication*, *Critical/Creative Thinking*, *Research Fluency*, *Oral Communication*, and *Collaborative Work*^[2] at a more advanced level than is found in First Year Seminar and First Year Writing. For Connections courses, the syllabus is expected to indicate the activities or assignments that will enable students to improve their skills in each of these areas and the comparative perspective the course will investigate.

We greatly appreciate the effort that many of our colleagues are putting into offering these courses, but that effort must be focused more clearly on the reason students are required to take Connections courses.

In order for courses to be offered in Spring, 2020, please ask instructors to submit revised syllabi by Friday, October 18, to coge@ric.edu that make clear the comparative perspective, the learning outcomes the course will address, and how those outcomes will be taught and assessed. Of course, I and other members of COGE will be glad to discuss courses and options with you or with other faculty so that we can offer the best program possible to our students.

Thanks.

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Chair, Committee on General Education (COGE)

[1] <http://www.ric.edu/faculty/organic/coge/Report-summer-2019-assessment-project.pdf>

[2] <http://www.ric.edu/generaleducation/Pages/General-Education-Outcomes.aspx>