

Goals in Essential Studies (ES)

At the same time as you select courses across the four broad fields of Communication, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, and Math/Science/Technology, you will be choosing courses that are designed to help you achieve the following goals.

Goal #1 Thinking and Reasoning [*click here to see critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and creative thinking rubrics*] *You should be able to use a variety of thinking and reasoning skills, apply these skills as appropriate in various situations, and move among them depending on purpose.*

Rationale: The ability to call on a variety of thinking and reasoning skills and choose among them in order to accomplish a range of civic, professional, and personal tasks is a core hallmark of an educated person. By the time you complete your ES courses, you will have encountered opportunities to practice various kinds of thinking and reasoning skills, including as least critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and creative thinking.

You will improve your *critical thinking* skills when your ES courses ask you to do the following:

- Synthesize and analyze texts, issues, or problems.
- Evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of arguments.
- Come to reasoned conclusions or resolutions to problems that includes foreseeing ethical ramifications of choices, broader implications of actions, and alternative solutions.

You will improve your *quantitative reasoning* skills when your ES courses ask you to do the following:

- Apply empirical data to a special problem or issue.
- Draw conclusions based on quantitative information.
- Analyze graphical information and use it to solve problems.

You will improve your *creative thinking* skills when your ES courses ask you to do the following:

- Explore alternate and potentially divergent perspectives on an idea, process, experience, or object.
- Discover ways to confront complex or ambiguous problems, make new connections, and see how things could be otherwise.
- Engage in creative practice as a means to develop aesthetic understanding.

Goal #2 Communication [*click here to see communication rubrics*]

You should be able to write and speak in civic, academic, and professional settings with a sense of purpose and audience.

Rationale: The ability to communicate effectively is a skill that is needed not only on the job but in personal and civic life. Communicating skillfully means being able to write and speak clearly for diverse audiences, and involves learning the conventions associated with each.

You will improve your communication skills when your ES courses ask you to practice the following, in written or oral assignments:

- Present information, express ideas, or construct arguments for particular purposes and audiences.
- Use critical thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to create effective written or oral presentations.
- Present research, cite sources, and format documents in ways that are consistent with different disciplinary standards.

Goal #3 Information Literacy [*click here to see information literacy rubric*]

You should be able to access and evaluate information for effective, efficient, and ethical use in a variety of contexts.

Rationale: Information comes from many different sources, appears in many different formats, and is used for varied purposes. It is important to be able to access information, understand factors that influence its creation and application, and use it effectively and appropriately.

You will improve your information literacy skills when your ES courses ask you to practice the following:

- Access needed information effectively, efficiently, ethically, and legally.
- Evaluate the credibility of information and its sources.
- Use information to effectively and ethically accomplish a specific purpose.

Goal #4 Diversity [*click here to see diversity rubric*]

You should be able to demonstrate understanding of social-cultural diversity and use that understanding to address issues, solve problems, and shape civic, personal, and professional behavior.

Rationale: Because the United States is becoming a more diverse society in a multicultural world, it is important to understand and appreciate social and cultural differences; given the North Dakota Century Code designation of a special mission for UND in education about American Indian cultures and histories, it is especially appropriate for students to consider courses in that area.

You will improve your understanding of and appreciation for diversity when your ES courses ask you to practice the following:

- Use concepts like culture, difference, and diversity.
- Recognize your own diversity in relationship to the larger society, and understand and respect the social-cultural diversity of others.
- Analyze and apply knowledge about diversity to domestic and global issues.