

## **Essential Studies (ES)**

### **What is Essential Studies at the University of North Dakota?**

Essential Studies (ES) is the academic core of your university experience. The courses offered in the ES curriculum provide broad and diverse perspectives on how human beings think and feel, solve problems, express ideas, and create and discover new knowledge. These courses also help you acquire essential intellectual skills: they challenge you to think critically and creatively, reason using numbers and charts, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, find and evaluate information from various kinds of sources, and increase your understanding of the role of diversity in a complex world.

### **Why are Essential Studies courses important?**

UND undergraduates take a number of Essential Studies courses out of the conviction that citizenship in a complex world demands a breadth of knowledge and a wide range of intellectual skills. You are likely to encounter shifting conditions and challenges over the next 50 or more years. This knowledge and these skills will prepare you for a satisfying and effective professional and personal life, and participation in the public life of your community.

### **What is the best way to select Essential Studies courses?**

When you choose your Essential Studies courses, we encourage you to venture into areas that are new, interesting, or arouse your curiosity. By choosing courses that range outside your current experience, you will gain opportunities to explore questions and issues that can challenge you to grow and expand your knowledge and awareness.

Also consider choosing ES courses that complement each other, so that you can extend what you learn in individual courses. By linking courses in this way, you can develop the ability to make connections among them and draw on their ideas and traditions to address the complex, multi-faceted questions of life in the 21st century. Your coursework should help you prepare you to actively engage in contemporary issues of public importance.

You might want to pay particular attention to your choices of special emphasis classes (described under “Essential Studies Requirements”). Each special emphasis requirement highlights a particular area of learning considered to be important by the university. For example, the U.S. diversity requirement offers a unique opportunity for you to learn more about American Indian histories and cultures, which is especially important to UND since the North Dakota Century Code gives the university a particular mission in education about American Indians. Some of your special

emphasis courses may be met within your major or with a class recommended by your major department.

Finally, you might want to consider meeting some of your Essential Studies goals in Honors, Integrated Studies, the American College of Norway, Study Abroad, civic engagement courses, or through another non-traditional option. Programs and courses such as these can provide an opportunity to focus intensively on Essential Studies goals and meet ES requirements. But at the same time, a non-traditional option can also provide a great experience. Such programs are worth further exploration.

### **Breadth in Essential Studies**

#### **Why will I take courses under four different categories of subjects?**

All Essential Studies courses contribute to your breadth of knowledge. In fact, possessing a breadth of knowledge is one hallmark of a well-educated person. The ability to draw on a variety of fields of knowledge is important for professionals in all fields; it is also crucial for understanding ourselves, our communities, and our larger world. In UND's Essential Studies program, you will complete coursework that introduces you to academic fields within Communication, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, and Math/Science/Technology. Taking courses across a wide range of subject-areas will expose you to the way that people think and create knowledge in a variety of disciplines. For example, your ES courses will give you the opportunity to explore what it means to think like an artist or art critic, like a psychologist or sociologist, and like a geologist or chemist.