

General Education Reflection

Isaac L. Kenyon

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Over the course of my semesters I've taken at Iowa State University, I have taken many general education classes. I will still remember my first large lecture hall class with two stories! While these classes may not relate directly to engineering, there are multiple concepts that you can learn from. I'll be talking about four different general education courses I have taken and how they improved my education and learning.

The first general education class that I will talk about is RUS 3750, Russia Today. In this class, we explored the history of Russia and eventually ended on the current state of the country today. We learned about the culture, society, and government by watching movies, reading parts of books, and learning about the art. I learned how Russia is similar to the U.S. but also very different. I think from this class, I learned how the workers in the Russian economy think. If I were to need to work with a Russian citizen on an engineering project, I might have a better understanding of how this person thinks.

The second class I'll talk about is ARCH 3210, History of U.S. Architecture. In this class, we focused on a handful of cities and how they transformed throughout time, how the downtown, suburbs, separation, and city projects are planned. We touched on

how certain groups of people have been favored throughout time. From ARCH 3210, I've taken away that engineering projects have a real-life effect on people. When talking about the construction projects taking place within cities, thousands of people had to move. Engineers often purely focus on the technical aspects, but it is important to look at how individual people may be affected by your engineering efforts. The effect of engineering on society is an ongoing issue that can always be improved on.

The third class is SOC 134, Introduction to Sociology. This was my first class in a large lecture hall, so I will always remember it. This class was very focused on the forces of social change and laying out how and why society is the way it is. It looks at these subjects at a very high level, and it shows points in history where big changes happened. I think sociology can help me in my engineering field by understanding how society might react to a product. An example right now would be the field of AI. You could go around and ask a sample of people, and I bet you would get a wide variety of results ranging from "it will change the world" to "it is destroying the world." This is a sociological thing that can be studied. I think having taken this course lets me reason from both points of view and helps me understand why each side feels the way they do.

The last class I would like to talk about is HD FS 2760, Human Sexuality. This was an interesting class, and in the sociology class, it was hit very briefly from a law perspective. Before starting this class, I really knew nothing about human sexuality and was oblivious to what was actually studied within this field. It touched on things from marriage laws, surgical procedures, studied genders, and psychology. I think during this class it helped form thoughts about the state of human sexuality in the current day and age. From this class, I gained the ability to understand where people may be coming

from, even if I can never truly personally understand, which is an important thing, being able to work with anyone and have respect for them as an individual. It can help with my career and life in general.

Overall, my general education classes have been a good augment to my main engineering classes. They have allowed me to take a variety of classes and use this knowledge to apply in my career and life. I've also enjoyed all of the professors in my general education classes. The professors helped me understand that it is important to have these classes challenge your thinking, and I enjoyed that they are very open to letting us students select what may pique our interest.