

LETTERS

Foundation Document Criteria for General Education Certification

Approved by FGEC December 2016

Requirement Purpose

An educated person seeks “out of the best books words of wisdom” (D&C 88:118). According to BYU’s Aims of an Education, students should develop “a lively appreciation of artistic, literary, and intellectual achievements of human cultures.” The Letters requirement addresses this aim by inviting students to approach texts not merely as delivery systems for content but as

1. aesthetic objects in which the aesthetic component is essential to its understanding,
2. modes of encountering and evaluating diverse perspectives,
3. means of historical, philosophical, or cultural understanding,
4. and sources of spiritual insight.

Learning Outcomes

In the process of completing this requirement, students will:

1. demonstrate skills in critical reading as they analyze primary historical, philosophical, theological, or literary texts as artifacts worthy of study in themselves,
2. demonstrate they can interpret and appreciate texts in their contexts, understanding a writer’s cultural background, purpose, audience, and rhetorical strategies (like argument or figurative language),
3. show they can evaluate texts for their power to shape culture and their spiritual insight.

Course Characteristics

Courses fulfilling this requirement will introduce students to various means of analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating primary texts. (Reading summaries or other secondary sources is insufficient for this requirement.) These texts should be a significant emphasis of the course and should have literary, philosophical, religious, historical, or cultural significance. Letters courses will use the language of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation in their supporting documents.