

Critical Inquiry Seminars

Background: the Ad Hoc Committee for General Education recommended that CCSU adopt a Critical Inquiry Seminar, required for all new students (transfers and first-year students). According to the March 2012 report, “The **Critical Inquiry Seminar** will be the hallmark of a revised General Education Program. Designed to emphasize critical thinking with a strong guidance in writing and informational literacy, Critical Inquiry Seminars should be taught by faculty from a wide variety of disciplines with representation from all four schools of the university. Faculty members may emphasize their own disciplinary expertise but are encouraged to consider interdisciplinary subjects as well as their own particular intellectual interests that may fall outside their discipline. Faculty should take the students through the process of critical inquiry—close observation, discernment of patterns, finding and evaluating sources, marshalling evidence, formulating conclusions, presenting those conclusions both orally and in writing, setting one’s own conclusions into the context of others’ thoughts on the subject. Critical Inquiry Seminars will better prepare students for collegiate work [and] foster a sense of community among students.”

Proposal: Critical Inquiry Seminars include the possibility of allowing the requirement to be filled by one 3-credit course, two linked 2-credit courses, or one 4-credit course. Critical Inquiry Seminars cannot be restricted to majors. CIS may and should be offered in all four General Education categories and as Gen Ed electives; a student’s CIS course will count in one of the Gen Ed categories (or as a Gen Ed elective) and thus does not add additional credits to the General Education program.

The following list of goals integrates learning outcomes for critical thinking, information literacy and the First Year Experience program. These courses, as noted, are designed to integrate informational literacy, critical thinking, and/or oral/written communication, as well as current First Year Experience learning outcomes.

Students will be able to:

- Organize, interpret, and evaluate evidence and ideas within (and across) disciplines
- Draw reasoned inferences and defensible conclusions
- Solve problems and make decisions based on analytical processes
- Find, access, retrieve, analyze, synthesize and use (web-based and other) information effectively and ethically
- Practice academic honesty and exhibit ethical conduct
- Have a sense of membership and engagement in the CCSU community
- Have comfort and confidence as students at CCSU, including knowing how to access CCSU resources
- Take personal responsibility for their academic performance
- Have academic purpose, including understanding of the role of general education
- Be able to utilize the degree evaluation to monitor progress toward graduation
- Possess skills for independent learning, self-motivation and academic persistence
- Practice effective collegiate learning/study skills

Further Details: We recommend a faculty member with sufficient release time to oversee CIS.