

Committee on Educational Policy

February 23, 2023

In attendance: Faculty: Robert Benedetto, Chair; David Hanneke; Mekhola Gomes; Chris Kingston (via phone); Geoffrey Sanborn. Provost and Dean of the Faculty: Catherine Epstein, ex officio. Students: Isaiah Doble '25; Zane Khiry '25. Recorder: Nancy Ratner, Director of Academic Projects.

Rob Benedetto, chair, called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. in the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, and the committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting.

Latin honors

Rob shared a request from the Registrar to institute the following policy for this year:

In recognition of the fact that the College's new Latin honors policy was passed after the spring 2023 add/drop deadline when graduating seniors could no longer adjust their schedules to meet any remaining categories of the breadth requirement, we are introducing a one-time exception for seniors who are graduating in May 2023. For this cohort only, cross-listed courses completed during any semester at Amherst may count towards the breadth requirement in either area in which the course is listed. For example, a course listed in both ARHA and HIST can be counted as either ARHA or HIST, regardless of which instance is recorded on the student's transcript. Each course can only be counted once towards the breadth requirement so that the aforementioned course could not be counted to fulfill both the arts and humanities categories of the breadth requirement. All students nominated for Latin honors by their major department in May 2023 will have their records evaluated for relevant courses, so no action is required on the part of students. We will not be making any changes to the student's historical academic record.

The committee agreed to allow this one-time exception to the Latin honors policy.

Course approvals

Moving to course proposals, the committee approved a set of courses with very low caps as "one-time only" for the coming year after the department chair agreed to raise with the department the issue of developing courses with larger caps for future years. The committee also approved courses that require students to have achieved a minimum grade as prerequisites but wondered if the department might agree to adding to that requirement the words, "or instructor permission," which would more closely match the actual process used by the department. The committee also discussed the issues of thesis-support classes and of team-taught upper-level seminars and whether these were an appropriate use of college resources. Geoff said he would contact the faculty offering team-taught upper-level seminars. The committee added as future agenda items a conversation about the use of grades as prerequisites, the appropriateness of allocating faculty teaching time to thesis support classes, and possible guidance for teaching team-taught courses.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.