

494 General Education Reflection  
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Throughout my time at Iowa State, I've had the opportunity to take many interesting courses outside of the college of engineering. While some of those courses were required in order to check boxes to graduate, there were several very interesting classes that I found to be more relevant to my education and personal development than many of the engineering classes that I took over the past four years.

My freshman year, I was involved with the Freshman Honors Program, and through this involvement I ended up taking an honors seminar titled "Unplugged". This seminar was focused on the necessity for people to get away from technology when they can in order to reconnect with themselves and the nature surrounding them. I think that this was important and will play a key role in my life after graduation. As my job will involve me working in front of a screen for eight hours a day, it will be important for me to get away when I can to get outside and let go of the stresses of modern life. Not only will this be healthy for me in general, but it will tie directly in to my ability to solve problems as an engineer: if I'm able to de-stress regularly by getting away from technology, I can be more effective when I sit back down the next day to tackle a new problem.

My sophomore year, I enrolled in Speech Communication 216, Great American Speakers and Speeches. This class was a look at the entirety of American history through the lens of the influential speakers and speeches that shaped this country into what it is today. This class taught me the impact that a powerful speech can have and highlighted why strong communication skills are vitally important in order to be successful in any career path. Many of the problems that society currently faces – climate change, the COVID-19 virus, political instability around the world – have parallels throughout history, and by understanding the leaders who took charge and solved these problems, we may be able to more effectively break through the barriers we currently face. Reading and learning from their speeches is an important step to understanding exactly how these leaders were able to rise up and motivate people to fight through the problems they were faced with. This is also true on a much smaller scale: by delivering effective speeches to teams in the workplace, a good leader is able to motivate and drive their teams to greater heights than most would think possible. This class had a big impact on how I understand spoken communication and will continue to impact my life for years to come.

My senior year, I had the pleasure to enroll in History 390, World Military History. This class, much like my class on American speakers and speeches, has completely turned my view of history on its head. The number one thing that I can connect this class to in modern life is warfare around the world, and while I have no plans to personally experience warfighting on any scale, having this historical perspective is critical for understanding exactly what is happening in our world today. It will connect to my future work in security penetration testing, as it taught me a lot about military strategy and tactics, which are comparable to the process of searching for vulnerabilities in a target before attempting to exploit them and gain control.

In closing, my general education courses have had a major impact on not only my collegiate career, but how I think about and view the world around me.