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General Education Reflection Essay
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General Education Reflection

A portion of Iowa State's required curriculum is the required general education elective courses. When I first signed up to take some of the elective courses, it was purely to fulfill the requirements, as they were subjects that I didn't have an interest in. But in taking these courses I could improve myself as an engineer and gain further insight into the background processes that enable us to live while still working towards my degree.

In my traditionally engineering-based classes, I was tasked with solving specific problems or building systems to improve existing structures. But when I took the class "Politics and Society," I was tasked with ascertaining the current state of our political system and different ideologies that explain why politics are the way that they are. It was a very interesting class that enabled me to think about not just engineering systems but social systems. Continuing on another class that gave me a similar experience was "Money, Banking, and Financial Institutions," as well as the pre-req "Principles of Microeconomics." Within these courses, we learned about investments, interest rates, and general good money practices. It is easy to use a bank as nothing more than a store of money, but after taking this class, I was able to understand why banks exist in the first place and how to use my money both safely and wisely. I believe that the topics I had learned in this course will be a valuable asset to me as I move forward into the workforce and try to start saving for retirement. Not even mentioning the core principles of economics I learned. Taking a dive and thinking about economics at this scale allows me to explore some of the possible effects that could result from scarcity or low-performant devices, which could be useful if I find myself on a more sales-orientated career track. Another class that allowed me to grow as an engineer was "Introduction to African American Studies." Within this class, I learned about the current state of Africa, as well as the path that led up to the current African political environment. As a black engineer, I think that this helped me understand more of my own culture, enabling me to widen my horizons in terms of cultural appreciation and tolerance.

Overall, Iowa State has helped me develop my skills in a non-technical manner by allowing me to apply these non-traditional classes to my degree. I think that by taking these classes, I have become a more well-rounded individual allowing me to prosper beyond my career.