In the past few years, I have taken multiple courses to complete my general education credits that have helped me think more about social, global, and economic issues in our world today, and how those could be applied to real world engineering problems. Throughout my time at Iowa State, I took the classes History of the American City and Greek Civilization, while transferring credit for my AP World History class from High School. In each of these classes, I learned about a broader scope of issues than what may be covered in the technical portions of my engineering classes, to help round out my education.

The first general education course I got credit for was actually completed in High School, being my AP World History class. During my time taking the course, we would have open discussions talking about the different political, economic, and technological effects of major world events occurring. We learned about how different countries or political powers grew over time and what led to such a rapid growth over early human civilization. I thought this was very interesting, since it helped teach me about why some outcomes may have happened like they did, since it was my job to come up with some deductive reasoning, which translated really well into my engineering classes after High School.

The next class I took was History of the American City, where I learned about the development and design of cities and parks from the colonial period, all the way up to the modern day. This class was especially interesting, because similar to World History, it showed me how certain aspects of our culture changed over time, and what the impacts to those choices could have been. For the final essay in the class, I chose to write about the history of segregation in Washington D.C., which enabled me to think critically about current societal issues and how those have evolved throughout the last few centuries. History of the American City also taught me how to view the technological development of a city in another lens, outside of the purely technical view an engineer may have. After taking this class, I feel like I have a much more open approach to thinking about design practices and how they can change over time.

The final general education course that I took was Greek Civilization, where I learned about the history of Ancient Greece from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period. We focused on the writings of Herodotus and Thucydides, which led to multiple open discussions on how we interpreted their stories, and how they could have contributed to the history of Greek culture. It was very fun to try and interpret the meaning and significance of different passages from texts that were written in an ancient period of Greece. I think that also had many applications towards Engineering today, in the sense of making use of the information that you are given, even if it is not fully complete.

Overall, these general education classes helped to round me out over my four years studying Electrical Engineering at Iowa State University. After taking closes such as World History, History of the American City, and Greek Civilization, I think that I am a much more rounded out student. I noticed a trend of taking all history classes, which I think shows that I want to learn more of our past and analyze it, so that we can better understand why we do things the way we do in the modern age.