

General Education Reflection

By Steven Ragan

Within my 4 years at Iowa State University (ISU), I have had the opportunity to experience a couple of different general education courses. So, it's important to discuss two things. General education courses are taken, and what I've learned in each and the connections between them and engineering problem-solving. This paper will discuss two main courses: HD FS 276 Human Sexuality and RUS 375 Russia Today. Let's start with Human Sexuality.

In Human Sexuality, I learned more about being open, accepting, and accommodating others. Learning this was important for my engineering career for one main reason. Currently, there is still some close-mindedness in the world, meaning many people might feel unable to share a problem they have and leave them facing it alone. So, learning more about being open, accepting, and accommodating others will help me approach problems that people might not feel comfortable discussing with a broader view and enable me to produce solutions that fit it. For example, someone once uncomfortable with sharing a medical problem might be able to tell me and let me find a solution. Now that we understand how Human Sexuality has affected me, we should move on to Russia Today.

Russia today taught me a lot about freedom of speech since the class covered how it was more than somewhat restricted in the Soviet Union. Learning about restricted freedom of speech helped me with my problem skills in one main way: Adding experience with freedom of speech. Now that I have this experience, I can solve problems where restricting speech on platforms might be necessary for safety reasons. For example, currently, I am working on a project where people query an AI with a cybersecurity-related question, and the skills I learned are helping me determine what questions I should be allowed to ask.

In conclusion, I've learned problem-solving skills from my general education classes about freedom of speech and broader audiences. These skills will help me in the future since I plan to enter a field with many problems. I think these skills will also help me outside of my career since current problems in the world are related to these topics.