

Kevin Nguyen

Cpr E 494

Spring 2022

General Education Reflection

During my time here at Iowa State University, I've taken the advantage of taking some classes that I would love to share my experience with that are not engineering orientated. These courses gave me a grasp of what it is like to take a non-engineering class and take interest in the social standpoint of the world. The common trend with the classes I took was mainly to discover culture in a sense and how other people live their lives differently than mine. I took general education courses that were not only of my interest but also were able to excel my knowledge to learn about the study of people around me. As an MVP scholar here at Iowa State University, I felt the obligation to learn about my upbringing and hear about others that could be like me. The general education courses taught me this by not only discussing different types of issues and topics but also by giving me experience with working with diverse people whose views I would normally never see in my core courses.

One of the first general education courses I took at Iowa State was a political science course taught by Dirk Deam. The course was PolS 335: Science, Technology, and Public Policy. This was a course that taught the importance of public policy for scientific discovery and technological advancement through the context of the space race. It taught me to see beyond the engineering solution by putting into context the necessity for a particular goal or motivation. In this class we studied many old ideologies, such as Plato and Aristotle, and essentially just learned from what they had to say about society and politics. Dirk Deam teaches socratically, so

in this class there were a lot of deep discussions with each other about ethics, society, politics, and how they all relate. Learning in this way taught me how to communicate effectively and efficiently with many different individuals in different majors and backgrounds, as well as taught me about ethics through different perspectives. Beyond the engineering solution, an engineer will constantly run into ethical dilemmas and should know the 'right' thing to do when they encounter such a dilemma, which is why learning about ethics and different ideals is so important.

During my later years of college, I decided to mix it up a bit from the political science courses I was taking and took Relig 210: Religion in America. I am not particularly religious but Learning about the different types of religions was always something that interested me. After taking this course, I have a better understanding of what the major religions' beliefs are, and a historical context of why those may be their beliefs. This is incredibly important for an engineer because as an engineer, you will most likely be working with people of many different religions and ethnicities and having an understanding of what their beliefs are may help you to better work with them.

Additionally, during my last year of college I took an anthropology course, Anthro 201: Intro to Cultural Anthropology, in which I studied different cultures and the historical importance of understanding these different cultures. Similar to the religion class, this class will help me as an engineer to work with a wide range of individuals by giving me a better perspective of why different cultures may have particular customs or issues. I think getting to know the people you will be working with towards an engineering solution is very important and understanding their cultural or religious background can help you better communicate and relate with them. Engineers and scientists are responsible for trying to solve many of the nations and the

worlds contemporary issues. One of these issues is reducing the carbon footprint through the promotion of green engineering. In order to promote such a thing as 'green engineering' there needs to be effective communication among all involved groups (e.g. the engineers, the public, the government, energy companies, computer companies, etc.) and I believe that my involvement

In general, education courses have prepared me extremely well. Most of my general education courses were political science courses taught socratically and this teaching method prepared me to effectively communicate with whoever I need to. Another issue, which I believe the same skills are required as before, is the need for the United States to re-do their infrastructure. This is a huge project that needs to get done, but as I learned in my general education courses, for an engineering solution to be achieved there needs to be some push or public policy to make it happen.