

LIST OF GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSES:

1. Philosophy 230
2. Religion 210
3. Economics 101
4. International Studies 235
5. German 201

REFLECTION

GE1: What are your current short/long term goals? You may include your “ideal” career in engineering or your preferred working environment.

My current short-term goal is to graduate with a decent grade and to find a full-time position somewhere outside of the state which I am both qualified for and challenged by. My current long-term goal is to find a fulfilling career as a software engineer in which I am given the opportunity to both grow as an engineer but also as a leader. I am looking for an environment that supports lifetime learning and cultivates a culture of strong work relationships and teamwork. I hope that my time here at Iowa State provides me with the means to fulfill these goals.

GE2: What have you learned in your general education electives, which allow you to formulate and evaluate engineering solutions in problem solving and innovation beyond the technical aspects in problem solving? How do general education classes help you to think about an engineering problem?

I feel that my general education electives were largely a chore to complete. Perhaps it was due to my choice of specific general education classes that I did not feel largely benefitted by them. Of my general education classes, I feel that German helped me the most; though I am not fluent in German, I feel that the experience in attempting to learn a foreign language helped a lot with both verbal and nonverbal communication. There is great value in learning to communicate one thing in many ways, in order to better share an understanding. Anyone who attempts to learn a foreign language will encounter a moment when they don't know the right word to communicate their thoughts, and they are then forced to find other ways to communicate what they mean to say. There are many times in engineering context where I find myself trying to communicate a technical concept but cannot always find the words to do so. I sometimes find that it helps to take a few steps back and try to communicate in a different way. I feel that taking German and learning part of another language helped quite a bit in that aspect. As an aside, German was not technically offered as a general elective for Software Engineers (nor were other foreign languages), but I took it and had it approved by the advisor as a General education class.

GE3: Relate what you have learned in general education classes to seeing beyond the engineering solution in problem solving and innovation. What are some other dimensions to consider and what impact do they have in an economic, global or societal context?

International studies, religion, and philosophy are all classes that can help understanding ways to empathize with peers. Empathy is an extremely important trait to have when approaching a solution to

a problem held by another party. Engineers should attempt to see how problems and their solutions will be viewed by all stakeholders. If engineers are able to empathize and communicate with their benefactors, they can avoid many problems. In a global context, this becomes even more important. Often we can be blinded by our own culture, and it helps to understand other cultures before assuming how a certain problem should be approached.