

## General Education Reflection Essay

At Iowa State, we engineers are required to fulfill general education requirements as part of our program. I believe that through these classes, I have gained a more well-rounded education. The classes I took include Introduction to Philosophy, American Indian Studies, Classical Mythology, and a sequence of classes on Music Technology.

All these courses play a part in helping me find engineering solutions beyond the technical aspect. Through Philosophy, I gained a better grasp of analyzing the logic of a statement or situation, which can be applied to ethical or even technical situations. Through American Indian Studies and Classical Mythology, I gained better understanding of other culture's spiritual beliefs and history. It is important to be mindful of people's heritage and how their beliefs shape their views when working with a diverse group.

Through the Music Technology sequence, which included Creative Digital Music, Computer Music Programming, and Sound Synthesis Design, I learned to apply engineering problem-solving to totally different technology than the norm. Particularly in Computer Music Programming, I was able to apply computer science concepts to a visual programming language for musical performances. These classes were good exposure to applying critical thinking to a different situation than typical engineering challenges in my field.

In Classical Mythology we learned about widespread myths and legends through the Greek and Roman cultures. If there's one thing I took away from that class, it would be that a culture's people shape its mythology. The Greeks and Romans created legends to account for natural phenomenon, and in that case, the mythologies flowed into each other as the Roman Empire developed. In our increasingly diverse country, many more people's beliefs and viewpoints are brought together. Therefore, it is my belief that we can understand each other better if we have more knowledge about other cultures. This applies to anyone, not just professionals such as engineers.

In American Indian studies, we learned about the phases of government policy towards American Indians over the course of US history and their effects. A common theme was corporate interest, such as a natural resource on reservation land, driving some tension. One example was the failed Desert Rock coal mine in New Mexico, which was faced with opposition by Navajo concerned with the ecological effects. This struck me as a lesson in responsibility. We as professional engineers should strive for solutions that minimize adverse effects such as damage to the environment.

Overall, I think my general education courses provided a well-rounded education outside of the rest of my curriculum, which was mostly technical. I will be sure to remember the lessons I learned in these classes when I am applying engineering knowledge to real-world problems.