

During my time at Iowa State, I took five classes that qualified as “general education.” These five include ME 220 *Globalization and Sustainability*, MUSIC 246 *Computer Music Programming Design*, AGRON 206 *Introduction to Weather and Climate*, POL S 333 *Democracy and Diversity in America*, and POL S 334 *Politics and Society*. My general education experience at Iowa State has been a unique one to say the least. Instead of going for “easy A’s” or classes with a “light workload,” I decided to choose classes that would enhance my perception about my surroundings, make me practice how to communicate my ideas clearly, and practice skills like writing, reading, and other essentials that my core engineering classes did not focus on.

I think the best “gen-ed” that explored all those categories was POL S 333, *Democracy and Diversity in America*. The whole premise of the class was to go through readings from the Federalist Papers to Alex De Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, to Martin Luther King Jr’s various writings and have an open discussion about how America’s version of democracy and representation changed over time. Before every class we were required to read from an assigned passage, and write a 500-word essay, so we would be able to partake in the discussions that took most of the lecture time. The professor kept tabs on who spoke during which classes and would call on those who had not spoken in a while so everyone would have to say something at least once every couple weeks. That class really helped me home in on my learning process, and how to translate what I was reading into my thoughts that would end up on a paper. The class also helped me to develop my writing skills, of which I had not really practiced extensively since high school. The exams in class were just writing papers, giving, and defending our positions on certain topics related to the readings we have done up to that point. Of my gen-eds I have taken

so far, this one was certainly my favorite, and I hope to get a similar experience out of the final gen-ed I am scheduled to take in the summer of 2021, POL S 334.

MUSIC 246, *Computer Music Programming Design*, is another unusual gen-ed. This class really showed me what computers can do the right programs. Music, making and/or writing it, has always been an interest of mine as evident by my participation in the Iowa State Marching Band, extra-curricular drumlines, and stage performances in high school. This class gave me an avenue to express myself and develop a new skillset I didn't really have before. Also, to be successful, I had to learn an entirely new computer program and toolset that I had never used before, ProTools. This gave me the chance to practice my sharpness and adaptability when learning new things, especially by working on how to identify what the differences were between the important and less-important parts, so speed up the learning process.

ME 220, Globalization and Sustainability, gave me an overview of how the global market works, especially from an energy perspective, and how renewables affect that. We covered topics like energy transference over distances, how best to get energy to places what need it, where energy collection is best for different types or renewables, and how the grid will have to change to accommodate a renewable future. It was interesting to learn the pros and cons of each renewable energy, where each type is geographically most efficient, and what types were best for developing countries in particular. It was also interesting to learn about different technologies each used, and how I as a Computer Engineer might work on and develop new and even better technologies in the future.

AGRON 206, , was the first general education class I took, and I think it was a good starting point. It was interesting to learn about how weather works, which is something that affects all of us every day, but we may not give much thought to. Also, we went over the different

tools used to measure different types of data like rainfall, ground moisture levels, and nitrogen levels and how that is affected by the climate and weather in the area. Again, this was a case where the class may not have directly applied to what I was learning in my core classes, but it was nice to learn about a topic that I was familiar with, but didn't necessarily know the specific of.

Overall, I am happy with the gen-ed's I decided to take during my time as a student, and I'm happy I chose to take classes that covered a wide-range of topics. While I am overall pleased with my core Computer Engineering experience, the general education one has been refreshing, enlightening, and satisfying.