Origins and Evolution (O & E)

This document is meant as a guiding tool for faculty proposing courses and for committees reviewing course proposals. It offers a blueprint for best practices for creating GE courses and highlights the aspects of the course that will be considered in review. Course developers can use this document as a potential tool for backward design in creating a new course or revising an existing course for the GE. Reviewers will use this document to provide feedback about the perceived degree of development of connections between course content, assignments, and the GE Theme.

A course proposal includes two main elements: the student-facing syllabus and the submission document that is read only by reviewers. The syllabus should clearly describe the connections between the GE Theme, course content, and assignments. The GE goals and expected learning outcomes (ELOs) should be listed, with a brief statement explaining why and how the course provides students with the tools to achieve these outcomes. The course submission document should point to these connections and explain and link the course's specific approach to the GE Theme via its activities and assignments.

Key elements of a O&E GE theme proposal are:

1. A brief, student-friendly explanatory paragraph in the syllabus immediately following the required listing of the GE category goals and ELOs that details the specific framing or focal system and places it in larger context.
2. A list of topics, questions, readings, and/or assignment descriptions linked to this framing of Origins & Evolutions.[1]
3. Assignments that assess student attainment of the Theme ELOs that, in the aggregate, have weight that makes them integral to passing the course[2].

Proposals without these elements will be sent back for revision. Revision requests may be broad suggestions for reconsideration, requests for explanation, or specific points of content or format (with these latter often characterized as "contingencies"). Courses that meet the three key elements but do not meet the guidelines laid out in the rubric below might also receive requests for revisions that must be resolved before final approval.

[1] Common practices include listing a focal topic for each week, module, or session of the course. Full citations of readings should be included. Descriptions of assignments can be helpful.

[2] For example, if the final exam is the only assignment where the students demonstrate their mastery of a specific ELO and has a weight of 10% of the overall grade, a student can receive a good grade (possibly A-) without showing mastery of that ELO.

Course Review Rubric: Origins & Evolution

Expectations are in bold on the left-hand column. The other cells of each row provide a qualitative assessment of the ways in which the course proposal materials address that expectation. The perceived strength of the alignment between course materials and the expectation increases from left to right.

	Not Met	Emerging		Met
Engage in critical and logical thinking about *Origins & Evolution*.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials describe opportunities for critical and logical thinking, but not specifically about concepts within *Origins & Evolution*	Course materials address concepts within *Origins & Evolution* in limited, narrow, or introductory ways	Course materials address concepts within *Origins & Evolution* using varied content and highlighting open areas of inquiry, diverse interpretations, and innovative perspectives.
"Advanced Study" of *Origins & Evolution*.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials describe advanced, in-depth study, but concepts of *Origins & Evolution* are not the primary emphasis of the course or of the advanced elements within it.	Course materials introduce *Origins & Evolution* in an introductory way, relying mostly on sources that are syntheses or reviews of original writings, research, or creative work.	Course materials describe opportunities for students to engage with *Origins & Evolution* through critique and review multiple original works, research findings, or other primary materials in addition to secondary materials.
Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to *Origins & Evolution*.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials describe opportunities for students to identify and describe their experiences with concepts relevant to *Origins & Evolution*.	Course materials describe opportunities for students to synthesize disciplinary or other approaches to concepts related to *Origins & Evolution*, but these are not connected to student's own experiences.	Course materials describe opportunities for students to identify and describe their experiences and academic approaches for understanding concepts relevant to *Origins & Evolution* and provide opportunities for synthesis and comparison across approaches, experiences, and concepts.

	Not Met	Emerging	Met	
Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work related to *Origins & Evolution*.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials describe opportunities for reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, but these do not focus on *Origins & Evolution*.	Course materials describe opportunities for reflection, self-assessment, or creative work related to *Origins & Evolution* but these are only minimally part of the grades and structure of the course.	Course materials describe multiple opportunities for reflection, self-assessment, and/or creative work on *Origins & Evolution* that are integral to the course and its assessment strategies.
Student reflections build on prior experiences with *Origins & Evolution* by revisiting these in new and challenging contexts.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials describe few opportunities for engaging with prior experiences or understandings of concepts embedded in *Origins & Evolution.*	Course materials describe opportunities for engaging with prior experiences or understandings of *Origins & Evolution* but do not describe ways in which these can be connected to new contexts.	Course materials describe opportunities for engaging with prior experiences or understandings of *Origins & Evolution* **and** ways that these prior understandings can be revisited or extended into new contexts.
Illustrate their knowledge of the time depth of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture[3] by providing examples or models.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials address the time depth of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture in superficial or limited ways.	Course materials describe ways in which students will learn about the time depth of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture, but do not connect these to the specific focus of the class in a meaningful way.	Course materials identify opportunities for students to illustrate their knowledge of the time depth of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture in relation to the focal system.

[3] A course may cover only some of these systems (e.g., universe or planetary systems only; biological and physical systems; human culture and biological system, etc), depending on its focus.

	Not Met	Emerging		Met
Explain scientific methods used to reconstruct the history of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture[3] and specify their domains of validity.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials refer to scientific methods used to reconstruct e.g., the history of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture, but do not provide opportunities for students to learn these in detail.	Course materials describe opportunities for students to engage with scientific methods used to reconstruct e.g., the history of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture, but do not address their domains of validity.	Course materials describe ways students will learn and apply scientific methods used to reconstruct e.g., the history of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture and ways that they will learn about the domains and limits of validity for those methods.
Engage with current controversies and problems related to questions about *Origins & Evolution*.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials identify current controversies and problems related to *Origins & Evolution* but does not connect these to the focal topic.	Course materials identify current controversies and problems related to *Origins & Evolution* and the focal topic but the students do not critically engage with them.	Course materials describe ways that students critically engage with current controversies and problems related to *Origins & Evolution* for focal system.
Describe their knowledge of how the universe, physical systems, life on Earth, humanity or human culture[3] have evolved over time.	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials provide opportunities for learning how the universe, physical systems, life on Earth, humanity or human culture have evolved over time but these are only minimally part of the course and its assessments.	Course materials provide opportunities for learning how the universe, physical systems, life on Earth, humanity or human culture have evolved over time but these are only minimally connected to the focal system.	Course materials provide opportunities for learning how the universe, physical systems, life on Earth, humanity or human culture have evolved over time **and** how these changes impact or are impacted by the focal system.
Summarize current theories of the origins and evolution of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture[3].	Not evident in materials provided.	Course materials describe opportunities for learning about a few current theories of the origins and evolution of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture.	Course materials describe opportunities for learning about a broad array of theories of the origins and evolution of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture.	Course materials describe opportunities for students to summarize and critique current theories of the origins and evolution of the universe, physical systems, life on earth, humanity or human culture.