# Designing & Teaching
# Scholarship in Practice Courses

*"The overall result of adding this new fourth area will be, in the spirit of the best definitions of a complete education, to foster a more broadly prepared, aware, and academically well-grounded University of Maryland graduate."*
"[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)"
Outline of the University of Maryland Plan for General Education, December 2010

Scholarship in Practice courses fall in to the [Distributive Studies](#) category of the University of Maryland [General Education](#) Program. This category ensures that students experience breadth and depth in their educational program. Each student will complete two courses from each of the four Distributive Studies categories (for a total of eight courses):
- Natural Sciences
- History & Social Science
- Humanities & the Arts
- Scholarship in Practice

It is expected that each student will take one course in their major area and one course that is unrelated to their major to complete the Scholarship in Practice requirement for General Education.

As this is a new course category, new courses will be designed and existing courses will be examined in the context of the expectations of this category.

All courses in the UMD General Education program are grounded by learning outcomes (below)
We encourage you to print this page and keep it open as you read the sections outlined on page 2 as these outcomes anchor the courses as well as the discussion in this document.

**The Scholarship in Practice Learning Outcomes**
At the completion of this course, students will be able to . . . ."
1. Demonstrate an ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship.
2. Articulate the processes required to bring about a successful outcome from planning, modeling, and preparing, to critiquing, revising and perfecting.
3. Demonstrate an ability to critique existing applications of scholarship in order to learn from past success and failures.
4. Demonstrate an ability to collaborate in order to bring about a successful outcome.
5. Recognize how an application of scholarship affects or is affected by political, social, cultural, economic or ethical dimensions.
6. Produce an original analysis, project, creative work, performance or other scholarly work that reflects a body of knowledge relevant to the course.
7. Effectively communicate the application of scholarship through ancillary material (written, oral, visual and/or all modes combined).

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## Supporting Documents and Resources

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The CTE-Lilly Faculty Fellows is a program sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and directed by the Center for Teaching Excellence.

This document is to help faculty develop and submit courses for the Scholarship in Practice category. Within the guide there is information about how to design a SP course in your discipline, how to design a course for non-majors, how to write and submit a successful proposal, and how to implement your course such that students make gains in learning outcomes.

# What is Scholarship in Practice?

*"In its most general conception, Scholarship in Practice speaks to the process whereby abstract knowledge is transferred into some tangible form. Through courses in this area, students will learn by applying a body of knowledge to create professional products or works of art. Areas such as architecture, business, education, and journalism will offer courses in this area that lead to products such as architectural designs, new technologies, innovative publications, new computer software, business plans, advertising campaigns, and educational curricula."*

[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

Academic disciplines have characteristic methods, processes and practices. This is as true of theoretical disciplines as of applied ones, of scholarly disciplines as of those that make art. Engineers, poets, mathematicians and historians go about producing knowledge, engaging our imaginations, solving practical problems, and enlarging our understanding in characteristic ways, even if there is no one right way for any given discipline.

In many courses, students come away with only a glimpse of what it means to work in the discipline. SP courses aim to give students a more authentic experience of what it means to be a biologist or a philosopher or a painter or a journalist... In many SP courses, students work toward results of the sort that professionals in the field produce, going through the stages of idea generation, planning, organizing, applying disciplinary knowledge, getting and giving feedback, collaborating, revising, and sometimes starting again, as good practice in the discipline would require. SP courses put a stronger emphasis on process than more traditional lecture courses, so that students come to grasp the practice of a discipline by engaging in the practice.

Many SP courses will be "applied" in the sense of aiming at "practical" results. However, possible outcomes of a SP course vary as widely as disciplines do: they could be as abstract as a mathematical theorem, as concrete as a sculpture, or as practical as a program that a local community might implement to address an urgent need.

What distinguishes SP courses is the way they immerse students in a rich intellectual apprenticeship, guided by the practices of particular disciplines and fields.

Briefly, the vision of Scholarship in Practice is:
- **Authentic Experience** - SP courses help students learn about the nature of a discipline by participating in an authentic experience of the discipline's work. While adjustments will be called for to take account of the fact that students are not professionals. SP courses stress active learning.
- **Process** - SP courses typically place far more emphasis on process than traditional courses. Many SP courses are based around a multi-stage project whose completion calls for and reinforces the tools and methods of the discipline.
- **Emergence and Discovery** - In most SP courses, students learn to deal with the unexpected and to incorporate insights and solutions that emerge from the process of the course. As is characteristic of disciplinary work, students will not simply know in advance where the process will take them.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship** - Students will have opportunities to depart from existing knowledge and to innovate or create new knowledge based on their own discoveries. They will be encouraged to take risks with their thinking. In many cases the course experience will engage students in the production of an original analysis, project, creative work, performance or other scholarly work.

# Why Practice?

*"Overall, these courses can give students an appreciation for how successful outcomes can be defined and assessed, how feasibility tempers and corrects optimistic intentions, and how realistic achievement through applications of knowledge always requires discipline and hard work."*

[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

Not every course will provide all of these benefits, but the SP category has the potential to provide many benefits to students, faculty, the university and the larger community.

**Benefits to Students**
- Foster innovation in environments in which risk-taking is expected.
- Help students make informed decisions about unfamiliar fields of study.
- Encourage students to take ownership of their own learning process.
- Emphasize an orientation towards process, through which students learn to cope with setbacks and surprises.
- Include authentic work that in virtually all disciplines calls for giving and responding to feedback, revising, rethinking, and carrying a project to completion over an extended time.
- Call for students to collaborate, providing a guided opportunity to hone their skills at goal-setting, negotiation, and cooperation.
- Highlight skills that are vital in the workplace. SP courses can provide a bridge between the classroom and the larger world, making students more marketable through experience with coping with deadlines, integrating critical reviews, and negotiation of teamwork dynamics.
- Combine practice and experience with theory and analysis. Students will learn to bring disciplinary knowledge to the solution of real-world problems, such as poverty, health disparities, and creation of affordable and sustainable design for housing and other products.

**Benefits to Instructors**
- Allow faculty to explore new pedagogical models
- Provide novel and extensive opportunities to engage and mentor students.
- Promote one's own discipline, and give faculty the opportunity to share valuable knowledge, skills, and experience gained from doing authentic work,
- Accentuate learning that extends beyond the textbook.
- Immerse students in the professional life of a faculty member, to provide students with an awareness of the identities of professionals and scholars.
- Offer opportunities for faculty to collaborate with students in the production of knowledge.

**Benefits to the Campus and the Larger Community:** SP courses will
- Be part of a broader initiative for authentic work that will help shape pedagogy at other institutions.
- Prepare students with practical skills and experiences that will prove beneficial for potential employers.
- Offer students opportunities to work with non-University communities to address real-world problems.

SP courses that place a student in the context of "learner-practitioner" allow the student to take their knowledge and skills beyond the university campus and into the real world, thus, contributing to the enhancement of his/her society, community and nation at large, as a good and responsible citizen.

# The Challenges of Practice

*"This new fourth area reinforces and enhances learning in the humanities, natural sciences, and history and social sciences with courses that put these areas of learning into practice. In the fine and applied arts, students learn to tackle the challenges associated with realization of an artistic vision, be it a stage production, symphony or skyscraper. In the language arts, in order to demonstrate competence in a foreign language, a competence that increases in importance every year, students must rewire their internal cognitive function through diligent study and practice…. In the realms of technological innovation and entrepreneurship, this area will serve to strengthen the ability of students to confidently approach and identify sustainable solutions to complex real world challenges facing our nation and world, such as economic development, global poverty and hunger, and responsible management of our natural resources"*
[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

This document outlines design strategies and helpful hints for faculty designing SP courses.

As SP courses offer new environments for instruction and learning there will be opportunities for thinking about course design in new ways. As impetus for creative thinking and as a foreword to the design section of this document, we offer here some challenges for consideration.

**Three broad challenges of SP courses include:**

1. **Conceptual Challenges**
   - SP courses are intended as vehicles to do "**authentic work**" in a given discipline. However, it is usually difficult to define exactly what real authentic disciplinary work is; it is often ground for vigorous debate within a discipline. Instructors will have the flexibility to define how they identify authentic work and must decide which skills are important in the discipline as applied to their course
   - How will faculty and students transfer the knowledge of a discipline into the **real world**? Given that the classroom is not the authentic environment of the discipline, there are limitations to practice that must be considered, or that invite creative strategizing from faculty. Doing authentic work in the classroom can be expensive as well.
   - These courses also invite critical thought from students regarding the authenticity of their practice, which is not usually the case in lecture-based courses. They may come into the course with **higher expectations** than for a traditional lecture-style course.
   - Developing a SP course for **non-majors** requires letting go of the desire to convey all the basic information of your discipline, as you would in a survey course. Instead, you will introduce just enough knowledge to enable students to participate in a process authentic to your discipline.
   - Re-imagining an **existing course** as SP requires a change in focus from content to process. Focusing upon the learning outcomes will make it clear that adding a "project" to an existing course will not transform the course in the expected manner.

2. **Facilitation Challenges**
   - The role of the faculty instructor shifts substantially in SP courses. The traditional role of instructors as delivering knowledge – and students consuming knowledge – Shifts. **Facilitation of student practice is the core of the course,** and this process requires a new set of skills, activities, and perspectives from faculty.
   - Faculty will have less control over material, with limited information to convey and seemingly unlimited pathways to student practice. Courses move in different and unexpected directions, and **faculty members are expected to manage and support these diverse directions.**

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- **Courses may seem to be "too large"** to effectively facilitate hands-on experiences and learning. They may also seem **"too short,"** in that one semester is not much time to learn the work of a discipline.
- Course enrollment will include both **majors** – students who have indicated interest in the practice of a discipline – as well as **non-majors** – students who will likely need to be convinced about the worth of experiencing disciplinary practice.
- Perhaps most importantly, the relationship of faculty members and students shifts substantially. **Students will become active learners**, which can threaten some commonly-held notions of authority for faculty members. However, faculty members become in a sense more valuable for their advice and support, as students repeatedly attempt to "do" authentic work that requires them to receive critiques and develop resilience.

3. **Learning Challenges**
- SP courses are often open-ended, in that their "products" emerge over time, with student input and engagement. This provides a different classroom learning environment for students, one which requires their **adjustment and ownership.**
- Learning will not be through rote memorization or replication of facts and figures, but through **application of concepts to real problems.**
- Students will need to consider their own interests and **take risks** to try new skill sets. They will also need to grow accustomed to being critical of their own work in a campus setting in which material that gives them the **"freedom to fail"** can seem threatening.
- In a sense, students will learn to trust faculty as facilitators of their learning, even when both faculty and students are engaged in practice that is rooted in discovery with **unclear end points, instead of clear answers to an exam.**

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# Designing a Scholarship in Practice Course

*"Courses in Scholarship in Practice offer students opportunities to exercise intellectual skills that complement learning in the liberal arts and sciences. These courses require students to shape and define a desired outcome and to select and combine knowledge from relevant areas of learning to achieve that outcome. Such courses encourage "reverse engineering" that is often involved in successful models and best practices, as well as an examination of failed attempts."*
[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

We imagine several alternative architectures for SP courses, presented below to provide starting points for future courses. A common thread linking SP courses is their use of activities, projects, and work that immerse students in the application(s) of selected knowledge and skills: carefully chosen activities that guide students through authentic experiences and situations, generating tangible products or developing insights that are accepted "units" of success/achievement within each discipline.

- For example, an appropriate product for an Engineering SP course might be a hovercraft; for a Journalism SP course it might be a well-researched story; for Philosophy it might be a well-honed idea presented as an essay; and for many disciplines it might be an analysis or critique of an existing plan or policy or some version of a case study that requires application of knowledge and skills. The "product" here is a very general term intended to convey a wide range of possibilities, not necessarily some physical object. Indeed the product itself is not nearly as important as the process used to generate it: conveying this process and giving students opportunities to experience it are important goals of SP courses, an emphasis that differentiates them from many traditional courses.

The number and nature of the activities, projects, and work will vary considerably from course-to-course and among disciplines, but one common theme is that most/all disciplinary practice involves a similar cycle: submitting work for feedback, accepting feedback, making appropriate revisions, and resubmission. This cycle should be built into the architecture of an SP course in a manner that reveals the practice within a discipline.

We envision several general ways of organizing courses around immersive activities:
1. One application activity spans the entire semester
   - Generating within the one semester course a stand-alone product or experience in process, or;
   - Contributing to a megaproject that spans several semesters or years
2. Multiple smaller application activities
   a. Each targeting distinct, selected competencies where insight from one project informs the next.
   b. A series of activities that are increasing complex are completed as stages building upon each other and toward a capstone activity (an "escalator" approach, or a "scaffolded" approach)

These course designs may be anchored within a course or serve as the culmination of courses – such as in a capstone course within a major or the second in a series of courses.

The activity may be experiential where the work of the students generates a service or contributes to a mission such as in an internship course or any course with experiential component.

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Any course where students are involved in the actual practice of a discipline will be appropriate for Scholarship in Practice, such as a research or thesis course.

See **COURSE DESIGN MODELS** document with design ideas drawn from existing SP courses (approved or submitted), as well as numerous brainstorming sessions among the CTE-Lilly Faculty Fellows.

 **To design your course:**
1. **Consider the Scholarship in Practice Vision** – how will this look in a course in your discipline?
2. **Design the Course** – Is this a new course or a previously existing course? Review the Backward Design approach to course design, and focus design on the SP learning outcomes.

## 1.   Consider the Scholarship in Practice Vision

How does the SP vision fit into the "big picture" course design?

SP courses will ask students to apply relevant knowledge toward the creation of a project, product, or work of art just as professionals of the discipline would develop. They will give students an appreciation for how successful outcomes can be defined and assessed, how feasibility tempers and corrects optimistic intentions, and how realistic achievement requires discipline and hard work.

The Scholarship in Practice vision as articulated in Transforming General Education and SP Learning Outcomes will drive the course design.

**To begin course development, envision your "big picture" course design in narrative form:**

Envision your course design - What is the "big picture" plan for the course? It may be helpful to draft your course idea in narrative form to guide the overall design process. A course narrative will also be useful for articulating the course design in the application for General Education approval process (see later). A course narrative may include a general description of the scholarship that will be addressed, the context in which the scholarship will be applied, and insight into the overall student experience in the course. The narrative will illustrate that the SP course design is centered on engaging students in practices authentic to the course discipline and that the course is not a traditional lecture based "introduction to the discipline" course.

Settling on the vision of your course and drafting a narrative that highlights the course's connection to SP, will lead directly to consideration of the student activities and course assessments (see **BACKWARD DESIGN**).

See examples of Course Narratives in **EXAMPLES**

## 2.   Design the Course

Each course approved for the SP category is expected to meet the SP learning outcomes. To establish a course aimed at learning outcomes requires planning and thought.  The course design process known as "backward design" will help in this planning process.

Backward design takes the *focus off* the instructor-delivered content and puts the *focus on* student-centered learning outcomes. The outcomes based approach of Backward Design is very useful in thinking about SP. This is a new course category for the UM General Education Program. SP

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courses are *defined* by the SP learning outcomes. The best way to create an SP course is to begin by thinking about the outcomes.

**Backward design follows the three steps enumerated by Wiggins and McTighe (See RESOURCES):**
1. Identify the desired results : The Learning Outcome
2. Determine acceptable evidence of learning: Assessment
3. Plan learning experiences: Instructional Activities
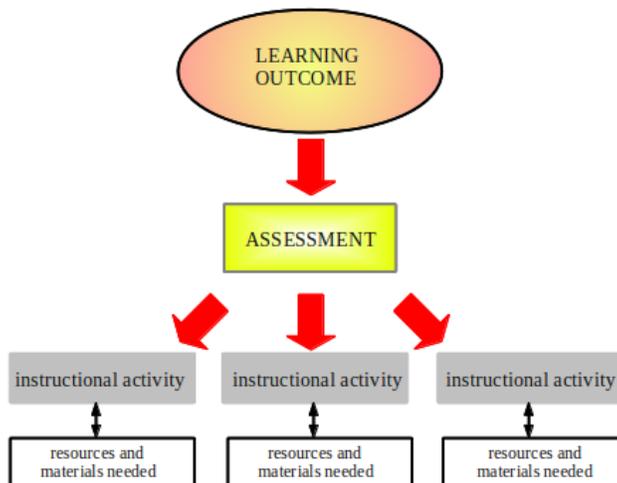


### 1. Identify the desired results : The Learning Outcome

Learning outcomes are used to drive course design. Well-crafted learning outcomes promote effective teaching because they focus the curriculum and instruction toward a specific goal. Learning outcomes are used as a basis for student assessment and are helpful to faculty in gauging the effectiveness of the course design and guiding curriculum modifications. Learning outcomes reveal the value of a course or degree program and provide evidence for the regional accreditation process. All courses in the UMD General Education Program are grounded on learning outcomes that were drafted by faculty focus groups. Each course in the program is expected to be designed such that students make gains in these outcomes.

A learning outcome describes what the student **will be able to do (or do better)** as a result of having completed the course. Learning outcome statements are **action oriented**, address behaviors and abilities that students gain from the course experience, and are designed to be measurable.

There are seven SP Learning Outcomes (See Page 1 of this document). The first is required for all courses. Additionally, four outcomes must be addresses in any SP course.

When creating an SP course, it may be helpful to consider the overall big picture idea of the course in the context of the outcomes. Determine which outcomes will be addressed by the course. In this process it may be helpful to restate the selected outcomes in the context of the course design.

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Key questions to consider when focusing learning outcomes on the context of your course:
- What activities have the potential to be the most powerful to allow students to make gains in a particular learning outcome? Is there a central activity (project/process) that could allow students to make gains in many/all of the outcomes OR Is there a set of related activities that together would allow students to meet many/all of the outcomes and engage students in the process of work in the discipline?
- What type of discipline knowledge will students need to be successful? How will they gain this knowledge? (Research? Lectures? Reading? Prior course work?)
- What types of activities are essential in the course experience to reveal to students the authentic work of the discipline?
- What type of assessments will be used to provide feedback to the students such that they have opportunities to revise their thinking and experience growth during the course?
- How will you determine that students are making learning gains? While in an academic course this is traditionally done with quizzes and tests, can you design an assessment strategy that is more authentic to the work and practice of the discipline?

Putting the learning outcomes into the context of a course can be challenging (See **LEARNING OUTCOMES** Best Practices).

When restating SP outcomes in the context of your course, be sure to keep the essential nature of the outcome intact, that the outcome be action oriented and that it be measureable.

## 2. Determine acceptable evidence of learning: Assessment
For each learning outcome, the instructor must determine the parameters for success in learning.

Consider Learning Outcome #1: At the completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate an ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship.

Example of this outcome restated for a course in Architecture Design:
Students will select, critically evaluate and apply principles of design to an architectural design project.

A. What will indicate *to you* that students have met this outcome?
- From this you will design <u>summative assessments</u> – assessments that will reveal that the outcome has been met. These assessments will typically be offered at the end of the course and will be high stakes (significant course points), such as a final creative work, a final project, a final report or some specific problems on a final exam. Depending on the discipline and specific learning outcome, some combination of these types of assessments may be needed in order to properly evaluate the students' achievement of all of the learning outcomes. (see Assessment section below)

Example: Students will design a sustainable dorm room

B. What learning activities will be appropriate for enabling the students to progress toward this end? How will you measure students' success at the completion of each learning activity?
- From this you will design <u>Formative assessments</u>. This step of backward design gets down into the day-by-day level of the course design. The instructor must determine

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the knowledge and skills the students need in order to make gains in the learning outcomes. What activities will support student gains and the overall course design? What types of "formative assessments" will reveal students' progress? What opportunities will students have for feedback from the instructor? (see Assessment section below)

Example: Students will participate in two design projects – the second project (above) will be informed by work on the first project. Each project will be presented to the students in stages where work at each stage will be assessed and discussed. The work will be iterative such that feedback to early projects will inform later work. The evidence used for assessment will include various authentic type activities: precedent studies, analysis of design report, alternatives report, presentation of a model, drawings, reflective essays, critique and discussion sessions.

## 3. Plan learning experiences and instruction: Instructional Activities

Learning activates will be planned in the context of the design of the course and to set up students to make gains in the selected learning outcomes.

Overall it is expected that students will be immersed in the process of practice that is authentic to the discipline. In planning learning experiences think about how to make the student experience mirror to the greatest extent possible the processes of the discipline where scholarship is practiced. Establishing and authentic practice experience may be more straightforward in some disciplines vs. others (Engineering vs. Philosophy for example) or depending upon if the students have prior knowledge and skill in the discipline (majors vs. non majors course) or depending upon the course size (large enrollment vs. mentoring of a student on an independent research project).

  A. What high stakes (significant points and effort) activities will be the focus of the course?
     - *The course is designed around one application/project.* The grade on the completed project will serve as high stakes activity. This activity would be designed to allow assessment of most or all of the selected learning outcomes.
     - *The course is designed around multiple smaller application activities.* The grade on the final project that is informed from insight of prior projects is likely to be a high stakes activity. This activity would be designed to allow assessment of most or all of the selected learning outcomes.
  B. What low stakes (fewer points, learning and risk taking opportunities) and weekly learning activities will be developed to help students learn the facts, skills, insights that are necessary to complete high stakes activities?
     - It is expected that SP courses are set up in a fashion to allow student learning to develop through stages common to most/all disciplinary practice: submitting work for feedback, accepting feedback, making appropriate revisions, and resubmission. Giving low stakes credit for initial stages encourages student effort and allows opportunity to take risks with their work.

SP courses focus on student engagement. There are many active learning strategies that have been shown to be successful in engaging students (See **ACTIVE LEARNING** and list below). Your challenge will be to select/design activities that relate to your course design and support an experience that allows students to immerse in the practice that is authentic to your course discipline.

Example from Architecture Design Course: See SP Course **EXAMPLES:** ARCH270

# Existing Courses - Are changes required to meet the SP category?

*"courses in Scholarship in Practice foster an awareness of potential impacts of new or altered practices or products, of consequences for those immediately affected, and of distant and future repercussions. Courses in application and production should also teach an appreciation for craftsmanship as well as an ethic of responsible productivity"*
[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

Disciplines where practice is at the heart have not traditionally been included in General Education. The SP category embraces the intellectual synthesizing of the applied disciplines and corrects an imbalance within the broad education of University of Maryland students by including applied disciplines such as business and engineering.

Many existing courses where practice is at the core of the course design will be appropriate for the SP category. Courses where students are involved in experiential learning, internships and research experiences are clear candidates for the SP category.

**Check list for instructors who are considering their existing courses for the SP Category:**
1. Course focuses on students immersed in placing scholarship of the discipline in to practice in a manner that is authentic to the discipline.
   ● For example in a creative writing course on poetry students spend time creating poetry by reading and interpreting poems, writing poems, critiquing their own work and the work of others, and re-writing.
2. Course is focused on students making gains in the SP Learning Outcomes.
   ● For each of four learning outcomes (including SP LO1 that is required) there are activities that allow students to develop expertise during the semester and there are formative (feedback type) assessments and summative (final cumulative type) assessments that reveal student learning gains.
   ● The Syllabus and grading scheme is focused on active learning work that represents students experiencing practice that is authentic to the discipline.

# What Scholarship in Practice is *Not*

In traditional courses, instructors often choose a textbook and follow its progression and activities throughout the course. This type of instruction is usually focused on conveying facts rather than teaching skills and processes, and so it is unlikely to be useful in an SP class. In addition, since many traditional courses do not teach students the skills necessary to perform authentic scholarship, simply adding a project to the end of such a course would be unsuccessful, as the students would not have the tools necessary to complete it adequately. Since an effective SP course will likely be backward-designed from its major goals, it is unlikely that adding a project to a traditional course will yield a successful SP course. SP courses are not intended to usurp traditional, introductory-level survey courses. While they might cover some of the same topics as a survey course, their practice focused nature will make it unlikely that they can cover most of the topics treated in a survey course. Thus, lower-level SP courses are not *necessarily* appropriate stepping stones for upper level course in the discipline. In contrast, however, SP courses may delve into selected topics in much greater depth than is possible in a survey course.

# Assessment of Student Learning

*Scholarship in Practice courses "teach the stages required for the pursuit of a tangible goal through planning, modeling, drafting, testing, revising, perfecting, and assessing. They emphasize the critical need to adjust and adapt a project to the contingencies of time and place and to the particular population involved"*
[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

Planning assessments for the SP course may at first seem daunting. This section delves more deeply in to how to get this done – without added steps – in the context of the SP course design. SP courses challenge us to conceive of assessment of student learning in new ways. We distinguish *formative assessment* that assists students in learning throughout the course, from *summative assessment*, that measures student's fulfillment of learning outcomes as a result of their participation in the activities of the course. Formative assessment is at the heart of Scholarship in Practice.

SP courses "give students an appreciation for how successful outcomes can be defined and assessed, Overall, they should give students an appreciation for how successful outcomes can be defined and assessed, how feasibility tempers and corrects optimistic intentions, and how realistic achievement requires discipline and hard work" (Transforming General Education)

Assessment can be defined as the process of obtaining evidence to support inferences concerning the attainment of learning outcomes

1.  Assessment Process
    In teaching we often use testing as an assessment measure. In SP courses we are challenged to consider assessment in the context of disciplinary practices. Hanauer et. al. **(**see **RESOURCES**) describe authentic assessment as assessment that situates the knowledge/skill to be assessed within its disciplinary context. This approach fits very well into the SP mission and course design.

For example, consider an SP course focused on architecture design. Students apply design principles to the architecture of a chair to meet SP Learning Outcome #1. In a "design a chair activity," students' knowledge of human body dimensions is essential. The instructor could test students on whether they had memorized the dimensions of the human body. That test, however, abstracts the knowledge from its context and does not reveal anything about the practice of a designer. If we take an *authentic assessment* approach – the instructor will assess students' use of their knowledge in the design process. In this manner we determine a student's knowledge of human body dimensions in a context that is meaningful or authentic to the use of that knowledge in the practice of the discipline.

Authentic assessment, therefore, takes place within a disciplinary process. It yields information about the student's command of knowledge and abilities to perform that process. This information is significant to both instructor and student. It offers feedback that guides students in their development. When course activities and assessment are iterative, the assessment process can help students learning develop in a systematic and informed manner.

For example, in the architecture course, students present their chair designs both visually and orally to a panel of critics who offer feedback on students' ability to communicate about design concepts. When students present their design of a second project, the design of a sustainable dormitory room, student presentation is thus informed by the critique of the prior work.

When building formative assessment into the SP course design, faculty will need to determine associated points contributing to the course grade. Ideally early activities will be "low-stakes"

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(fewer points) conducive to encouraging students as they are learning, and then the points will "ramp up" as students develop increasing mastery.

For example, in the architecture course, critiques on the first design project count only a few points towards the semester grade. In the second half of the semester, when students undertake the second more complex project, they are expected to engage the now familiar design process, armed with insights gained in the first iteration. For the second project, critiques are weighted more heavily, reflecting the students' increased abilities to apply scholarship in practice.

**What are the benefits of *authentic* assessment?**
- An assessment activity that reveals what it is meaningful.
- Engages students and motivates them to learn. Knowledge and competencies are presented within the context of a discipline-specific activity. Students make a connection between their level of knowledge and skill and their ability to succeed at the task.
- Models professional activity. Disciplinary practices tend to be complex and difficult. Authentic, assessment when used as a formative assessment offers diagnostic information that provides feedback that is useful in student development of understanding and skill.
- Predicts student success in actual disciplinary activities. Although we are primarily focusing on the development of SP courses for non-majors, one potential outcome of these courses, oriented to freshmen and sophomore students, might be capturing student interest in pursuing the discipline as a major.
- Increases metacognition, helping students to think about their own mental processes. This assists students in developing an important life skill – learning how to learn.

2. Evidence from SP Learning Outcomes
   What types of student work are appropriate as vehicles for authentic assessment?
   What type of evidence will serve as a vehicle to reveal student gains on SP outcomes?
   This was discussed in the context of the SP Design process with an example from an architecture course. It is important to note that designing assessments may seem overwhelming. In the context of an SP course one process or project may serve to assess a variety of SP learning outcomes.
   For example: In a philosophy SP course, students produce a written analysis that results from a process of philosophical hypothesis generation, exploration of relevant literature, "peer review," and revision. The written analysis is the evidence. The analysis is assessed for students ability to critically evaluate and apply relevant areas of scholarship (SP Learning Outcome #1), students ability to bring about a process that requires revising and perfecting (SP Learning Outcome #2) and producing and original analysis (SP Learning Outcome #6).

   Evidence is the result of a student assignment that is defined in the context of work authentic to the discipline.

3. Methods and Measures to analyze evidence for learning gains.
   What criteria will be used to examine evidence for student learning?
Often the criteria are articulated in a chart or a rubric where levels of student performance are indicated. Faculty may also choose to demonstrate learning by pre and post testing.

Each learning outcome will have particular challenges when articulating criteria that indicate a learning gain.

Example:_ consider how the architecture design course meets SP Learning Outcome # 5: "At the completion of this course students will be able to recognize how an application of scholarship affects or is affected by political, social, cultural, economic or ethical dimensions."

- Students are asked to consider the impact of sustainability on their decisions throughout a design process (Example of one Instructional activity to meet this outcome).
- Students give a final presentation to a panel of critics. The students discuss their rational for key design decisions in their project. They are required to present visual material, such as diagrams, in support of their design process (Evidence).
- The student's decisions will be analyzed for student gains in recognizing how an application of the architecture design process is affected by political, social, cultural, economic or ethical dimensions. Critics will use a rubric to score student success in making design decisions in response to sustainability. Students will be scored on a scale from very weak (no consideration of sustainability) to very strong (5 or more decisions made on the basis of sustainable design strategies) (Assessment method).

As SP courses are designed to engage students in work authentic to the discipline, there will be a variety of activities that may be reveal evidence of student learning gains in SP outcomes.  This might include projects, discussions, experiential experiences, research. Often work will be done in teams. Assessing students' gains in collaborative skills (SP Learning Outcome #4) offers a special challenge (see **GROUP WORK**).

As formative assessment is recommended as an essential component in SP courses there will be a challenge to the faculty to develop manageable mechanisms for frequent assessments. One option is the use of peer review. Having students evaluate each other as a step of formative assessment not only supports the assessment mission but engages students in another process that is authentic to many disciplines. Providing clear criteria for the review in a rubric will contribute to the ease of assessment and the articulation of expectations to the students.

# Revealing the Design in the Course Syllabus

*"In addition to fostering students' intellectual development, the new Scholarship in Practice category also supports the overall purpose of the "Distributive Studies" category by expanding students' exposure to academic endeavors across the large, diverse institution that is the University of Maryland."*
[Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland](#)

The course syllabus is important as it represents the course design to the students as well as to the SP Faculty Review Board. A clear articulation of the goals, expectations of students and course design in the syllabus will communicate to the students and the faculty board the intention of the course.

## The SP Syllabus
*\*Refer to the University Guidelines for Syllabi at [http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/syllabus.html](http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/syllabus.html)*

It is essential that the SP course design is reflected in the following sections of the syllabus:
- Course Title
- Pre-requisites
- General Description of the Course
- Statement of Course Goals and / or list of Student Learning Outcomes
- Course Schedule, Due Dates
- Expectations for Students
- Grading Procedures

The calculation of the final grade should reveal that the SP activities are central to the student experience in the course. It is recommended that SP "points" be dispersed in a manner that reflects a progression of learning (some low stakes assignments building to higher stakes assignments for example)and that SP assignments titles reveal the authentic nature of the work (vs. listing the activities as Assignment 1,2 or 3 that suggest academic vs. authentic activity).  In the course schedule it is recommended that there be an obvious path indicating the progression of learning within the course schedule and in the accumulation of course grade points.

Alignment of the course design and the syllabus construction will have numerous benefits.
- For students, having a clear idea of how the course activities fit into the context of practice in a particular discipline will go a long way toward promoting 'buy in' and will foster an understanding of how, for example, individual activities or assignments fit into the bigger picture of the process that these courses are designed to immerse students in.
- For the SP Faculty board, clarity and alignment will be important as they determine whether the proposed course meets the goals of SP.  In the General Education course approval process; there is also an excellent opportunity to articulate this alignment in the introductory narrative section of the application form and in the responses to the Learning Outcome questions.  These sections should explain how the course design will immerse students in authentic activities and the process of a particular discipline as well as how students will be held accountable and receive credit for their work.

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# Implementing the SP Design in your Course

*"Courses in Scholarship in Practice offer students a chance to innovate by exploring the material basis of ideologies and exposing the ideology upon which material reality rests."*
Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland

Running a process-oriented course requires a level of individualized attention to students that could be challenging for class sizes larger than 30 or 40. This challenge can be lessened by strategic design features and adopting additional strategies such as:

- Setting up work as group vs. individual projects. This will lessen the grading (fewer projects) and with purposeful design will allows students to make gains in SP outcome 7 related to collaborative learning. (See **GROUP WORK** document)
- Peer review – student groups evaluate the work of other groups or individual students evaluate each other.
- External review – by other faculty in the department, people in industry, perhaps the public.
- Interim assessment – for semester-long projects, to support the learning process and to reveal how practice in a discipline occurs, it is important to set up the work towards a final project in stages with evaluation at each stage. This aligns well with one SP goal (emphasis on iterative process of practice) and also helps to spread out the work load on the instructor.
- Undergraduate Teaching Assistants/Learning Assistants – One intriguing option here could be using students in an upper level SP UTA course as assistants/facilitators for a lower level SP course (e.g. one targeted at non-majors) = $(SP)^2$. Refer to the Office of Undergraduate Studies Guidelines for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants: http://www.ugst.umd.edu/documents/TAGuidelinesUGST.pdf
- Graduate Teaching Assistants – Expensive, yes, but probably necessary for some SP courses.
- Use the campus on-line learning system for communicating with students, to support student group work, to share and highlight information, to direct students to resources, etc.

**Helping students adjust to a new way of learning** – SP courses represent engaging and thought-provoking ways to deliver course content that many students will come to enjoy and appreciate; however, these courses require a shift in teaching and learning styles for instructors and students alike. Moving from the comfort and predictability of the traditional lecture-exam format course to the more engaged, participatory, and praxis-oriented style of learning required of SP courses will be unfamiliar and possibly uncomfortable for some students, particularly those who are new to the university setting or unsure of themselves academically. To help students transition into this course approach, we have provided the following recommendations to use as your courses evolve:

1. ***Set great expectations and make them transparent to students.***
   - **Clarify your expectations of students and help them value the SP course approach by revealing the course design to the students in the syllabus and in the criteria for grading (rubrics).** Clear and transparent expectations will help students to connect the work of the course with your desired outcomes for the course and will help students understand early on not only what they will be learning, but how they will be learning and why this learning is important. Furthermore, if students understand the learning objectives, and if you use these objectives to create course activities and assessments (see **BACKWARD DESIGN** document), then significant ambiguity about teaching and grading will be eliminated.
   - **Provide a syllabus that reveals the course design and the mechanism by which students will be held accountable for their learning**. In the course syllabus clearly

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articulate the course design. Give authentic and meaningful names to student assignments. The points awarded for student work should reveal how the learning experience builds within the course. Include learning outcomes and linked activities.

- **Highlight the role of formative assessment in the course design**. Students learning will develop as they receive feedback and revise their work (see **RESOURCES** document).
- **Use best practices for group work**: If gains in collaborative skills (Learning Outcome 4) are part of the course design, set up the groups and the group projects using best practices for group work (See **GROUP WORK** document). Ensure that the project will benefit from the insights and efforts of more than one student. Make the project relevant – in the SP course- make the project authentic to the course discipline this will allow students to see the relevance of the work in the context of the discipline.
  Set up the project to relate to other course learning outcomes such that students see the relevance of the work to the overall course. Ensure that there is a mechanism to give students feedback and to hold individual students accountable for work within a team. Ensure that there is a clear statement in the syllabus about how individual students will be assessed and provided opportunities to make gains in collaborative skills.

## 2. *Communicate the value of the course design*

Create buy-in for the SP concept by sharing the following features of a SP course to students. For example students will have the opportunity to:

- Participate in active learning opportunities in the context that is authentic to the course discipline.
- Develop skills and insights that are transferable to careers and graduate school.
- Take risks, create, apply, evaluate, and innovate.
- Create an original product using processes of professionals in the field.
- Develop and exercise the skills of collaboration required to bring about large-scale outcomes, as well as the need to convince and recruit others to invest in or accept a new idea or vision.
- Develop a meaningful understanding of the practices of a discipline.
- Address complex real world challenges facing our nation and world.
- Develop an appreciation for craftsmanship as well as an ethic of responsible productivity.

## 3. *Help students along the way with opportunities for practice and guidance.*

Develop the course to ensure that student learning is supported. Set up your course such that students are doing work that is regularly assessed. You may find that some of techniques of assessment are better suited to one type of course over another, or that as your course evolves, different techniques and partnerships become more worthwhile. Use what is most authentic to your discipline and is most useful to support your course design.

- Determine how students are progressing (Formative Assessment)
  - In class mini-assignments
  - Think-pair-share questions
  - Short assignments that prepare them for longer, more involved assignments
  - Supervised class time to work on projects
  - Examples of the type of work you are looking for
  - Role playing scenarios
  - Case studies discussions

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- Blog or on-line journal with periodic instructor and/or peer feedback.
- Provide feedback to help students formulate their ideas and revise their work. Feedback can come from the instructor or other relevant personnel
  - Peer evaluations
  - UTAs
  - Grad TAs
  - Other faculty in your department
  - Industry partners
  - Community members
- Clarify grading criteria in lists or rubrics – for transparent grading and to communicate feedback
- Provide examples of model work.

## 4. *Create a positive environment that allows students to take risks.*

Personalize student experiences in your course to help you maximally engage students and positively influence their learning experiences.

- Get to know your students through class discussion and background surveys, which will allow you to assign tasks that are appropriate in complexity and difficulty to the level and background of your students.
  - create educational experiences for the students you have in class which require them to utilize information you have taught as well as their professional and personal skills.
  - feel valued as members of your community of scholars
  - emphasize how each student's different background brings a variety of talents and assets to the class
- Create an open and friendly classroom environment that encourages students to share their experiences and value their class time. This will create a classroom culture or learning, and help to limit the influence of overly talkative or dominant students while helping the more shy students to engage in the course.
  - Indicate early on in the course that you expect all students to participate in the course discussions and activities.
  - Start classroom discussions with easy to answer questions for a "warm up."
  - Consider using clickers, twitter, or other readily available technologies to elicit responses from the entire class.
  - Use think-pair-share or small group activities to promote discussion and participation.
  - Follow up with quiet students after class via email or in person, letting them know that you have expectations of them, and helping them to prepare to participate.
  - Give students the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback to you about their learning experiences a couple of times throughout the semester.
- Communicate your expectations clearly
  - Assume students want to learn
  - Use the syllabus to show students how graded work contributes to course goals
  - Remind students about course goals often and in many ways
  - Shape comments to students in context of what they need to know to move forward
  - Communicate priorities

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- Respect and Embrace Diversity
  - o Use questionnaires to learn about your students
  - o Establish groups for team projects that capitalize on the diversity represented in the class
  - o Use role play to encourage students to investigate issues from a variety of perspectives

**5.  *Use and recommend campus resources.***

On occasion, you may encounter students who are struggling to succeed in a SP course for a variety of reasons. Whether they are not used to the new approach to learning and teaching, they are not yet mature enough to synthesize information, or they simply do not appreciate the new pedagogy, there are campus resources to help them:

*Learning Assistance Service, University Counseling Center:*

The primary goals of the Learning Assistance Service are to help students strengthen their skills and improve their academic performance.  Their dedicated staff is here to help students understand themselves as a learner, manage the demand of their courses, and apply appropriate learning strategies.  Website:

http: //www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/html/welcome.html

Phone: 301-314-7693

# Representing your Course on the General Education Application

Once you have completed your course design, as described in prior sections, use this guide to help you represent it clearly and completely on the GenEd application form and in the course syllabus. See also how two courses that have been approved for SP completed the application and presented the course design in the syllabus: ARCH270 application, ARCH270 syllabus and PSYC221 application and PSYC221 syllabus.

**Step 1: Log-in on GenEd Submission Webpage through the following:**
Go to www.gened.umd.edu.
  a. Select the Faculty tab.
  b. Select "Submit a GenEd or I-Series Course"
  c. Enter the University ID and Password information.
  d. You will be prompted to upload a syllabus and respond to a series of questions:
     o Enter Application Preliminaries
     o Answer a Few Questions about This Course
     o How Does This Course Meet the General Education Learning Outcomes?
     o Upload a Copy of the Course Syllabus
     o Submit Application for Departmental Approval
See CHART: Submission of Course for General Education Review

**Step 2: Answer a Few Questions about This Course**
1. General Information
     **a.** Title
     **b.** Course Number
     **c.** College
     **d.** Department
     **e.** Submitted By
2. CORE Information – select as appropriate to your course
     **a.** CORE Fundamental Studies
     **b.** CORE Distributive/Advanced Studies
     **c.** CORE Diversity
3. General Education  Information
     **a.** Fundamental Studies
     **b.** Distributive Studies: select Scholarship in Practice
     **c.** Diversity
4. Course Questions
     **a. Please give a brief description of the course –** Use this space to present the "big picture" narrative describing your course design and how the course meets the overall mission of the SP category. See Course Design
     **b. Please list any pre- or co-requisites for this course –** For non-majors SP courses, none is the preferred answer (see below). For in-major SP courses, indicate courses that are required.
     **c. If there are pre- or co-requisites, please justify them with respect to their appropriateness for a General Education course – For** the Non-Majors SP Courses, there should be no pre- or co-requisite courses if at all possible.  In some cases one course as a pre-requisite will not eliminate the possibility that a course be considered for "non-majors". Give rationale for any pre- requisites or programs of courses.

d. **Please list any restrictions (e.g. majors only) placed on this course –** For non-majors SP courses, there should be no restrictions (e.g. majors only).

e. **What is the approximate course size (students/academic year)?** There is no requirement. However, discuss with you department chair the enrollment expectations from your department and college.

f. **Please describe how student learning will be assessed (i.e. exams, homework, papers, group projects, etc.). –** In this section list how students will be assessed. Indicate the student activities/work that will be assessed to determine students' learning. Use titles from the syllabus. It should be evident that the student experience is authentic to the practice of the discipline and that the assessments offer opportunities to measure student gains in the learning outcomes. Generally, formative assignments that allow students to attempt an activity, revise their thinking, and resubmit their work should be "low stakes" (small proportion of final grade), while final work such as a culminating project or paper that has benefited from comments, revisions, insights from prior work, etc. would contribute a higher proportion of the course point total.

g. **Comments on the course that you feel may be useful for the review process. Also, if this is an existing course that you are planning on making changes to via VPAC (i.e. changing the title), please list those proposed changes here. –** This is a space to indicate any pertinent course information. For example this is a place to indicate if this is a resubmission of a previously reviewed course, whether or not the course has been taught previously and any changes that have been made to address the SP learning outcomes. Finally, if this is a new course, or if significant revisions are being made to an existing course, please indicate the where the course is in the VPAC approval process. In addition indicate if this course in linked to a program or is linked to another course or set of courses in some substantial manner.

h. **Describe the body of scholarship that will be put into practice. –** Very specifically describe the scholarship of the discipline that will be the focus of the student experience. What scholarship will students apply as they participate in this course?

i. **Describe how this body of scholarship will be applied. –** Indicate the how the underlying course design engages students in application of the scholarship (indicated above): In what activities will students apply scholarship. How, in a manner authentic to the discipline, will students engage in the process of practice? What work will the students do?

**Step 3: Consider How This Course Meets General Education Learning Outcomes**
**Learning Outcomes Questions**

- Learning outcomes are phrased as, "*At the completion of this course, students will be able to...*"
- Answers are expected to demonstrate how the course will:
  1. Give students the ability to meet the learning objective [Student activities]
  2. Determine that students were successful in meeting the learning objective [Assessment measures]

**SP courses must address at least 4 of the SP Learning Outcomes, the first is required.**
For each learning outcome question it may be helpful to first restate the learning outcome in the context of your course design. Then

- Describe activities* that will allow students to meet the outcome (instructional activities)
- Identify the assessments (formative and summative) that will support students learning and finally reveal students' abilities in meeting this outcome.

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*It may be that the same activity assessed for different types of learning will be used to meet more than one learning outcome. This will be dictated by the course design.

It should be evident that for each selected learning outcome there are opportunities for an iterative process of assessment and feedback on student performance on activities such that students will develop their abilities over the course of the semester.

Activities and assessments that are described in the application should also be evident in the syllabus. Further the syllabus should reveal how the activities and assessments described in the application work together to engage students in authentic practice within the course discipline.

**Step 4: Upload a Copy of the Syllabus**

**Step 5: Submit Application for Department Approval**

# Review of Scholarship in Practice Applications

Once submitted, the faculty instructor must inform his/her department chair and college dean. For the proposal to be electronically forwarded to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the submitting department and college must electronically approve the submission and send it forward to the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

Once the proposal has been forwarded to the Office of Undergraduate Studies it will be reviewed by members of the Scholarship in Practice faculty board. Instructors may receive a phone call with questions about the proposal. The instructor may receive feedback and revisions may be required. Once the proposal is approved the chair of the faculty board will release the decision and the instructor, Department Chair, and Dean will receive electronic notification of approval of the course. Approved courses are listed in Testudo as "Scholarship in Practice."

**Criteria used by the SP board in review of course proposals.**
- Learning Outcome Questions – reveal appropriate student activities.
  - Students are engaged in authentic work of the discipline (where the discipline is defined within the response to "What is the Scholarship that will be put into practice"). This is reflected in the responses to application questions, course grading, rubrics, course points found in syllabus etc.
- Course design as articulated in the application and in the course syllabus includes a clear thread of formative instruction throughout the course design.
  - (e.g. scaffolding of learning, opportunities to revise and resubmit). This is reflected in course schedule, grading, rubrics course points etc.
- Courses that address collaborative work employ best practices for group work and include expectations for individual accountability.

**Courses that are not accepted for Scholarship in Practice:**
- The course design does not emphasize practice (student engagement) in meeting the learning outcomes. For example the course is a lecture based and the focus is on students learning content of the discipline.
- See "What scholarship in practice is not." (See Section in this document)

**Common reasons that courses are returned for revision:**
- The responses to the learning outcomes questions in the application do not delineate student activities related to the learning outcome.
- The responses to the learning outcome questions in the application do not describe how the instructor will know that the students are making gains in the outcome (how student learning will be measured/assessed is not indicated)
- The student activities described in the application are not mentioned in the syllabus.
- The student activities described in the application are not given significant mention in the syllabus and/or weight in the course grade.
- There is no evidence in the syllabus that the course will immerse students in practice of the discipline in a manner that will allow students to make gains in the learning outcomes.
- There is no evidence in the course schedule (or other syllabus section) that students will have opportunities to develop skills and insights related to learning outcomes in a manner that

represents how work is completed within the discipline (for example that projects are completed in stages that require time, discussion, revision, critique, collaboration etc.).
- For learning outcome 4: "Demonstrate an ability to collaborate in order to bring about a successful outcome" there is mention of group work in the application and syllabus however there are no guidelines/expectations/ assessments related to how a particular student will make gains in an ability to collaborate.