

University Studies Program

Southeast Missouri State University

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The University Studies Handbook is also available on line <http://www.semo.edu/ustudies>

Welcome from the President

Welcome to Southeast Missouri State University and our nationally recognized University Studies program!

We are glad that you chose Southeast and its outstanding faculty for your college education, an education that will undoubtedly prepare you to be as competitive and successful in life as thousands of Southeast graduates in such fields as business, politics, medicine, science, education, music, art, criminal justice, and technology, to name just a few.

One of the reasons our graduates are successful is that they receive a broad and deep general education in our University Studies program. Another is that Southeast's first-year experience program is among the best in the country, ranked as one of the top 40 in the nation in the 2008 edition of *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Colleges."

Southeast students participating in our University Studies and first-year experience programs are also living in an era characterized by some as the "information age." One of the characteristics of this period is that the pace of change in every field is accelerating more and more rapidly. In some fields, experts have noted that the amount of new knowledge doubles every three to five years -- or in some cases in a matter of months. Many futurists have pointed out that most people entering the job market these days can expect to have several different careers during their lifetimes. This makes it more urgent that you look upon your university experience as an opportunity to prepare yourself to cope with a changing environment.

College is not just about preparing you to perform a specific task, although Southeast offers many opportunities for "real world experiences" to help prepare you for that "first job" after college. Rather, college is about creating an educated person, one who is able to function responsibly and successfully in whatever environment he or she may encounter. Included in this booklet is a list of the nine "objectives" of University Studies. Those objectives spell out the kind of skills you will need for success during your lifetime of career changes. I hope that you will not consider your University Studies courses as an "extra burden" -- something to "get out of the way" -- but rather as the key to becoming a broadly educated human being and thus making your life and career a success.

Again, welcome to Southeast! I look forward to seeing you on campus!

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Dobbins
President

Experience Southeast...*Experience Success*

What is University Studies?

Dear Student:

All colleges and universities offer a core of courses designed to help students develop a collective understanding of the world and prepare for the changing conditions of personal, family, and career life. At Southeast Missouri State University, you will have these core learning experiences in the courses of the nationally recognized University Studies program. After examining this handbook, you will see that this reputation is due to two emphases of the program: academic skills and curriculum themes.

In a nutshell, the University Studies program is designed to help you develop academic skills by learning the ways that scholars in different academic disciplines seek answers to important questions about our lives. In the program, you should learn how artists, scientists, poets, economists, and other scholars use critical and creative thinking to understand humans and their relationship with the universe around them. For example, to understand the relationship of humans and nature an artist may create a painting of humans in a serene forest setting; a scientist may test hypotheses about human impacts on the ecology of that forest; a poet may weave words expressing a sense of wonder at the forest's beauty; and an economist may seek to understand the optimal cost-to-benefit ratio of harvesting the trees in that forest. Each of these scholars uses different approaches to thinking about the interaction of humans and nature. The courses in the University Studies lower division categories help you learn key academic skills that are the bases of these various ways of seeking answers to fundamental questions about our existence. The lower division courses, therefore, provide opportunities for you to learn how scholars acquire knowledge and form it into concepts that help us understand the world around us. This emphasis is evident in the lower division curriculum's theme, "Acquisition of Knowledge: Gaining Perspectives on the Individual, Society and the Universe."

After completing the lower division courses, you will enroll in three interdisciplinary courses. These upper division University Studies courses are focused on the theme, "Integration of Knowledge: Living in an Interdependent Universe." The interdisciplinary courses will help you see that the various ways scholars seek answers to questions are complementary and based on the same underlying academic skills. Your experiences in these courses should help you understand that integrating the different ways of applying these intellectual skills is a powerful and necessary way to gain a fuller understanding of the complex issues, problems, and joys of human life.

What are these important academic skills? You will find the nine University Studies skills objectives and the program's themes and structure described later in this handbook. Every University Studies course uses academic subject matter to help you practice these key skills as you prepare for life after college. Please examine these skills objectives and themes carefully and then look through the descriptions of courses in the University Studies program. The information you find on these pages will help you choose courses that interest you and that meet the requirements of various academic programs. By making good use of this handbook, you will gain a better sense of how the University Studies program will help you succeed academically, personally, and professionally.

The staff of the School of University Studies and Academic Information Services is committed to helping you be successful in the University Studies program. As you participate in the program and prepare for your future, we encourage you to ask us for advice and help. We wish the best for you and will work with you to help you achieve your educational goals.

Sincerely,



David Starrett, Dean
School of University Studies and
Academic Information Services

University Studies and Academic Information Services Administrative Offices

The location of offices and activities contained within University Studies and Academic Information Services are as follows:

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