

Lindsey Fester
FABE 3140
February 13, 2017

h-Engineering Impacts Essay

While the Food, Agricultural, and Biological Engineering curriculum is predominantly composed of math, science, and engineering courses, it also requires that five general education curriculum courses be completed in order to better establish an understanding of the impact engineering solutions can have in global and societal context. Three of the non-engineering general education courses I took include Sociology 302 (now 3302)—Technology, Society, and Social Change, International Studies 3350—Introduction to Western Europe, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies 317 (now 3317)—Hollywood, Women, and Film.

Sociology 302 (now 3302)—Technology, Society, and Social Change explored social aspects of technology, social change, and technological development as well as underdevelopment and the global economy. The entire foundation of this course—recommended specifically for engineering students—is designed to offer an in-depth investigation of the consequences of the increasingly rapid pace of technological advances as well as the forces responsible for its progression. As engineers, we bear a large portion of this responsibility; while we do oftentimes contribute to new technologies, our primary focus is in ensuring that these innovations not only meet the needs of society, but more importantly enable our planet to remain sustainable. As Food, Agricultural, and Biological engineers, it is our duty to provide solutions to technical problems by designing ecological products that implement efficient use of our biological resources. By improving agricultural processes in order to preserve basic necessities such as soil and water, we can help impede environmental degradation that could ultimately threaten our survival. As such, we as engineers possess the power to drastically impact the way we allow technological development to shape the future of our society.

International Studies 3350—Introduction to Western Europe presented an introductory overview of the historical background to modern Western Europe. Specifically, the course examined the development of society and politics in seven western European countries, as well as the evolution of art, architecture, and music from the 11th century until the outbreak of WWII. This course allowed for a detailed exploration of foreign countries and cultures that proved to be paramount in stimulating my consideration of how great the global influence of engineering can really be. While their histories, politics, and societal norms may differ drastically from ours, we are all alike in the rudimentary necessities of life. As the world's population continues to increase, a growing issue of concern for engineers will concentrate heavily on the political and economic relations between foreign nations. The idea of working collectively to develop engineering solutions that meet universal goals will become increasingly important in order to sustain human life.

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies 317 (now 3317)—Hollywood, Women, and Film surveyed the representation of women in Hollywood cinema from the 1930's to the present. This course provided insight into the complexity and uncertainty of the film industry by demonstrating its historical and aesthetic depiction of women and particularly how race, gender, sexuality, and class are negotiated. It further explored how female filmmakers have created alternative versions of women in film. Perhaps the farthest detached from my engineering curriculum, the central topic of this course bears striking parallels with the history of women in engineering. Rather than being impacted by solutions that engineers work to develop, I believe that the issue of gender inequality has seen direct influence by the field of engineering in general. The societal evolution and progression of females involved in various engineering disciplines and the increase in the likelihood of women to contribute to such disciplines has only assisted in closing the gap.