

THE NEW DOC

The Dimensions of Culture Program has served as the Marshall College core curriculum and writing program since the early 1990s. DOC was designed as an intensive set of three courses to explore the American experience through the complex and controversial issues regarding the social and political implications of inequality and the asymmetries of power associated with historical and contemporary racial, ethnic, gender, and class hierarchies. The core curriculum served as content-driven writing instruction. Successful completion of the lower-division DOC sequence fulfills the University of California writing requirement.

Various criticisms were leveled at DOC in the last few years, and faculty and student investigations concluded that changes needed to be made. Those changes have been implemented and have resulted in a NEW DOC.

- Two senior professors (Robert Cancel – Literature, and Robert Horwitz – Communication, both of whom helped develop and teach the original DOC curriculum) are now the Co-Directors of the DOC Program and oversee its reinvention and its day-to-day operation.
- A new set of senior professors drawn from the departments of Communication, History, Literature, Political Science, Sociology, and Theatre & Dance have met and have formulated new course logic, content, and syllabi. Among other things, the courses are more strongly rooted in history, with more focused, accessible, and doable reading assignments.
- DOC 1 retains its focus on questions of inequality, but is now more rooted in historical texts rather than abstract theoretical readings.
- DOC 2 retains its focus on social justice and law, but is oriented more broadly with reference to political theory and the American experience, the assigned readings no longer so heavy with court cases.
- DOC 3 retains its focus on cultural representations – literature, film, photography, music, video, theatre, etc. – but reemphasizes historical context as well as building the students’ analytical skills to interpret these complex and allusive cultural expressions.
- The three courses are designed to be more integrated, with central themes flowing from course to course.
- The balance between the course content and writing instruction is more appropriate. There is no longer a paper assignment in DOC 1. Instead, numerous journal entries are geared toward helping students identify and summarize the key arguments of assigned texts, and also develop the elementary but critical reading and writing skills necessary for work at the university level. Formal papers will be assigned in DOC 2 and DOC 3, accompanied by intensive instruction and revision overseen by DOC Assistant Director and writing specialist Dr. Pam Wright.
- A Steering Committee has been established to oversee the DOC Program. That committee consists of faculty, Thurgood Marshall College undergraduates, and current and former DOC Teaching Assistants. Transparency and open dialogue will be fostered at all levels of the DOC Program as the new version of the sequence develops and is implemented.