REINERT CENTER

Defining Features: Survey Course

A survey course is typically a course of broad disciplinary perspective. Often, the survey can incorporate different aspects and content from a specific field, but can also include content from other disciplines for which all of the content may share common objectives. Survey courses can be introductory in nature and may serve to expose students to material that is foundational for continued study in the discipline, or can be a stand-alone course after which students may not encounter the discipline again. These courses are sometimes specifically for non-majors in the discipline, but can also be included in the course of study for discipline majors.

Some key questions to consider when designing a survey course:

What are the goals and objectives faculty agree can be related in a single course that may represent their discipline?

Is the survey course intended to be discipline-specific or interdisciplinary?

If more than one discipline is involved, do all stakeholders have consensus of goals, objectives and content?

Kapp, J. L., Slater, T. F., Slater, S. J., Lyons, D. J., Manhart, K., Wehunt, M. D., & Richardson, R. M. (2011). Impact of redesigning a large-lecture introductory earth science