Natural Foundations Thread

Description
In this requirement area, you will explore our modern understanding of nature and the physical world and how we have arrived at this knowledge. Courses in this thread will explore the impact of this understanding on society and discuss how human activity changes the world. You will confront both the wonders and the dangers inherent in science, and be challenged to consider your individual and collective responsibility for these changes.

Learning Goals and Outcomes
Courses in this thread will be guided by the following learning goals and outcomes. Each course will meet at least five of the following ten learning outcomes:

GOAL ONE: To inspire intellectual curiosity about the world as it is and a deeper understanding of the global condition.

Outcomes:
1) Students can articulate the historical and contemporary significance of global interconnections and interdependence in human, natural, and physical worlds.
2) Students explore and analyze the dynamic relationship of global and local issues or problems.
3) Students understand sustainability as an economic, social, and environmental practice
4) Students imagine and critically explore likely and alternative global futures.

GOAL THREE: To promote active and critical reflection on the human self in its full range of contexts.

Outcomes:
1) Students study the self and the ways in which it is situated in human, natural, and physical worlds.
2) Students analyze and reflect on their own sources of identity and values.

GOAL FOUR: To challenge students to critically examine their ethical responsibilities and choices in both local and global contexts.

Outcomes:
3) Students appreciate sustainability as an economic, social, and environmental value.

GOAL FIVE: To encourage purposeful public engagement and social responsibility.

Outcomes:
1) Students demonstrate the intellectual and practical skills necessary for meaningful work and active participation in the local community and larger world.
2) Students explore the value of purposeful action in the face of the pressing problems of the 21st century.
3) Students come to see themselves as responsible, engaged and informed persons, capable and willing to act in ways that will improve or reshape the world.

Staffing
Primary staffing responsibility for this thread will be delivered by the Departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Life and Earth Sciences, and Physics and Astronomy as well as select Environmental Studies courses.