

Global Connections (3 courses total, 3 Foundations + Second Language Requirement)

An illustration of how the categories of the grid could be developed

“U.S. students stand at the crossroads of history in many ways. They are at the forefront of seismic changes in all aspects of living and thinking. There is growing consensus in business, scholarship and policy-making that the 21st century worlds of work, family, neighborhoods and communities have the fundamental characteristics of hybridity, fluidity, volatility, and interdependence that is more intense and intimate than perhaps any other time in human history, in short, a “complex connectivity”.ⁱ Students entering the world as workers, innovators, family and community-makers, and citizens face an economy that has drastically shifted away from industrial to information and knowledge-based services, a political context where power relations and cognizance of inequalities permeate social life from bedrooms to boardrooms, and a sociocultural world that demonstrates that shrinking spatial distances do not automatically imply vanishing cultural distances or dense and stable social networks.”

“What Are Global Skills and Cultural Competencies?”

Numerous studies continue to show the extent of “global illiteracy” of our students and the need to address the situation before it is too late.ⁱⁱ This shortcoming demands an education that builds upon time-tested fundamental cognitive, perceptive, analytic and communicative skills such as critical thinking, literacy and numeracy, but also a “new” emphasis upon a different set of skills that may be termed “global skills”. Key among these are cultural competencies or literacies, linguistic proficiencies, multivariate or holistic problem-solving, and power analytics. The 21st century workplace is not only more competitive but also presents competition as cultural since competition is now with “cultural others” given the migration of work and immigration of workers. This generates various responses including xenophobia, ethnocentrism, shock, breakdown in information and knowledge sharing and crucially erects barriers to *trust* – a key social, economic and political value. There is thus a growing attention to language acquisition but this needs to not only be focused on what are still thought of as “foreign” languages, but also in the languages of cooperation, collaboration, power and resistance, social and natural ecologies, and humanism and human rights.”¹

¹ Achieving and Assessing Global Skills and Cultural Competencies: General Education for the 21st Century, Department of Anthropology, William Paterson University of New Jersey, 2009. Presented at the 1st Friday discussion on global issues.

Global Connections Dimension: Draft Outcomes

Value and demonstrate the skills and understandings essential for success in a global society

Students will be able to

A. Employ a foreign language to communicate with others.

B. Be literate about a variety of global concerns and be able to articulate a clear account of the issues involved.

C. Understand some of the historical, political, economic and other cultural conditions behind some of today's global issues.

D. Articulate comparative cultural structures, systems and artifacts between the United States and at least one other region of the world.

E. Apply intercultural knowledge and competencies in addressing issues in the major discipline or profession.

F. Employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated means for communicating with people of other cultures.

Second language requirement (0-6 credits)

All students will take a placement test and be placed in their appropriate level from Basic-I through Intermediate-I. Successful completion of the Intermediate-I level fulfills this requirement. Students who place at the Intermediate-II level will be encouraged to continue their language studies but will not be required to do so.

The University is considering whether proficiency in a second language will be a graduation rather than a USP requirement. Pending resolution of this issue, these credits may not be included as part of the University Studies Foundations.

Approaches for Understanding Global Issues

Students will be expected to complete the Critical Thinking Core Courses prior to enrolling in the courses offered in this category. Some exceptions may be necessary for students who are unable to complete the 5 core courses by the end of their 1st year. Students will choose the approaches and "big problems"/global issues courses from a variety of discipline areas outside of their major coursework. The first course must include an historical approach to a global issue.

The possibility of designing cluster courses related to a global problem or issue will be encouraged providing some opportunity for guided direction.

Historical Approaches for Understanding Global Issues (Approaches I)

Many global issues today are deeply interdisciplinary with complex histories of lands and peoples, political systems and religions, economies and culture, mixing with the natural distribution of resources (or the lack thereof) and the local applications of technology to create

dozens of different stories on almost any issue that is raised. Understanding as many of these dimensions as possible of an issue is necessary in order to be an active participant both in the workplace and in our social and political lives. Students will select two of these foundations for greater competency and then apply these approaches to two different global big problems as described below.

Examples of courses that might be adapted or developed in this category

Economic History (HIST 328/Econ 328)

Social History of Modern Europe (HIST 301)

Age of Global Connections (HIST 319)

Imagining War (HIST 369)

Women and Islam: History Politics and Culture (WS 359/ASN 359)

African Caribbean History (AACS 304)

East Asian Civilization (ASN 270)

Approaches for Understanding Global Issues II

This is the second of the two required foundational approaches for understanding and working upon major global issues.

Examples of courses that might be adapted or developed in this category

Economic Growth and Development (ECON 360)

African Politics (AACS 338)

Faces of Diversity: Anthropology of Contemporary Migration (ANTH 325)

Modern India (ASN 394/HIST 394)

Political Philosophy (PHIL 222)

Politics of the Third World (POL 333)

Population and Development in Asia (SOC 376)

Earth Through Time (ENV 220)

International Relations (POL 240)

Globalization and Development (ANTH 310)

Approaches for Resolving Global Issues

There are many difficult problems in our world today, which span both national and disciplinary borders. This course area will use the foundational skills students have previously acquired and practiced to examine how such issues can be approached, why they are resistant to resolution and what sort of strategies might work in the future. Courses in this area will use a number of approaches in the examination of its topic problem beyond the home discipline of the instructor. This course could also be part of a thematic sequence.

Majors can choose to offer this course within the major or not.

A very short list of global problems/issues:

Is Development Sustainable?

Medicine and Society

Drugs, Disease and Resources

Science and Religion

Concepts of the Self from Antiquity to the Present
World Hunger and Poverty
Energy, Power and the Environment
Revolutions and Social Change
Death and Dying
Can Literature Illuminate the Public Discourse on Science?

GE Council
Draft
March 23, 2009
