

General Education: The Human Community

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Mission Statement

In the liberal arts tradition, General Education: The Human Community aspires to create informed global citizens of the 21st century. We challenge our community of students and faculty to engage in personal and collective reflection, development, and action.

Philosophy

General Education: *The Human Community* is the core academic program of James Madison University in which students come to understand how distinct disciplines look at the world from different vantage points. Courses in *The Human Community* are organized into five clusters, each emphasizing unique tools, rationales, and methodologies. Taken together, courses in a student's chosen major and *The Human Community* complement and complete each other. Both are integral and essential components of a student's full and proper education.

Goals

Students understand the historical and contemporary distinctions and interconnections among people, institutions, and communities that create, preserve, and transmit culture and knowledge in the arts, sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and humanities.

Students become skilled in questioning, investigating, analyzing, evaluating, and communicating.

Students participate in a variety of aesthetic and civic experiences reflecting human concerns and values that transcend the limits of specialization.

Structure

The Human Community credit hour requirements are:

Cluster	Credits
Skills for the 21 st Century	9
Arts and Humanities	9
The Natural World	10
Social and Cultural Processes	7
Individuals in the Human Community	6
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Cluster One: Skills for the 21st Century

Gretchen Anne Hazard, Coordinator

Cluster One is the cornerstone of General Education: *The Human Community* at JMU and to subsequent study in the major and professional programs. This cluster emphasizes competencies in the areas of oral and written communication, critical thinking, and information literacy. The broadly stated goals for Cluster One are:

- Demonstrate competency in information literacy.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills.
- Demonstrate effective oral presentation skills.
- Demonstrate effective writing skills.
- Demonstrate self-analysis and self-directed learning.

Competence in these goals is fundamental to general education and to subsequent study in major and professional programs. Therefore, all students are required to complete all Cluster One requirements during their first academic year at JMU. The specific learning goals for each area of Cluster One are included in this section.

Cluster One Structure

Cluster One consists of nine credits. All students MUST complete one course in each of three groupings of courses representing the main content disciplines of the cluster: Critical Thinking, Human Communication, and Writing. Courses may be taken in any order. In addition to the three courses, students are required to demonstrate competency in information literacy by completing two high stakes exams: the technology test (Tech Level I) and the Information Seeking Skills Test (ISST).

Cluster One Requirements

All students must complete Cluster One requirements during their first academic year at JMU. If this requirement cannot be met due to extenuating circumstances a deferral form must be submitted to the Office of University Studies by March 7, 2010.

Information Literacy

Cluster One requires completion of the two information literacy tests during the first year. Information literacy is the ability to locate, evaluate and use information effectively to accomplish a purpose. Cluster One students must demonstrate competency by successfully completing:

- Information-Seeking Skills Test (ISST)
- Tech Level I exam (word processing, presentation software, spreadsheets)

See the General Education Web site for more information.

Critical Thinking

Cluster One requires the completion of one of five courses offered in critical thinking. Students study various techniques and approaches to critical thinking such as analyzing and evaluating information, arguments, premises, and concepts and their relationships as well as fostering problem solving abilities.

Depending upon the course, the content focuses on the function of language, basic business principles, issues in recent history, mediated communication, informal logical reasoning or problem solving in science and technology.

Choose one of the following:

- GBUS* 160. Business Decision Making in a Modern Society
- GHIST* 150. Critical Issues in Recent Global History
- GISAT* 160. Problem Solving Approaches in Science and Technology
- GMAD* 150. Mediated Communication: Issues and Skills
- GPHIL* 120. Critical Thinking

Human Communication

Cluster One requires completion of one of three courses offered in oral communication. Students are introduced to the study of human communication as a process. Emphasis is on examining the role of self-concept, perception, culture, verbal and nonverbal dimensions in the communication process, using power and managing conflict, and applying critical listening. Depending upon the course, the content focuses on an overview of the principles and practices of interpersonal, small group, and public communication, or constructing informative and persuasive speeches with an emphasis on individual public speaking contexts, or constructing informative and persuasive group presentations.

Choose one of the following:

- GCOM* 121. Fundamental Human Communication: Presentations
- GCOM* 122. Fundamental Human Communication: Individual Presentations
- GCOM* 123. Fundamental Human Communication: Group Presentations

Students who have received credit for one *GCOM* class are not eligible to receive credit for a second *GCOM* class. Students who have received credit for *GCOM* 121 are not eligible to receive credit for *GCOM* 122 or *GCOM* 123. Students who have received credit for *GCOM* 122 are not eligible to receive credit for *GCOM* 121 or *GCOM* 123. Students who have received credit for *GCOM* 123 are not eligible to receive credit for *GCOM* 121 or *GCOM* 122.

Writing

Cluster One requires completion of the writing course *GWRTC* 103. The emphasis is on the process of constructing a focused, logical, coherent, well-supported thesis or point of view. Students employ research and formal documentation to produce writing stylistically appropriate to its audience, purpose, and occasion. Students edit their writing for clarity and control of conventions, and they are prepared to use reading and writing in their personal, academic, and civic lives.

Complete the following:

- GWRTC* 103. Critical Reading and Writing (formerly *GWRT* 103)

GWRTC Placement and Exemptions

Students may receive credit or exemptions for GWRTC 103 (formerly GWRT 103) under the following conditions:

- an AP minimum score of 4 on the English Language and Composition or the English Literature and Composition test
- a Higher-Level IB English score of 5
- transfer or dual enrollment credit for GWRTC 103 (formerly GWRT 103)
- Receive an exemption for successfully completing the Waiver Exam for GWRTC 103.

Students who have received credit for GWRT 101 are not eligible to receive credit for WRTC 100. Students who have received credit for GWRT 102 are not eligible to receive credit for WRTC 100 or GWRTC 103 (formerly GWRT 103).

Cluster One Learning Objectives

After completing Cluster One: Skills for the 21st Century, students should be able to use reading, writing and oral communication, critical thinking, and information literacy skills for inquiring, learning, thinking and communicating in their personal, academic, and civic lives.

Information Literacy

After completing both information literacy tests and course work in critical thinking, human communication, and writing, students should be able to:

- Determine when information is needed and find it efficiently using a variety of reference sources.
- Evaluate the quality of the information.
- Use the information effectively for an appropriate purpose.
- Employ appropriate technologies to create an information-based product.
- Use information ethically and legally.

Critical Thinking

After completing course work in critical thinking, students should be able to:

- evaluate claims in terms of clarity, credibility, reliability, and accuracy.
- demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze and generate claims, arguments, and positions.
- identify and evaluate theses and conclusions, stated and unstated assumptions, and supporting evidence and arguments.
- apply these skills to one's own work and the work of others.

Human Communication

After completing course work in communication, students should be able to:

- understand and apply the fundamentals of audience analysis, message construction, development, organization, and presentation.
- deliver effective oral presentations in a variety of contexts.
- identify, evaluate and employ critical and sensitive listening behaviors.
- identify and manage the verbal and nonverbal dimensions of communication in a variety of contexts.
- recognize and apply the influences of self-concept perception and culture on communication.
- identify, evaluate and utilize the nature and functions of power and the strategies of conflict negotiation.

Writing

After completing course work in writing, students should be able to:

- develop and support a relevant and informed thesis, or point of view, that is appropriate for its audience, purpose, and occasion.
- analyze and evaluate information to identify its argumentative, credible, and ethical elements.
- reflect on civic responsibility as it relates to written discourse (critical thinking, reading, and writing).
- demonstrate effective writing skills and processes by employing invention, research, critical analysis and evaluation, and revision for audience, purpose, and occasion.
- effectively incorporate and document appropriate sources to support a thesis and effectively utilize the conventions of syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Cluster Two: Arts and Humanities

Dr. Michael Moghtader, Interim Coordinator

Cluster Two shows students what it means to live lives enriched by reflection, imagination, and creativity. It does so by offering each individual a multidisciplinary experience within the arts and humanities, those areas of endeavor that humans have long valued for their intrinsic worth and that invite a deeper appreciation of the human experience. The broadly stated goals for Cluster Two are:

- To introduce students to cultural, historical, aesthetic, and theoretical expressions of and questions about human experience.
- To expose students to multiple academic disciplines in the arts and humanities and their methods and unique perspectives.
- To inspire a deeper awareness of how the interplay between culture and expression affects both collective and individual identities.
- To foster appreciation of the aesthetic and formal qualities of literary, visual, and performing arts.
- To engage students in thinking critically and communicating clearly about enduring questions concerning human life, culture, and history.

Cluster Two Structure

Students complete nine credits by choosing one course from each of three groups: Human Questions and Contexts; Visual and Performing Arts; and Literature.

Group One:

Human Questions and Contexts

Students will take one course from the list below. *GAMST 200* takes an interdisciplinary approach to questions about American identity and shows how they reflect a complex interplay of cultural, historical, religious, and ideological perspectives. The *GANTH* and *GHIST* courses introduce students to the great cultures of the world by surveying the common patterns of experience that characterized Western, Middle Eastern, Asian, African, Meso- and South American societies in the past. The *GHUM* courses are interdisciplinary, in-depth explorations of specific topics, cultures, periods or themes. The *GPHIL* and *GREL* courses explore the great inquiries into human existence and the ways different cultures across different time periods constructed their responses to questions concerning humans' existence and their relationship to nature, ultimate reality and the universe. Thus all of the courses in Group One emphasize central questions about the human condition and ways of studying values and beliefs as they are shaped by class, gender, race, historical events, philosophy and religion.

Choose one of the following:

- GAMST 200*. Introduction to American Studies
- GANTH 205*. Buried Cities, Lost Tribes: The Rise and Fall of Early Human Societies
- GHIST 101*. World History to 1500
- GHIST 102*. World History Since 1500
- GHUM 102*. God, Meaning, and Morality

- GHUM 250*. Foundations of Western Culture
(Topics vary by section. Examples include: Ancient Greece, Rome)
- GHUM 251*. Modern Perspectives
(Topics vary by section. Examples include: The Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Human Rights)
- GHUM 252*. Cross-Cultural Perspectives
(Topics vary by section. Examples include: East Asia, West Africa, Latin American Cultures, Islamic Civilization)
- GPHIL 101*. Introduction to Philosophy
- GREL 101*. Religions of the World

Group Two: Visual and Performing Arts

Students will take one course from the list below. The art history surveys introduce students to the visual arts (whose history often has been interconnected with developments in music, dance and theatre/film); these surveys are organized chronologically, but focus distinctly on artistic perception and experience. The global music surveys explore history and the arts through the study of music: its development, aesthetics, forms and styles, and its context within the cultural communities that produced it. *GART 200* and *GMUS 200* are introductions to art or music in general culture; *GTHEA 210* studies theatre as an art form including acting, directing, design, costuming, lighting; *GMUS 203* explores America's musical landscape and examines the interconnections among music, art, and literature in historical periods.

In all Group Two courses, students will examine the innate human aesthetic sense, sources of art and music appreciation, and the creation of art as both an expression of human creativity and a means of giving meaning to the world. Thus all the courses focus on the key areas of human creativity and expressiveness through the visual and performing arts - imaginative outpourings that have form, structure, meaning and aesthetic appeal that all students can come to appreciate.

Choose one of the following:

- GART 200*. Art in General Culture
- GARTH 205*. Survey of World Art I: Prehistoric to Renaissance
- GARTH 206*. Survey of World Art II: Renaissance to Modern
- GMUS 200*. Music in General Culture
- GMUS 203*. Music in America
- GMUS 206*. Introduction to Global Music
- GTHEA 210*. Introduction to Theatre

Group Three: Literature

Students will choose a course from the list below. The literature surveys provide students with extensive reading experiences of representative genres and authors and various critical approaches to literary texts, as well as opportunities to explore the complex ways that the literature both reflects and helps change or create the cultural and intellectual contexts of the times in which they are written. Students are expected to learn strategies for reading and interpreting any literary text so that they come to deepen their appreciation of the aesthetics, rhetorical strategies and meaning of a range of literary texts. Through the humanistic study of

literature, students will also obtain a better understanding of themselves and their own culture as well as those of others.

Choose one of the following:

- GENG 235. Survey of English Literature: From Beowulf to the 18th Century
- GENG 236. Survey of English Literature: 18th Century to Modern
- GENG 239. Studies in World Literature
- GENG 247. Survey of American Literature: From the Beginning to the Civil War
- GENG 248. Survey of American Literature: From the Civil War to the Modern Period
- GENG 260. Survey of African-American Literature

GHUM 200. Great Works

(Topics vary by section. Examples include: German Literature in Translation; Speculative Fiction; Western Classics)

The courses in Group Three are designated as "writing-infused." Students will write a minimum of 5000 words (about 15 pages double-spaced in a standard font) distributed among five separate, graded assignments. The courses thus afford students extensive opportunities to produce various genres of academic writing, as well as to develop more engaged and sophisticated reading strategies through exposure to interesting and thought-provoking texts.

Cluster Two Learning Objectives

After completing Group One, Human Questions and Contexts, students will be able to:

- Question their own and others' opinions about and responses to the world.
- Apply the methods of the discipline(s) studied to material from the humanities.
- Identify and evaluate arguments using appropriate concepts and techniques to formulate logical arguments on the same basis.
- Demonstrate an understanding of broader cultural, historical, or conceptual contexts of particular issues, ideas, objects, or events - past and present.
- Appreciate appropriate humanities events (such as exhibits, films, performances or public lectures).

After completing Group Two, Visual and Performing Arts, students will be able to:

- Explain how artistic works and culture are interrelated.
- Recognize that the arts are accessible and relevant to their lives.
- Demonstrate disciplinary literacy (vocabulary, concepts, creative processes) in a major art form.
- Produce an informed response to the form, content and aesthetic qualities of artistic works.
- Appreciate arts events.
- Acknowledge relationships among the arts.

After completing Group Three, Literature, students will be able to:

- Generate increasingly nuanced questions (interpretations, ideas) about literature and explain why those questions matter.
- Use appropriate vocabulary and tactics to analyze specific literary expressions of culture and the relationship between the reader, the author and text.
- Define ways that texts serve as arguments and identify rhetorical and formal elements that inform these arguments.
- Recognize appropriate contexts (such as genres, political perspectives, textual juxtapositions) and understand that readers may interpret literature from a variety of perspectives.
- Articulate a variety of examples of the ways in which literature gives us access to the human experience that reveals what differentiates it from, and connects it to, the other disciplines that make up the arc of human learning.

Cluster Three: The Natural World

Dr. Kit Murphy, Coordinator

Scientific investigations into the natural world use analytical methods to evaluate evidence, build and test models based on that evidence, and develop theories. Mathematical studies of form and pattern can create a language that assists in these investigations. Courses in this cluster provide students with the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills in science and mathematics at the college level. Students will be introduced to a substantial body of scientific facts, concepts, models and theories, and they will also gain experience in using basic mathematics to obtain knowledge about the natural world. Each track is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, thereby demonstrating boundaries and connections among mathematics, the sciences and other aspects of culture.

Cluster Three: Track I and Track II

All students begin either Track I or Track II in Cluster Three during their first year and should complete it by the end of their sophomore year. Individual courses in the tracks satisfy requirements in a number of major and professional programs on campus. Students are encouraged to select appropriate courses in Cluster Three on the basis of their backgrounds, interests and educational objectives.

Track I

In this track, students take one course from each of three groups and are required to have at least one lab experience. Group 1 consists of mathematics courses, and Groups 2 and 3 consist of science courses. The groups may be taken in any order, except for courses denoted by an asterisk (*), which have a mathematics and/or science prerequisite or corequisite.

Group 1. Choose one of the following

- G*SAT 151. Analytic Methods I: Topics in Applied Calculus for Integrated Science and Technology
- G*SAT 251. Analytic Methods II: Topics in Statistics for Integrated Science and Technology
- MATH 103. The Nature of Mathematics
- MATH 205. Introductory Calculus I
- MATH 220. Elementary Statistics
- MATH 231. Calculus with Functions I
- MATH 235. Calculus I

Group 2. Choose one of the following

- CHEM 120. Concepts of Chemistry
- CHEM 131. General Chemistry I (CHEM 131L required lab corequisite)
- G*SAT 112. Environmental Issues in Science and Technology (includes lab)
- G*SCI 101. Physics, Chemistry and the Human Experience*
- G*SCI 121. The Physical Nature of Light and Sound (includes lab)
- PHYS 140. College Physics I (PHYS 140L required lab corequisite)
- PHYS 215. Energy and the Environment*
- PHYS 240. University Physics I*

Group 3. Choose one of the following

- G*ANTH 196. Biological Anthropology
- ASTR 120. The Solar System
- ASTR 121. Stars, Galaxies and Cosmology
- G*BIO 103. Contemporary Biology
- BIO 114. Organisms (includes lab)
- BIO 270. Human Physiology (includes lab)*
- G*GEO 102. Environment: Earth
- G*GEO 115. Earth Systems, Cycles and Human Impact
- GEOL 110. Physical Geology (includes lab)
- GEOL 200. Evolutionary Systems (includes lab)
- GEOL 210. Applied Physical Geography
- GEOL 211. Introduction to Oceanography
- G*SAT 113. Issues in Science and Technology: Living Systems
- G*PSYC 122. The Science of Vision and Audition

Lab Experience

Students must either complete a Group 2 or Group 3 course with a lab or complete *G*SCI 104.

Track II

In addition to the science and math content, Track II emphasizes the learning environment and the unifying themes that link each of the individual classes. Track II is meant to serve primarily, but not exclusively, IDLS majors. MATH 107 must be taken prior to *G*SCI 163; *G*SCI 161 and *G*SCI 162 are corequisites; *G*SCI 163 and *G*SCI 164 are corequisites. Corequisite pairs may be taken in any order.

- MATH 107. Fundamentals of Mathematics I
- G*SCI 161. Science Processes
- G*SCI 162. The Science of the Planets
- G*SCI 163. The Matter of Matter
- G*SCI 164. Physical Science: Learning Through Teaching
- G*SCI 165. The Way Life Works

Cluster Three Learning Objectives

After completing Cluster Three: The Natural World, students should be able to meet the following objectives grouped under three learning goals:

- Describe the methods of inquiry that lead to mathematical truth and scientific knowledge and be able to distinguish science from pseudoscience.
- Use theories and models as unifying principles that help us understand natural phenomena and make predictions.
- Recognize the interdependence of applied research, basic research, and technology, and how they affect society.
- Illustrate the interdependence between developments in science and social and ethical issues.
- Use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret natural phenomena.
- Discriminate between association and causation, and identify the types of evidence used to establish causation.
- Formulate hypotheses, identify relevant variables, and design experiments to test hypotheses.
- Evaluate the credibility, use, and misuse of scientific and mathematical information in scientific developments and public-policy issues.

Cluster Four: Social and Cultural Processes

Dr. Raymond M. Hyser, Interim Coordinator

Rapid changes are taking place in today's world that are transforming our lives. To make informed judgments about the causes of these changes, their underlying dynamics and the implications they hold for the future, students must become critical thinkers about their own societies and the larger global community. Students must learn how to frame questions, develop strategies of inquiry, build upon past scholarship and make connections between distinct disciplines of study. Cluster Four courses help students develop these capabilities through an examination of the key social and cultural processes and structures that shape the human experience. Students will take one course that focuses on the American experience and one course that examines the global experience.

The Cluster Four courses that students must take are not sequenced so that either part of the cluster may be taken first or they may be taken concurrently. *Students may not take two courses from the same discipline in completing the Cluster Four requirement.*

Cluster Four Package

The American Experience

Each of the American Experience courses provides students with an understanding of the major themes and concepts that structure American life today. *GHIST 225* does so through a contextual and document-based study of the American historical experience that emphasizes the interaction of people, ideas and social movements. *GJUST225* frames questions regarding historic and contemporary events in terms of issues of justice, highlighting how societal structures interact with individual lives and vice versa.

GPOSC 225 focuses on the evolution and contemporary operation of the American political system by examining its fundamental principles and current dynamics.

Choose one of the following:

- GHIST 225*. U.S. History
- GJUST 225*. Justice and American Society
- GPOSC 225*. U.S. Government

The Global Experience

Each of the courses in the Global Experience is an investigation into a series of global issues that are of great importance to the human community. Topics discussed will vary from course to course. Issues are examined in a systemic context that allows students to see connections between disciplines. The unifying theme is an analysis of overarching structures at the global level that condition people's behavior and which are shaped by that behavior. From this perspective the study of global issues requires more than studying current events; it involves placing these global issues in a systemic context.

Choose one of the following:

- GAFST 200*. Introduction to Africana Studies
- GANTH 195*. Cultural Anthropology
- GECON 200*. Introduction to Macroeconomics
- GGEOG 200*. Geography: The Global Dimension
- GPOSC 200*. Global Politics
- GSOCI 110*. Social Issues in a Global Context

Cluster Four Learning Objectives

American Experience

Students completing this part of Cluster Four will be able to identify, conceptualize and evaluate:

- Social and political processes and structures using quantitative and qualitative data
- Key primary sources relating to American history, political institutions and society
- The nature and development of the intellectual concepts that structure American political activity
- The history and operation of American democratic institutions
- The history and development of American society
- The history and development of American involvement in world affairs

Global Experience

Students completing this part of Cluster Four will be able to identify, conceptualize and evaluate:

- Basic global problems
- Global political, social, cultural and economic systems
- The issues involved in analyzing societies different from one's own
- The global forces that shape societies
- Theoretical models used in studying global problems
- The strengths and limitations of alternative solutions to global problems across and within cultures

Cluster Five: Individuals in the Human Community

Dr. Jeanne Martino-McAllister, Coordinator

Through studying the many variables that influence human behavior in contemporary society, students gain an understanding of the relationship between the individual and a diverse community and develop a sense of responsibility for self and community. Students explore how individuals develop and function in the social, psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions.

Cluster Five Structure

In Cluster Five, students learn about themselves as individuals and as members of different communities. The courses within this six credit-hour cluster may be taken concurrently or individually, in any order. Students are required to complete one course each in Wellness and in Sociocultural Dimension. Students are expected to complete Cluster Five course work during their first two years at the university.

Wellness

Courses in this area examine the dimensions of health and wellness. An emphasis is placed on the factors that influence health and wellness, particularly individual behaviors. Students will participate in self-assessments that provide information about their health and wellness behaviors and their overall health status. In addition, students will learn strategies that improve lifetime health and wellness. Courses include a physical wellness component as a part of the

course requirements.

Choose one of the following:

- GEIC 101. Wellness Dimension: Individual Perspectives*
- GHTH 100. Personal Wellness*
- GKIN 100. Lifetime Fitness and Wellness*

Sociocultural Dimension

Courses in this area focus on sociocultural and psychological aspects of individuals interacting within societal contexts. Students study the formation and functions of social relationships and reflect on personal responsibilities to diverse communities within which people function throughout life. Students explore sociocultural and psychological aspects of personal belief systems, self-identity and assumptions about others. Courses in this area enable students to develop ethical and scientifically based critical thinking about human behavior and social interaction.

Choose one of the following:

- GEIC 102. The Sociocultural Dimensions: Community Perspective*
- GPSYC 101. General Psychology*
- GPSYC 160. Life Span Human Development*
- GSOCI 140. Microsociology: The Individual in Society*

Cluster Five Learning Objectives

After completing Cluster Five: Individuals in the Human Community, students will be able to do the following.

In the wellness domain:

- Understand the dimensions of wellness, the various factors affecting each dimension and how dimensions are interrelated.
- Understand the relationship between personal behaviors and lifelong health and wellness.
- Assess their own levels of health and wellness and understand how these levels impact their quality of life.
- Identify and implement strategies to improve their wellness.

In the sociocultural domain:

- Identify factors that affect individual and group behavior in social contexts.
- Identify factors that lead an individual or group to adopt a particular position on social and behavioral issues.
- Discern the extent to which sources of information about the socio-cultural domain are reputable and unbiased.
- Evaluate the extent to which the approach to, and uses of, psychosocial research are ethical and appropriate.