Cluster One: Skills for the 21st Century
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Cluster One is the cornerstone of The Human Community at JMU. 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 Requirements

- Complete one course in each grouping of courses, Critical Thinking, Human Communication, and Writing.
- Demonstrate competency in information literacy skills by successfully completing two tests: the technology test (Tech Level I) and Information Seeking Skills Test (ISST).

GWRIT Placement and Exemptions

Students may receive credit or exemptions for GWRIT 103 under the following conditions.

Receive credit for GWRIT 103 for:
- 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 GWRIT 103

Receive an exemption for GWRIT 103 for:
- A SAT II Writing score of 670 or higher

Students who have received credit for GWRIT 101 are not eligible to receive credit for WRIT 100. Students who have received credit for GWRIT 102 are not eligible to receive credit for WRIT 100 or GWRIT 103.

Cluster One Structure

Students complete their nine credits for Cluster One by completing one course in each of three groupings of courses representing the main content disciplines of the cluster: Critical Thinking, Human Communication, and Writing. Students complete one course in each area and the courses may be taken in any order. Students are required to complete course work and the information literacy competency exams during their first year at the university.

Critical Thinking

Cluster One requires completion of one of four courses offered in critical thinking. Students study various techniques and approaches for analyzing and evaluating information, arguments, premises, concepts and their relationships. Depending upon the course, the content focuses on basic business principles or issues in recent history or mediated communication or the functions of language.

Choose one of the following
- GBUS 160. Business Decision Making in a Modern Society
- GHIST 150. Critical Issues in Recent Global History
- 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: Principles and Practices
- GCOM 122. Fundamental Human Communication: Individual Presentations
- GCOM 123. Fundamental Human Communication: Group Presentations

Writing
Cluster One requires completion of the writing course GWRIT 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
- GWRIT 103. Critical Reading and Writing

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.

Required Competencies:
Information Literacy
Cluster One requires completion of the 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)

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.