Cluster Two: Arts and Humanities

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By studying and experiencing works of fine arts and literature and by understanding their place in cultural and intellectual history, students develop an appreciation of the human significance of the arts and humanities through history and across cultures.

Cluster Two Structure

Cluster Two introduces students to the arts and humanities, those expressive forms that humans have valued as having intrinsic worth. Students complete their nine credits by choosing one course from each of three tiers, each representing a broad area of study in the liberal arts. These three tiers are 1) Historical, Cultural, Philosophical Perspectives; 2) Fine Arts; and 3) Literature.

Tier One: Historical, Cultural, Philosophical Perspectives

Students will take one course from the list below that reflects broad historical, cultural, and philosophical perspectives. The GHIST courses introduce students to the great intellectual and religious bases of Western, Middle Eastern, Asian, and African cultures. The three philosophical and religious 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. The GHUM courses are interdisciplinary explorations of cultures, periods, or issues such as Human Rights, which cross cultures. GAMST 200 focuses on questions of American identities and how they are forged from a complex interplay of cultural, historical, religious, and ideological perspectives. Thus, all courses in Tier One are broadly cultural, deeply philosophical or religious, and historical. Students will understand the varying responses within different cultures to central issues about the human condition and ways of expressing and determining 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
- GHIST 101. Global Culture to 1650
- GHIST 102. Global Culture since 1650
- GHUM 102. God, Meaning, and Morality
- GHUM 250. Foundations of Western Culture
- GHUM 251. Modern Perspectives
  (such as Enlightenment or Romanticism or Human Rights)
- GHUM 252. Cross-Cultural Perspectives
  (such as East Asian or West African)
- GPHIL 101. Introduction to Philosophy
- GREL 101. World Religions

Tier Two: Fine Arts

Students will take an art or art history, music history, or a theatre course that will introduce them to the fine arts. 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 Tier 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 fine arts, music or theatre – 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: Ancient to Renaissance
- GARTH 206. Survey of World Art II: Renaissance to Modern
- GMUS 200. Music in General Culture
- GMUS 203. Music in America
- GMUS 205. Global Music to 18th Century
- GMUS 206. Global Music 18th Century to Present
THEA 210. Introduction to Theatre

Tier Three: Literature

The literature surveys provide students with extensive reading experiences of representative genres and authors, 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: Restoration through the Romantic Era
- GENG 236. Survey of English Literature: Victorian Era through the 20th Century
- 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

Students planning to participate in one of JMU’s Studies Abroad Programs in Florence, London, Martinique, or Salamanca may fulfill some or all of their Cluster Two requirements depending upon the program in which they participate. For additional details, consult the International Programs Web site at http://www.jmu.edu/international/studyabroad/gened.html.

Cluster Two Learning Objectives

In Cluster Two, students read, write, and think about the arts, humanities, and culture; they visit historical and cultural sites and experience art, music, theatre, dance, and literature. They learn what it is to live lives enriched by reflection, imagination, and creativity.

After completing Cluster Two, students should be able to:

- respond in an informed way to the form, structure, and aesthetic qualities of artistic and literary works;
- identify and analyze similarities, differences, and interrelationships among the fine arts;
- apply appropriate vocabulary and concepts for the description and analysis of artistic, literary, historical, and philosophical or religious works;
- explore interrelationships among historical events and intellectual, artistic, literary, and philosophical or religious movements and works;
- explain how artistic and literary works from past and present civilizations are individual expressions of cultural, historical, and intellectual forces; and
- articulate central philosophical and religious questions and the varying responses to them within different cultures.