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 GPOSC 200 or GPOSC 225 to complete the Cluster Four requirement.

**Cluster Four Structure**  
*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. JUST 225 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
- JUST 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
- GEGOG 200. Geography: The Global Dimension
- GPOSC 200. Global Politics
- GSOCI 110. Social Issues in a Global Context

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**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

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