Cluster Four: Social and Cultural Processes

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Courses in Cluster Four require students to think critically about their own society and its relationship to the larger global community. These courses develop responsible and enlightened global citizenship by examining a wide variety of the processes that shape the human experience. Students will take one course that focuses on the American experience and one course that examines the global experience.

Cluster Four Structure

Cluster Four courses are not sequenced so that either part of the cluster may be taken first or they may be taken concurrently. Students may not take POSC 200 and POSC 225 to complete the Cluster Four requirement.

The American Experience

Each American Experience course provides students with an understanding of the major themes and concepts that structure American life today. HIST 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. POSC 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:
- HIST 225. U.S. History
- JUST 225. Justice and American Society
- POSC 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:
- AFST 200. Introduction to Africana Studies
- ANTH 195. Cultural Anthropology
- ECON 200. Introduction to Macroeconomics
- GEOG 200. Geography: The Global Dimension
- POSC 200. Global Politics
- SOCI 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:
- The social and political processes and structures using quantitative and qualitative data.
- The 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 and culture.
- 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:
- The basic global problems.
- The global political, social, cultural and economic systems that shape societies.
- The issues involved in analyzing societies different from one’s own.
- The theoretical models used in studying global problems.
- The strengths and limitations of solutions to global problems across and within cultures.