

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES (GP)

September 1, 2015

I. Short description

Global Perspectives courses encourage substantive engagement with cultures outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context. Students will encounter and reflect upon the global differences and cultural diversity that shapes our world. Courses may focus on factors such as contemporary or historical experiences, mores and norms, products, practices and customs, or guiding beliefs and presuppositions. All courses are expected to reflect theologically on the meanings and consequences of diverse perspectives and experiences, including a fuller understanding of a Gospel that is both culturally contextualized and culturally translatable.

II. Thematic Core Learning Outcomes and Interpretation

A. Students will be able to . . .

1. understand the history, culture, or social experience of at least one cultural group outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context
2. analyze the global context of at least one cultural group with reflection on one's own context
3. articulate a Christian theological understanding of global differences, cultural diversity, and unity

B. Expansion and Interpretation of the outcome statements

To engage today's interdependent world, students need to work with people and communities from across the globe. Christians are additionally part of the global church and benefit from interacting with and learning from fellow Christians in a global context. Global Perspectives courses provide students an important opportunity to grow in their global awareness. This theme may be satisfied by and integrated with GEL *programs* that advance the development of skills in intercultural literacy and competence as discussed below.

1. Outcome #1: Students will be able to understand the history, culture, or social experience of at least one cultural group outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context.

"Understand the history, culture, or social experience": Global Perspectives courses equip students to study and understand another culture in relation to its traditions, beliefs, experiences, politics, economy, social structures, or history. While the emphasis is on human and social factors, substantive focus on global processes (such as globalization or the movement of people or the flow of ideas) and geography (the role of place, ecology, etc.) as it relates to the human context under study is welcomed.

"At least one cultural group": Many courses in this theme will deal with multiple groups, either in their contemporary settings or through their historical development. The goal of this outcome is to ensure that students will develop a deeper understanding of at least one community that identifies itself or has in the past been identified by such social and cultural characteristics as language, heritage, ethnicity, caste, and territorial boundaries. The course should enable students to engage substantially, critically, and appreciatively with at least one such group.

“Outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context”: This refers to the Global Perspectives emphasis on cultures (western and non-western) outside the Anglo/Anglo-American civilization and tradition. Anglo/Anglo-American refers to the United States and the dominant groups of Canada; Anglo refers to the dominant majorities of the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. While the American context has clear distinctions from the experiences of these other nations and groups, they do have a shared heritage including colonialism and language. This theme is intended to push students beyond the context in which they are currently situated as students at Wheaton College.

2. Outcome #2: Students will be able to analyze the global context of at least one cultural group with reflection on one’s own context.

“Analyze the global context”: Students should understand the cultures/societies being studied in their own terms and with a sincere desire to learn from the models, practices and priorities of the culture studied. That is, students should gain a relatively complex understanding of the culture(s) being studied in multiple facets (e.g., economic, historical, social, cultural, artistic, literary, political) as well as how these facets interact with or are influenced by larger global processes and forces. A course that is primarily about a particular topic in which examples are used from various cultures (e.g., an economics course that draws case studies from many international contexts), but does not develop students’ understanding of any particular cultural context in depth would not be an appropriate course for this theme.

“With reflection on one’s own context”: As students articulate the commitments, suppositions, and/or practices of a culture in its own terms, they will then be able to interact with that context in critical and respectful ways, whether or not the claims within that tradition are ones that the interlocutor desires to affirm. This respectful engagement of another cultural group in its context requires students to grow in self-awareness of their own cultural context and presuppositions.

3. Outcome #3: Students will be able to articulate a Christian theological understanding of global differences, cultural diversity, and unity.

“Articulate a Christian theological understanding of global differences, cultural diversity, and unity”: Because all human beings – women and men of all cultures and languages – are made in the image of God, diversity is both part of the created order and inherently good. Human sinfulness has marred the beauty of God’s created order so that human differences are also an occasion for sin and brokenness to be manifest in human life. In courses studying other religious traditions, students should be able to articulate the commitments, suppositions, and/or cultural logic of other traditions on their own terms. Students should demonstrate theological discernment and respect as they interact with and learn from global Christian traditions and communities.

The overarching goal of courses in the Global Perspectives theme is to expose students to the reality of global differences and cultural diversity while considering how we should respond as Christians. As members of the global church, students should grow in their awareness and appreciation for our brothers and sisters in Christ outside Anglo/Anglo-American contexts.

4. Global Perspectives Courses and GEL Programs

Students who successfully complete a GEL approved program (including orientation, an immersive cross-cultural experience outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context, and debriefing) will satisfy the Global Perspectives theme if the program has applied for and received approval

from the Curriculum Committee for meeting the Global Perspectives outcomes, whether or not specific courses in that program meet this particular theme guidelines. For example, students studying global economics and business in a semester program in Indonesia may meet the requirement through the required orientation, immersive, and debriefing components of the program even if no specific course for credit during the term meets these outcomes.

III. Guidelines

A. Expanded Description

None given.

B. Connection between area outcomes (Part II above) and the 12 overall program goals of Christ at the Core (see p. 8-9 of the Proposal)

1. Global Perspectives courses ask students to “understand the history, culture, or social experience of at least one cultural group outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context.” This relates to “Christ at the Core,” Holistic Learning Goal #4 of “engaging constructively with racial, cultural, social, and religious diversity with the goal of learning to treasure the breadth and scope of Christ’s church and God’s world.” This goal contains both an academic dimension of understanding local diversity as well as seeking to cultivate the affective outcome of treasuring “the breadth and scope of Christ’s church and God’s world.”
2. An important goal of Global Perspectives is growth in an intellectual humility as expressed in “Christ at the Core,” Wisdom Learning Goal #3: “growing in intellectual virtue and critical self-awareness through engagement with the complex questions of history, human values, and contemporary life.”
3. This growth in Global Perspective should be done in a thoughtful and theologically informed manner. As students learn to “articulate a Christian theological understanding of global differences, cultural diversity, and unity” this supports “Christ at the Core,” Christian Character Learning Goal #4: “growing in their love for others, for the created order, for Holy Scripture, for the church of Christ across the world and throughout history, and for the truth, goodness, and beauty of the Triune God.”

C. Examples of Assessment

Given the diversity of courses from across the disciplines that will be under the theme of Global Perspectives, faculty may employ those discipline-appropriate measures of student success to determine achievement of the three learning goals.

A range of rigorous assignments could provide evidence that students have successfully achieved the three Student Outcomes given in section II.A. Depending on the structure of the course, one significant assignment might be relevant for assessing more than one outcome; in other cases a series of assignments will be more appropriate. A few examples and suggested approaches are offered here as *possible inspiration* of disciplinary appropriate and rigorous options, but **use of these exact assignments is not required**. Faculty are encouraged to go beyond these or substitute other creative assignments as they develop individual courses.

1. Assessment of Outcome 1: Understanding another cultural group involves substantive engagement and analysis with that group’s context or global and social factors that shape their

experience. This can be accomplished through a larger project (written or oral) that demonstrates contextual awareness and answers a key question related to understanding the cultural group in its context, or it could be addressed in essay questions or a class debate.

2. Assessment of Outcome 2: Analyzing the global context of a cultural group and one's own context requires developing an understanding of both the non-Anglo/Anglo-American culture while also critically reflecting upon self and one's culture. A wide range of assignments could assess this from reflection journals to an exam essay question or critical self-reflection incorporated into a larger project.

3. Assessment of Outcome 3: Articulating a Christian understanding should be an important component of at least one assignment. Tacking it on to the end of a task – such as a single paragraph addressing Christian concerns at the end of a research paper – would not have the same rigor as assignments that ask students to consider Christian understanding throughout.

D. General Advice

For this theme in particular, experiential learning should be emphasized and valued. Assessment techniques most amenable to experiential learning activities should be strongly supported.