A global studies program with emphases on globalization and world news events has the potential for strengthened connections between undergraduate education and the ‘real world’ as it happens (reducing the ‘cloister’-effect sometimes found amongst educational institutions). Having an innovative program that fits a university’s mission and curriculum may connect students to significant post-graduation opportunities and help UMM’s efforts to internationalize its curriculum and promote global citizenship.

A study of current world news would encourage good news consumption habits and teach students a high degree of information literacy with world news resources. Integrated with other coursework with a global focus, students would develop skill in synthesizing academic research with journalistic accounts of current world news events.

Prospective Student Learning Outcomes

- **Caring:** By engaging current world news events regularly, students may develop a wider purview of ordinary concerns than they might otherwise. Also, students will have the tools to discuss world events with peers, coworkers, and friends and family, expanding the circle of concern.

- **Learning to Learn:** The study of current world news would encourage good news consumption habits and teach students a high degree of information literacy with world news resources. Integrated with other coursework with a global focus, students would develop skill in synthesizing academic research with journalistic accounts of current world news events.

- **Foundational Knowledge:** Becoming conversant with world news events could operate as a form of foundational knowledge, leading students to greater understanding of course material that focuses upon globalization and, perhaps, course material in other areas (particularly of the humanities and social sciences).

- **Human Dimension:** Students would engage intercultural difference and gain perspective on the own experiences as world-historical subjects by examining multiple perspectives.

- **Application:** The curriculum features significant emphasis upon oral communication, information literacy, and project management. This training, combined with the familiarity with world dynamics fostered by the curriculum, should make graduates from such a program appealing to certain employers and graduate programs.

A GSM-with emphasis minor would be obtained by a) taking a mix of courses in the major that reflect global issues/globalization; b) taking supplementary courses.

A GSM-with emphasis minor would be obtained by a) taking a mix of courses in the major that reflect global issues/globalization; b) taking supplementary courses. Supplementary courses:

1. an "Introduction to Global Studies' course that reviews the history and theory of globalization;
2. an ongoing 2-credit global current events seminar that students would take for a required number of semesters;
3. a global studies course that focuses upon a topic in global politics, economics, or world history;
4. a course that reviews the history and theory of globalization;
5. a course that focuses upon a topic in global politics, economics, or world history.
6. a course that focuses upon a topic in global politics, economics, or world history.

A major, if the minor is a success, would retain the structure described above, but would likely include a) an annual global studies course; b) require students to produce a detailed analysis of a particular issue. Ideally, this analysis would be in fulfillment of an end-of-semester assignment in another course, creating a cross-course learning opportunity.

Do you have interest in, expertise, or experience with global citizenship education, the teaching of current world news events, globalization studies, or programs designed to scaffold with other academic programs? I’d love to hear your insights, recommendations for research to review, criticisms, and questions.

Prospective Institutional Outcomes

- Admissions: would a featured global studies program appeal to students and parents uncertain about a university with a liberal arts focus and/or a remote rural location? Would such a program be marketable?

- Retention: would students whose educational experience is tied to current world news events be more likely to see their education as relevant?

- Student Culture: would a global studies program at a liberal arts campus foster a strong outward-looking community of students, or strengthen pre-extant outward-looking communities?

- Post-Graduation Outcomes: Would students with a global studies degree thrive after graduation?

A Model of what the Curriculum Might Entail

Curricular initiatives in global studies could be scaffolded with a variety of programs. A pilot Global Studies minor program could be linked to a wide variety of majors.

For example, a Global Studies minor (GSM) with a Foreign Language emphasis; a GSM with Econ/Management emphasis; GSM with Environmental Studies emphasis; GSM with History; Anthropology, or Sociology emphasis; GSM with Pol, Sci, emphasis; GSM with Humanities (English, Art History, etc.) emphasis.

In this model, students would select an emphasis that corresponds to their majors.

A GSM-with emphasis minor would be obtained by a) taking a mix of courses in the major that reflect global issues/globalization; b) taking supplementary courses.

Opportunity

A global studies program with emphases on globalization and world news events has the potential for strengthened connections between undergraduate education and the ‘real world’ as it happens (reducing the ‘cloister’-effect sometimes found amongst undergraduates). It could stimulate a vital common conversation about the world and students’ place in it. It might also contribute to stronger learning and performance in other classes.

Additionally, a global studies program would seek to foster global citizenship, provide dynamic, relevant problems for critical thinking, and foster independent learning habits and skills. Finally, there is opportunity for effective cross-fertilization between a global studies program and other areas of the liberal arts curriculum. The contexts, theories, histories, and texts students engage in their courses might ‘come alive’ with more frequency if they helped explain the intercultural dimensions, social and historical contexts, significant policy debates regarding current world news.

Implementation Specifics for a Global Studies Minor

A. A curriculum structured around globalization, totaling 4 required courses, 4 pre-selected courses within a track allied to another major, and 10 credits of a recurrent 2-credit discussion seminar of current world news events.

B. Discussion seminar: in this recurrent 2-credit seminar (for a minimum of 10 credits), students would follow a rotating list of six global world news events and prepare discussions on the events on a weekly basis. In addition, students would provide contextualizing presentations on the events from a series of positions ("the historical background," “debates within U.S. Policy regarding the issue,” “world perspectives on the issue,” “a key cultural or geopolitical context”). End of the semester assessment would engage students’ understanding of the geographic, historical, and cultural contexts of the event, of policy debates regarding the event, and would include a cumulative assessment of students’ understanding of global news and geography.

C. Each semester, the discussion seminar would require students to produce a detailed analysis of a particular issue. Ideally, this analysis would be in fulfillment of an end-of-semester assignment in another course, creating a cross-course learning opportunity.

Challenges and Prospective Areas for Research

Challenges:

1. Designing tracks that contribute to other majors; i.e., making the GS program a net benefit for majors with a global/international focus.

2. Making use of available resources while developing a coherent, effective curriculum.

Prospective Areas for Assessment and Research:

1. Relation between Global Studies and student knowledge and understanding of the complexities of global events;
2. Impact of Global Studies upon students’ ethical purview;
3. Efficacy of interdisciplinary links between the current events seminar and courses within the program;
4. Efficacy of interdisciplinary links between courses within the program;
5. Relation between program participation and student success within the liberal arts curriculum;
6. Contribution of program participation to post-graduation outcomes (employment, graduate school, etc.).

Proposal

An academic program that integrates the ongoing study of global news events with a focus on interdisciplinary perspectives on globalization. This program would be proposed as an academic minor, with the possibility of expansion into a major program if there is consensus about its quality and value to students and the institution.