Thematic Focus Course Proposal

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**Thematic Focus**(Learning Foundations or Learning Explorations is a prerequisite and Cultural and Social Difference: Identity and Theological Explorations are pre- or co-requisites)

The Thematic Focus courses play a critical role in the Integrations Curriculum. These courses offer students a chance to explore and critically examine in depth a theme of their choosing. While these courses will utilize a single Way of Thinking to examine the theme (a co-taught class may count for two Ways of Thinking) the course will also reflect upon how different Ways of Thinking would approach the same theme differently in an effort to help student see the distinctive value different disciplines bring to bear on an issue.

While these 4-credit, 200- or 300-level courses can count toward the major, they have several obligations to the general education program. These courses are dedicated to a single theme, include a common reading on that theme, contribute to the Integrated Portfolio, and introduce students to the liberal arts and sciences goal of studying a diverse array of disciplinary approaches. They can be on any topic within one of the themes. Faculty who teach a Thematic Focus class on the same theme will be meeting to select a common reading for their themed classes and to discuss possible ways to maximize integration across sections. Faculty who teach Thematic Encounter courses will be encouraged to attend these discussions. In cases where these courses are team taught by two faculty members with different methodological approaches, they can count as two distinct Ways of Thinking.

Requirements: An artifact for the portfolio, assignments for assessment of Integrations Curriculum Learning Goals, use of the common reading, introducing students to the liberal arts and sciences goal of studying a diverse array of disciplinary approaches, and one co-curricular or arts event related to the theme of the Thematic Focus course.

In the Integrations Curriculum a course can be designated as either:

1. A Way of Thinking, OR
2. CSD: Identity (CI) or CSD: Systems (CS), OR
3. Learning Foundations, Learning Explorations, or Learning Integrations, OR
4. Theological Explorations (THEO 1) or Theological Integrations (THEO 2)

Thematic Encounters or Thematic Focus\* designations must be attached to a course with a Way of Thinking designation.

Any course carrying one of the above designations may also have one engagement^, except for Theological Explorations (THEO 1), CSD: Identity, Learning Foundations, Learning Explorations, and Learning Integrations, which cannot carry engagements:

1. Artistic engagement (ARTE)
2. Experiential engagement (EXP)
3. Global engagement (GLO)

* Any course may satisfy the Quantitative Reasoning skill requirement.
* Any course (except course that fulfill Theological Explorations, Theological Integrations, Learning Foundations, or any course with a THEO course number) may also satisfy the Benedictine Raven.

\*Thematic Focus courses will be renumbered based on theme and course level to be consistent across the curriculum. They will still carry the Department prefix.

The renumbering will be as follows:

277/377 - Justice Theme  
278/378 - Movement Theme  
279/379 - Truth Theme

Each course under the Theme will have a different letter, for example:

HIST 276A  
HIST 276B, etc.

^Semester-length study abroad courses may carry both GLO and EXP.

Themes

**Justice**This theme focuses on historical and contemporary social change, whether forms of oppression or advocacy for human dignity and inclusion. Courses might explore concepts of justice, or historical or contemporary calls for fair and equitable conditions, institutions and laws, or the fight for human rights and equality, or various policies and movements that have restricted the same.

**Movement**   
This theme examines the interactions of ideas, people, energy, information, or matter as they flow from one location, literal or metaphorical, to another. This theme recognizes that movement can occur across conceptual, historical and stylistic boundaries, and that humans, other animals, and even the most basic components of our world move in one form or another, and often, from one form to another.

**Truth**This theme examines what truth is, why it is valuable, how it shapes choices and our perceptions of ourselves and our world. This theme might explore efforts to discover and promote truth, or the ways in which lies, errors, biases, or faulty science subvert, obscure, and misidentify truth.

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***A single section of a course can only carry one theme.***

**Learning Goals**

Analyzing Texts - Intermediate

Students evaluate texts for significance, relevance to the students’ goals, and make connections among texts and/or disciplines.

Collaboration - Intermediate

Students use group roles effectively, build constructively on the work of others, incorporate multiple perspectives into the work of the group, and produce independent work that advances the project.

Information Literacy  - Intermediate

Students locate relevant information using well-designed search strategies, evaluate and use appropriate and multiple resources, and articulate why using information has many ethical and legal implications.

[Thematic Focus Teaching Guidelines (link)](https://www.csbsju.edu/documents/Integrations%20Curriculum/Teaching%20Guidelines%20-%20Thematic%20Focus.docx)

Thematic Focus Rubric (link not available at current time)

Course number:

Course title (as listed in the official catalog). If a topics course, please list the specific title this request applies to:

Abbreviated course title for the class schedule (30 characters or less including parenthesis & designation)

Prerequisites (if any):

MOST RECENT Official course description from the Academic Catalog. If this is a topics course, please list description for this specific topic:

Instructor:

List all other designations applied for:

Received:

Please note:

A.  The committee understands that some courses may still be in development. Prompts that ask for examples of assignments seek information about the spirit of what students will do and instructors are not bound to the specific details (e.g. writing prompts) provided.

B.  The committee includes faculty from a variety of disciplines. Please remember to briefly explain disciplinary terms, contexts, and/or texts to allow all the members of the committee to best understand how your responses address the question.

C.  As you are answering these questions, please keep in mind that students will need to produce work to assess their fulfillment of the related learning outcomes if applicable.

**THEME**

For which theme are you applying? (check box)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Justice |
|  | Movement |
|  | Truth |
|  |  |

1. Please provide an introductory overview of the course by elaborating on course content.

2.a. How will the theme be integrated throughout the totality (please see the teaching guide for further information) of the course content, and if appropriate, lab content? Your answer should address how you will build in the tools/knowledge/content needed for the course.

2.b. Provide an example(s) of assignment(s), lab(s), and/or activity(ies) where students do this.

3.a. How will your course's designated Way of Thinking contribute to students' understanding of the theme?

3.b. Students will submit an artifact to their portfolio that demonstrates how students use the course's designated Way of Thinking to examine the theme. Please describe the type of artifact students could produce. (The students will use this artifact in Learning Integration their junior or senior year.)

3.c. A student reflection will be submitted, i.e. for students to have some further information about their process, etc., relating to the artifact. (Please initial you understand this)

We encourage you to consider using the DEAL model and point to teaching guidelines.

**LEARNING GOALS**

As you are answering the following questions, please keep in mind that students will need to produce work that will be used to assess their proficiency in the related learning outcomes. All assessments/assignments related to the learning goals need to focus on the theme.

**Analyzing Texts--Intermediate**

4.a. How will students learn to evaluate texts for significance, relevance to the students’ goals, and make connections among texts and/or disciplines?

4.b. Describe an activity or assignment where students will demonstrate they have met the intermediate Analyzing Text learning objective. Please include a potential example prompt.

**Collaboration--Intermediate**

5.a. How will students learn to use group roles effectively, build constructively on the work of others, incorporate multiple perspectives into the work of the group, and produce independent work that advances the project?

5.b. Students will complete the Collaborative--Intermediate DEAL reflection to demonstrate they have met this objective. Please initial here to acknowledge this required element.

**Information Literacy--Intermediate**

6.a. How will students learn to locate relevant information using well-designed search strategies, evaluate and use appropriate and multiple resources, and articulate why using information has many ethical and legal implications?

6.b. Students will complete the Information Literacy--Intermediate DEAL reflection to demonstrate they have met this objective. Please initial here to acknowledge this required element.

**Liberal Arts and Sciences**

7. This class is intended to "introduce students to the liberal arts and sciences goal of studying a diverse array of disciplinary approaches." This should include engagement with at least one Way of Thinking in addition to the course's designated Way of Thinking.

Provide an example of an activity that will facilitate students making connections between how your Way of Thinking approaches the theme and another Way of Thinking approaches the same theme.

**Common Reading**

Thematic Focus courses must include a common reading on the theme. This common reading is selected at a meeting of instructors teaching thematic focus courses in the next academic year. The purpose of the common reading is to provide all students studying a theme with a shared understanding of an aspect of the theme which then can be explored from a variety of Ways of Thinking.

8. Initial here to indicate that you agree to assign the selected common reading on the theme.

9. How will you integrate the common reading into your course?

**Co-Curricular or Arts Event**

Thematic Focus courses must include a co-curricular or arts event related to the theme.

10. Initial here to indicate that you agree to have your class attend a co-curricular or arts event related to the theme.

11. How will you integrate this event into your course?

(Optional) Additional information (is there anything else that you would like the GECC to know about this course or application?):

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