**Thematic Clusters**

Thematic clusters provide students with opportunities to explore an issue, theme or topic from a variety of perspectives. The clusters encourage students to integrate their learning by juxtaposing competing and complementary ways of framing complex issues and problems at a more advanced level. Co-requisites: Ethical Inquiry, Social Responsibility, and Citizenship. Other pre-requisites for courses in the Thematic Clusters vary by course and are determined by the department offering the course.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students completing a thematic cluster will

1. develop a broader and more comprehensive knowledge of an issue or topic than is achieved by a single disciplinary perspective;
2. understand and articulate orally and in writing how subjects are approached and framed from different disciplinary perspectives;
3. gather, interpret and use information at a level appropriate to the courses in the cluster.

**Cluster Characteristics**

Clusters will include between 5 and 12 existing or new courses from different departments at the 200-level or above.

1. Students must take a total of three courses in the cluster from at least two different prefixes and can count only one course that could be used toward fulfilling their major.
2. Cluster faculty will provide a 3-year rotation schedule for cluster offerings. A cluster must be available for a minimum of 5 years.
3. A minor may substitute for a cluster if it requires at least 15 credit hours and comes from outside the student’s major department. Departments offering multiple minors must specify how students taking a major and a minor in the same department will satisfy Cluster learning outcome number one.
4. A double major may substitute for a cluster if at least 15 credits of the second major are distinct from the first major.
5. All cluster courses employ writing as a part of learning and assessment.
6. Cluster faculty will plan and assess the cluster’s coherence, share syllabi and explicitly articulate overlap and integration. Such integration could take a variety of forms: a distinct course, a sequence of assignments within or across courses, sequencing of courses, journaling, etc.
7. Each cluster is encouraged to develop co-curricular activities and opportunities for the practical application of what is learned in the cluster.
8. Any departmental prerequisites for the cluster must be clearly identified. Individual course prerequisites will continue to be established by the home department. Core co-requisite: Ethical Inquiry, Social Responsibility, and Citizenship.
9. Continuing students wishing to take a cluster course at another institution must get prior approval from the assistant provost for undergraduate programs or the chair of the Core Curriculum Committee for the course to count toward the cluster requirement. The assistant provost and the CCC chair will consult with cluster faculty as appropriate on these prior approvals.