

**Self-Study Report on Global Perspectives, GENED 140**  
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**Catalog description:**

*This course introduces students to key terms, concepts, issues, and relationships in economics, geography, and political science. The course investigates how increasing globalization impacts issues such as authority and competence of the nation-state, population growth and migration, economic development and trade and patterns of international cooperation and conflict.*

*May not be taken on an S/NC grade basis.  
Unreq: LSINDP 140*

**1. Sources of information for this report:**

- a. Earlier self-study reports
- b. Report of Summer 2003 Global Perspectives/US Experience in a World Context workshop
- c. Results of 2004 pre-course and post-course direct assessments
- d. Results of 2004 student evaluations relating to achievement of goals
- e. Spring 2005 syllabi for most Global instructors

**2. Mission Statement:**

Global Perspectives introduces core ideas in economics, geography and political science essential for basic understanding of trends, problems and issues of global importance.

**3. Course Objectives:**

In summer 2003, a workshop involving instructors from Global Perspectives and US Experience in a World Context resulted in the rewriting of the goal for both courses to simplify and reword them in the language of student learning outcomes. The new goals and objectives are as follows:

Global Perspectives should help students achieve the following *goals of general education*:

- Think critically and analytically, integrate knowledge and draw conclusions from complex information.
- Understand and appreciate the culture and diversity of the U.S. and other countries, and live responsibly in an interdependent world.
- Acquire a base of knowledge common to educated persons, and the capacity to expand that base over their lifetime.

- Develop problem-solving skills using maps, graphs, and tables of descriptive statistics.

Global Perspectives should help students achieve the following *course-specific objectives*:

- Identify countries of the world and basic geographical features and patterns of resource distribution.
- Understand the origins of international problems and the changing role of the U.S. in the world.
- Understand contemporary population concepts and trends.
- Compare political and economic systems and their effects on international relations and U.S. foreign policy.

#### **4. Relationship of course to mission of the University, the goals of General Education, and the objectives of the Core area.**

The very first sentence of the University mission statement mentions “global perspectives,” as follows: “The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is committed to the development of the individual, the growth of personal and professional integrity and respect for diversity and global perspectives.” University objectives, too, list a commitment to “globalism,” along with multiculturalism.

With respect to specific General Education goals and objectives, faculty have identified a number of ways in which Global Perspectives instructors meet them, as follows:

#### **Gen Ed goal: Understand and appreciate the culture and diversity of the U.S. and other countries, and live responsibly in an interdependent world.**

Five of the current Global Perspectives professors have lived abroad for long periods; three were born abroad. They draw on their extensive experiences in other cultures to help students understand different perspectives and different cultures. All professors assign exercises intended to help students see the world through the eyes of others. For example, one professor has students access a decision making simulation (<http://www.churchworldservice.org/decisions/index.htm>) in which they are asked to consider themselves in the place of a person in a less developed country making everyday choices about food, medicine, crops, jobs, etc.

**Global Perspectives objective: “Identify countries of the world and basic geographical features and patterns of resource distribution.”**

All faculty give map quizzes to familiarize their students with all of the countries of the world. All also spend time discussing global poverty and related resource-distribution issues.

**Global Perspectives objective: “Understand the origins of international problems and the changing role of the U.S. in the world.”**

Global Perspective professors accomplish this goal in a number of ways. One does this primarily by looking at a number of major contemporary global issues characterized by a very high degree of international interdependence. Such issues include economic globalization, global warming, comparative poverty and development assistance, the AIDS pandemic, international migration, global security issues, and (strained) US relations with the European Union and the Islamic World. In each case, students contemplate the difference in perspectives between nations and consider the scope for international agreement or conflict.

**Global Perspectives objective: “Understand contemporary population concepts and trends.”**

Population trends are covered in all of the Global Perspective sections, although the geography professors, not surprisingly, emphasize them more. The two-team taught sections (economics and political science) spend 2-3 weeks on population measurement concepts and trends, including the demographic effects of the AIDS pandemic. Other professors discuss population issues in the context of sustainable development, international conferences on population, and countries’ population planning policies, e.g., China’s “One Family, One Child” policy.

**Global Perspectives objective: “Compare political and economic systems and their effects on international relations and U.S. foreign policy.”**

All of the Global Perspective professors discuss various types of political and economic systems, and their effect on international relations in their sections. For example, one professor compares the different types of authority relationships in absolute monarchies, constitutional monarchies, oligarchies, theocracies, democracies, communism, and fascism. As examples, she uses the U.S., the Soviet Union, Iran, and Uzbekistan. She also familiarizes students with different types of economic systems, such as feudalism, capitalism, and socialism, and explains the role of the United States in shaping the international economy (market economy).

## **5. Developments since the last course review, in spring 2003**

In summer 2003, faculty from Global Perspectives and U.S. Experience in a World Context met to develop assessment instruments for the two courses. The four faculty members who participated accomplished the following:

- a. Rewrote the course goals for the two courses;
- b. Agreed on the administration of a “subjective” assessment at the end of the course evaluating student perception of the extent to which the course met its learning objectives;
- c. Developed a pre-test and post-test assessment instrument for the two courses. The pre-test is supposed to be administered in the first ten days of class, the post-test in the last ten days. Professors have the option to include the post-test on the final exam. The assessment has ten multiple-choice questions. The first six are an adaptation of questions included on the 2002 National Geographic-Roper Literacy Survey (see [www.nationalgeographic.com/geosurvey](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geosurvey) ). The other four relate to a passage from Thomas Friedman’s *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*.

Also, in late summer 2003, five Global Perspectives and one U.S. Experience in a World Context instructors participated in a workshop for the purpose of developing course units on topics related to Communist and Post-Communist Eurasia. Each of the six professors developed lecture material, reading lists and Power Point presentations on topics in their areas of expertise (AIDS in the former Soviet States; Russian political philosophy, political transitions in Russia; political/economic transitions in China; Women in Russia and Central Asia; and religion in the post-Soviet states). This two-day workshop was funded by the Department of Education Title VIA Grant to Enhance International Studies. The goal was to share knowledge on transitions in Eurasia, the area of focus of the grant and encourage greater coverage of that area in sections of Global Perspectives and U.S. History in a World Context. These types of units/modules would be more useful to Global faculty if there were a Global Perspectives website for sharing teaching materials and ideas (see weaknesses/recommendations below).

## **6. Collaboration between departments**

As a result of these workshops and a team-teaching arrangement between Jeffrey Heinrich in Economics and Anne Hamilton in Political Science, there is good communication between faculty in Economics and Political Science who teach this course. Communication and collaboration between Geography faculty and faculty from the other two departments is not as strong. This is partly due to the fact that one faculty member left the department in 2002, and a new hire was not brought on board until fall 2003, after the summer workshop mentioned above had been conducted.

## 7. Assessment

As indicated above, Global Perspectives faculty have developed and started to implement an assessment program. The results for the content-based pre-test and post-tests (direct assessment) are set out below:

<b>ITEM NUMBER</b>	<b>% CORRECT, PRE-TEST (N=496)</b>	<b>% CORRECT, POST-TEST (N=340)</b>
1 (major powers/Cold War)	76.6	61.7
2 (Colonizers of Africa)	46.6	51.8
3 (Oil-exporting region)	92.7	90.4
4 (Communist state in WH)	77.8	79.2
5 (Population>1 billion)	64.9	70.5
6 (UN Security Council)	35.7	49.7
7 (Friedman passage)	60.5	18.7
8 (Friedman passage)	18.3	59.4
9 (Friedman passage)	75.4	63.5
10 (Friedman passage)	56.9	46.2
<b>AVERAGE SCORE</b>	<b>6.05</b>	<b>5.91</b>

This data tells us very little, except that our students enter the class with some basic knowledge about the world. Note that questions 1-6 are identical on the pre- and post-tests; questions 7-10 relate to different passages (sequential, from the same text), so they are not directly comparable.

The fact that the average score went down is discouraging. Most puzzling, in the post-test, is the decline in the reading comprehension scores, as well as the smaller percentage of correct answers to question number 1.

Once spring 2005 data are available, the data will need to be distributed to Global Perspectives faculty for review and discussion.

The results for the assessment of course goals attainment (“indirect assessment”) are set out in the table below. Students were asked to what extent individual course goals had been achieved. A “1” indicates “fully agreed;” “5” was the lowest possible score.

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>MEAN RESPONSE</b>
Think critically and analytically, integrate knowledge and draw conclusions from complex information.	1.21
Understand and appreciate the culture and diversity of the U.S. and other countries, and live responsibly in an interdependent world.	1.25
Acquire a base of knowledge common to educated persons, and the capacity to expand that base over their lifetime.	1.21
Develop problem-solving skills using maps, graphs, and tables of descriptive statistics	1.80
Identify countries of the world and basic geographical features and patterns of resource distribution	1.38
Understand the origins of international problems and the changing role of the U.S. in the world	1.11
Understand contemporary population concepts and trends	1.40
Compare political and economic systems and their effects on international relations and U.S. foreign policy	1.18

## **8. Strengths**

### **a. Continuity in Global faculty**

There has been only one faculty hire, in geography, since the 2003 report, and she has been teaching the course for two years now. In Political Science, Jane Gottlick, one of the original instructors of the course, has returned and taught multiple sections of the course over the last two years. This means that there is a cadre of experienced, committed instructors teaching the course.

### **b. Assessment program in place**

An assessment program has been developed and is being implemented. The process of rewriting the course goals and developing the assessment instruments has made faculty focus on what we are trying to achieve and the best way to achieve this. Heightened consciousness of course goals has made us rethink how it is that we do what we do.

### **c. Commitment to multidisciplinary**

A review of the syllabi indicates that all departments teaching this course are committed to multidisciplinary. We do not use common texts across

departments or even within departments, so this has to be judged on a case-by-case basis.

## **9. Weaknesses/recommendations**

- a.** Need to integrate Geography faculty into course planning.

Geography faculty have played a lead role in the development and leadership of this course. John Patterson won the Everett Long award for his leadership of the General Studies program in 2004, and Jayati Ghosh (who left in 2002) participated in the first team-taught section of the course. Unfortunately, Geography faculty have not been able to participate in recent course workshops. Although their lack of participation has not been because of a lack of commitment to the goals of the course, this has affected the communication (especially on an informal basis) between the Geography faculty with other faculty teaching the course. A summer or winter workshop with Geography faculty participation would help to remedy this.

- b.** Need to develop mechanism for sharing course materials.

Global Perspectives does not have a common web site to share course materials across faculty and departments, as well as over time. The World of the Arts has a D2L site each semester, in which each faculty member is enrolled as an instructor. The development and maintenance of such a site should be explored. This could be invaluable, especially for new instructors.

- c.** Need to take assessment program to next stage.

Global faculty needs to decide whether the assessment tools need revisions and whether these data suggest that changes are warranted. Bearing in mind that we only have one semester of data at the time of writing this report, preliminary analysis of the data raises doubt about its value.

- d.** Need to consider adopting common student assignments and (minimum) standards. For example, perspective analysis paper, if assigned in all sections, could be used as the basis for assessing goals number 1 and 2.