Global Connections and Historical Comparisons Focus Area (rev. August 11, 2014)

About the Focus Area

Global Connections and Historical Comparisons (GCHC) is a six-course focus area within the International Studies major. The focus area is geared towards International Studies students who are interested in developing a historical perspective on the processes, institutions, and ideas shaping the contemporary world. Ultimately, students pursuing the Global Connections and Historical Comparisons track will receive a major in International Studies and a minor in History.

Global capital and new technologies of communication now appear to be eclipsing the power of nation states and transforming personal lives. But today’s globalism and its challenges have important historical antecedents. Oceanic and transcontinental circuits of commerce, warfare, the slave trade, shared technologies, and religious movements have linked Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas for more than 500 years. Modern capitalism and the state arose out of this first global world and its manifold interconnections.

The Global Connections and Historical Comparisons focus area invites students to explore this historical lineage and its impact on contemporary geopolitics and international institutions, political ideologies, and asymmetries of political and economic power. Global migration and diasporic experience also has a long history, and this focus area explores the cross-cultural exchanges and cultural innovations that result from the interactions of peoples in the new contact zones created by commerce, warfare, and empire.

Key topics and themes include:

• Oceans, Empires, and Circuits of Commerce, Goods, and Commodities
• Borderlands, Cross-Cultural Encounters, and Migration
• Slavery & Other Coerced Labor Regimes
• Transformations of Kinship, Family, and Gender
• Origins and Development of Capitalism
• Late Modernity, Cosmopolitanism, and Diaspora
• Political Ideas and Religious Beliefs in Global Perspective
• Decolonization, “Neo-Imperialism”, and the Post-Colonial Condition
• Nations and the Transnational in the Contemporary World

The Global Connections focus area is especially designed for IS majors who wish to deepen their understanding of the historical origins of today’s global world and to graduate with a minor in History. It provides systematic training in historical interpretation and methods, including the use of primary sources. The department’s many small, seminar-style courses encourage in-depth interactions with faculty and other students. The History Minor is also writing intensive: the minor provides the analytic and organizational skills that are the pre-requisites for post graduate degrees and careers in business, law, and public affairs.
Contact

The Global Connections coordinators will be happy to answer any questions about this new focus area:

Professor Sydney Van Morgan (smorga37@jhu.edu), Director of International Studies

Professor Gabriel Paquette (gabriel.paquette@jhu.edu), Department of History

Professor Pier Larson, Department of History

Professor Todd Shepard, Department of History

Professor Philip Morgan, Department of History

Declaring the Focus Area

IS students wishing to declare the focus area must complete the following steps:

1. Make an appointment with Professor Sydney Van Morgan, Director of International Studies, to establish GCHC focus area within the IS major;
2. Declare the History Minor by completing an “add minor” form, which can be obtained at the Registrar’s Office, and having it signed by Professor Toby Ditz (toby.ditz@jhu.edu), DUS-History, who will assign students a faculty advisor.

Academics

Students will be required to take a total of six courses to complete the focus area. Five of the six courses must be selected from an approved list of history courses with a global or transnational orientation published each semester. These courses may be double-counted towards the International Studies major History requirements and will replace the “Concentration” requirement for the IS major:

- 2 courses at the 100-level from the History Department (100.1xx)
- 4 additional History courses
  - a minimum of 3 must be at the 300-level or above. 1 may be at the 200-level.
- 3 of the 4 must be from the History Department (100.2xx -100.4xx); 1 (one) may be given by another JHU department or program so long as it is cross-listed with the History Department.

Completing the focus area will also grant students a minor in History.