

**DEEP
DIVE**
sessions

THE NEW
**GENERAL
EDUCATION**

Building Connections

Matt Ostermeyer, PhD
ostermeyer@arizona.edu



Session Road Map

- ❖ Introduction to the session
- ❖ What is 'Building Connections' and how does it fit into the new GE?
- ❖ If I'd like to propose a Building Connections (BC) course, what do I need to know?
- ❖ Q&A and additional resources



GE Curriculum

Entry Courses


Intro to GE Experience
1 unit


Foundations
9 units (variable)

Core Courses


Exploring Perspectives
12 units


Building Connections
9 units

Exit Course


Portfolio
1 unit



Overarching Goals of Building Connections

- ❖ Practice interdisciplinarity and multi-perspective taking.
- ❖ Explore the unique contributions of knowledge, skills, methodologies, values and perspectives from varied disciplines and social positions.
- ❖ Facilitate higher-order learning activities such as conceptual thinking, problem solving, innovative design, critical analysis, evaluation of ideas, and creation of knowledge/products.



Interdisciplinarity as a Spectrum

Team-Teaching



Single-Instructor

Equal Weight of Perspectives



Supplementing* Perspectives

**still substantial & intentional*

Disciplinary Integration



Connections to Broad Contexts
societal / personal impacts & responsibilities



“Power of Parks” Example - Course Description

Picture a majestic sunset view from the rim of the Grand Canyon. Now, imagine the sounds of laughter and splashing water at a local community pool. Both scenes capture the potential of parks as places of relaxation, inspiration, exercise, connection, learning, and conservation. This course explores how environmental and climate change scientists, public health experts and medical doctors, educators, artists, as well as social justice advocates, understand the importance of parks (and related recreation programs). Assigned readings will be paired with news stories, multimedia and guest speakers to foster dynamic and timely discussions about the role of parks in contemporary society. Importantly, students will visit several parks and use personal reflection as critical context throughout the semester.



Inclusive, Accessible & Flexible Framework

- ❖ The point is, multi-perspective-taking is the focus!
 - The **way** you do it is up to you (just be intentional and impactful)
- ❖ **Not restricted** to the disciplinary categories of *Exploring Perspectives*
 - Natural Scientist, Social Scientist, Humanist, Artist
- ❖ Can utilize other disciplinary perspectives that might be more **specific/specialized**
- ❖ Space to think **outside the disciplinary box** too (ie. social positions)



Required Learning Outcome for all BC Courses

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate the ability to utilize multiple perspectives and make meaningful connections across disciplines and social positions, think conceptually and critically, and solve problems.

Unique course objectives that incorporate specific contexts, content, and activities will map onto and facilitate this learning outcome.



TLS 356: Sport, Adolescents and School

Potential Modified Course Description (current Tier Two INDIV)

This course will encourage you to think critically about sport in school settings through multiple lenses that include sociologists, developmental psychologists, medical experts, politicians, school administrators, coaches, parents, as well as athletes themselves. We will explore a) the economic, political, and socio-cultural forces that affect sport in schools; b) how sport in schools shape and reflect individual and collective values; and c) how classism, misogyny, racism, homophobia, and transphobia create inequities in youth/school sports.



Potential Perspectives

Disciplinary and/or Scholarly Perspectives:

Perspectives from Social Positions:

- ❖ Astronomer
- ❖ Sociologist
- ❖ Linguist
- ❖ Composer
- ❖ Paleontologist
- ❖ Economist
- ❖ Religious Studies Scholar
- ❖ Dancer
- ❖ Botanist
- ❖ Historian
- ❖ Classicist
- ❖ Painter
- ❖ **Etc.**

- ❖ Public Health Expert
- ❖ Medical Professional
- ❖ Business Person
- ❖ Architect
- ❖ Engineer
- ❖ Educator
- ❖ **Etc.**
- ❖ Data Analyst
- ❖ Quantitative / Qualitative Researcher
- ❖ **Etc.**

- ❖ Arizonan
- ❖ Borderlands Resident
- ❖ Marginalized / Minoritized Group
- ❖ Community Member / Organization
- ❖ Activist
- ❖ **Etc. Etc. Etc.**



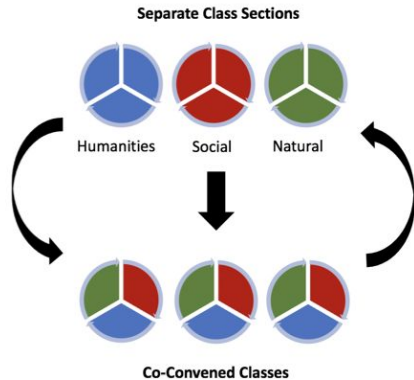
Looking for inspiration?





Team-Teaching - Honors College Example

Three parallel courses regularly meet together throughout the semester to explore questions from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Students conduct collaborative research, and engage in guided discussions and activities designed to practice integrating diverse perspectives.



1. HNRS 150B1 guides students from a **social scientific perspective**, grounded in the practice and methods of anthropology, sound studies, & gender theory.
2. HNRS 160D1 guides students from a **humanistic perspective**, grounded in the practice and methods of photography, art history, & the study of place.
3. HNRS 170A1 guides students from a **natural science perspective**, grounded in the practice and methods of science: testing hypotheses through experimentation and observation and systems thinking.



Team-Teaching

- ❖ Ensures multiple disciplinary insights will be present
- ❖ Provides opportunities for instructors to model interdisciplinary thinking and dialogue in the classroom
- ❖ Allows instructors from different disciplines to engage students in the practice of viewing topics from a variety of perspectives and insights

Team Teaching Resources (*In Development*)

- New UNIV topics course to support development of BC courses
- Resource Manual
- Other Incentives & Support

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Building Connections

Matt Ostermeyer, PhD
ostermeyer@arizona.edu

Megan Baker, PhD Candidate
meganb1@arizona.edu

Katie Southard, PhD
ksouthard@arizona.edu

Emily Jo Schwaller, PhD
emilyjoschwaller@arizona.edu

Next Deep Dives:

- April 15, 2-3:00 | Exploring Perspectives
- April 19, 1-2:00 | Reframing Diversity in General Education
- April 20, 1-2:00 | Writing in General Education
- April 22, 2-3:00 | Quantitative Reasoning in General Education

