

Constellation Descriptions



Below is a list of current constellations. A course listing for each constellation can be found in the college catalog.

Big ideas!

The Big Ideas Constellation asks students to confront one basic question: What is a big idea? Ideas inspire people and communities, but sometimes those ideas have unforeseen consequences. Does the greatness of the idea lie in its originality, or in its consequence? Through interdisciplinary study, students will rigorously examine some of the major ideas that have shaped the human experience—for better or for worse. This grouping of courses provides a survey of fundamental and controversial ideas, examined through different disciplinary perspectives, and investigates how these ideas inform contemporary life.

Children and the Family:

The Children and Family Constellation provides students with the opportunity to explore issues concerning the development and functioning of individuals and families throughout the life cycle: Infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age and older adulthood. Through interdisciplinary study, students will rigorously analyze past and/or contemporary conceptualizations of childhood, education, the family, aging, and death and how scholars working in various disciplines have approached an understanding of these fundamental social concepts.

Community:

The Community Constellation will explore how communities are built and the challenges they face. Students will analyze how communities are defined and the impact of these definitions.

Creativity and the Arts (formerly Aesthetics and Creativity):

The Creativity and the Arts Constellation encourages students to explore the arts, creativity, design and innovation; to interrogate the basis of aesthetic judgments across time, place, and media; to formulate their own criteria for judgments attuned to differences of, for instance, social class, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, and/or to create and compose their own literary and artistic works. Through interdisciplinary study, students will learn to connect the historical and creative context of works in the arts.

Diversity:

Through interdisciplinary study, students will rigorously examine how social, cultural, and biological categories of sameness and difference are made and unmade and how they function within diverse human contexts. The Diversity Constellation will allow students to address a series of complex questions: How and why are we similar and/or different? How are similarities and differences understood among human populations? How do we respond to and analyze sameness and difference? How do categories of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, class, age, and ability shape our understandings of sameness and difference? What are other categories that shape how we understand sameness and difference? What are the consequences of these understandings of sameness and difference at the social, political, cultural, and/or economic level?

Environmental Sustainability:

Every environmental issue has a tangible link to a multitude of academic disciplines; e.g. the natural, the social sciences, the humanities, business, and economics. Many of our present and future problems will not necessarily be solved by a focused course of study in one discipline, but rather, by individuals who have been exposed to a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving. This constellation will prepare our students to participate in a global society that is increasingly sensitive to environmental issues and will deepen their awareness of the complexity of environmental problems and the pressing need for novel solutions

Globalization:

The Globalization Constellation encourages appreciation of the world's diverse languages, cultures, values and practices and recognizes the common and intertwined issues that societies across the globe face. Students will develop comparative perspectives of the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of those issues, including their interconnectedness. Through interdisciplinary study, students will rigorously examine how their lives are affected by globalization and how knowledge from their own personal background and academic disciplines may contribute to global solutions.

Health and Wellness:

The Health and Wellness Constellation encourages students to recognize the importance of holistic personal well-being through interdisciplinary study. Courses in this Constellation will provide students with the understanding of dimensions of well-being and variations across cultures and through the lifespan.

Leadership and Professional Development (formerly Professionalism, leadership and entrepreneurship):

The Leadership and Professional Development Constellation will investigate the philosophical and practical foundations that guide professionals in various disciplines, fields, and contexts. Through interdisciplinary study, students will rigorously examine concepts of leadership and professionalism, as well as the skills involved in motivating and managing human activities in a number diverse contexts, past and present.

Media and Popular Culture:

The Media and Popular Culture Constellation explores how media and popular culture, from film, to music, to sports, to art, to social media, to mass media, suffuse daily life. Through interdisciplinary study, students learn to examine and critique how media and popular culture function in, share, and are in turn shaped by, contemporary society, politics, and culture.

Peace and conflict:

The courses in the Peace and Conflict constellation examine the causes and context of conflict and/or war, and their resolution. The courses consider the practices and complexities of pursuing peace and justice.

Science and technology:

The Science and Technology Constellation explores how the rise of science and technology has profoundly affected nearly every aspect of the world in which humans live. Science and technology are inextricably connected to our lives: social and cultural institutions; our daily habits; our bodies and our minds. Through interdisciplinary study, students will rigorously analyze issues, especially with those with importance to their lives. They will learn how to evaluate claims about science, and they will learn how to evaluate their own use of technology and its consequences.