

# GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT MINOR

## INTRODUCTION

Wesleyan's strengths in language studies, study abroad, civic engagement, and social justice are brought together in the Global Engagement Minor (GEM). The Global Engagement Minor integrates a student's academic studies, co-curricular activities, and experiential learning in order to help each participant reflect on and further cultivate their intercultural development and global engagement. (Please see the GEM Model (<https://www.wesleyan.edu/cgs/GEM/GEM%20Model.html>).)

In order to provide GEM with theoretical and pedagogical coherence, we use the idea of "intercultural competence." Intercultural competence is not a state that one achieves, once-and-for-all; it is a process and an attitude. There are several definitions of intercultural competence in the existing literature, such as Bennett's (2008) "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." We seek to build on such ideas while also explicitly integrating a critically informed approach to globalization into our framework. This results in a multi-faceted "competence" that consists of the mutually reinforcing knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand, relate to, and engage constructively with the experiences of others. (See GEM Learning Goals.)

We understand "cultures" to be porous, fluid, internally contested, and often overlapping — and yet still to be vital realities shaping the lived experiences of all people. Building intercultural competence requires not just acquiring new knowledge but also practicing the skills and honing the attitudes that are needed to interact effectively and appropriately on a basis of informed, mutual respect. Such respect requires, and the GEM reinforces, a reflection on one's own position in the world and one's conceptualization of self.

By acquiring new knowledge, developing new skills and honing existing ones, and cultivating an attitude of responsibility and openness, GEM students not only gain a complex understanding of global problems but also learn to work toward positive solutions. In addition, building intercultural competence in a cohort setting helps advance mutual understanding between culturally different individuals and groups.

## ADMISSION TO THE MINOR

Students may apply to the GEM during Spring of their first year. The application consists of a short statement of interest describing how and why the Global Engagement Minor fits into the student's academic plans, a breakdown of the students' academic history, and a brief recommendation from a professor at Wesleyan.

Interested students can apply here ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdc-w7v6RN6ejvOvDZCxizVudHCAeyslaaJnoCQthnkbfgwA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdc-w7v6RN6ejvOvDZCxizVudHCAeyslaaJnoCQthnkbfgwA/viewform?usp=sf_link)). Students will need to ask a faculty member for a recommendation and inform them that Natalia Román Alicea, Assistant Director of Intercultural and Language Learning, will provide them with a short recommendation form to complete.

Students will be considered part of the GEM group after they have been accepted to participate and they have enrolled in the GEM Introductory Seminar offered in the Fall of their sophomore year. Admission of students to the program in the Fall of their sophomore year or later may be possible via petition.

## MINOR REQUIREMENTS

During their sophomore through senior years, GEM students will complete a series of structured academic and co-curricular activities including an introductory seminar, global perspective coursework, language studies, off-campus cultural immersion, and a capstone seminar that will enable them to synthesize and reflect on the varied components of intercultural competence.

A key feature of GEM is that all these activities are interrelated, building on one another to support GEM students' reflecting on and cultivating intercultural competence. The global perspective coursework, language proficiency, and cultural immersion off campus are all subject to reflection and discussion in the two dedicated seminars and via the students' individual e-portfolios. In addition, we will encourage students to engage in suitable on-campus activities that would enable them to deepen their intercultural learning and global engagement.

### REQUIREMENT 1: INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR

Complete the 0.5-credit "Introduction to Global Engagement" seminar (CGST205).

This introductory GEM seminar provides a set of frameworks and activities to help students process their intercultural experiences, and an initial opportunity to collectively reflect on, critically analyze, and brainstorm about how to act on what they have learned. In particular, Introduction to Global Engagement will provide students with the tools to gain insight into their own cultural rules and biases; analyze how their own experiences have shaped these rules, and learn how to recognize and respond to cultural biases. It will also provide students with a framework to articulate a complex understanding of cultural differences and how they are inflected through power, privilege, and oppression. Students will set up and learn to use the e-portfolio software in the introductory seminar and will be able to add to it over their three years in the GEM.

The Assistant Director of Intercultural and Language Learning will work with faculty and staff colleagues to develop the syllabi for this seminars, building around the learning goals and objectives articulated above (see table, Intercultural Competence Learning Goals).

### REQUIREMENT 2: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE COURSEWORK

Complete 4 full-credit courses dealing with at least 3 world regions, defined as:

- Global
- East Asia / Pacific
- Europe and Eurasia
- Latin America
- Middle East and North Africa
- South and Central Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- United States and Canada

A wide range of courses from across the curriculum can satisfy the GEM Global Perspective Coursework requirement. One's "home" region(s) can count; a single region can count for two of the three regions if two courses engage with significantly different aspects of the region (e.g., the experiences of Indigenous peoples and of colonizers); and pan-global courses can also count toward one of the three regions.

Coursework will be tracked within each student's GEM Certification Form; students will consult with their GEM advisor to ensure that a course will count, which will be tracked by selecting the course through the form's "override" function.

staff. Please contact Natalia Román Alicea, Assistant Director of Intercultural and Language Learning, at [nromanalicea@wesleyan.edu](mailto:nromanalicea@wesleyan.edu) for any questions, comments, or concerns.

### **REQUIREMENT 3: CAPSTONE SEMINAR**

Complete the 0.5-credit GEM Capstone Seminar hosted by the Fries Center for Global Studies.

As part of this seminar, GEM students are expected to complete an e-portfolio that will synthesize their experiences from all requirements. The e-portfolio requires students to reflect on their intercultural development, knowledge, and skills gained throughout the GEM program and to interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of their own and others' worldviews. GEM seniors will present their e-portfolio to other participants and to the advisors of the program.

### **REQUIREMENT 4: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

Intermediate proficiency in two or more languages, including one's native language(s). This requirement can be met in several ways:

- Taking language courses through the intermediate level (as defined by the relevant department; often four semesters of college-level coursework)
- Demonstrating intermediate (or greater) proficiency gained outside of Wesleyan; native speakers of languages other than English can simply inform their GEM adviser of their proficiency.
- For multilingual students, taking any subject course taught in English shows sufficient proficiency in English.

### **REQUIREMENT 5: CULTURAL IMMERSION OFF-CAMPUS**

GEM students need to choose an off-campus experience as a focus for reflection with their cohort members and via their e-portfolio. Options for satisfying this requirement include:

- Study abroad for at least one semester
- Internationally focused internship or fellowship abroad or in the U.S.
- Internationally focused service-learning abroad or in the U.S.
- Internationally located research experience

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Routine administration of the GEM will be handled by the FCGS Assistant Director of Intercultural and Language Learning Natalia Román Alicea, supported by the FCGS Administrative Assistant and overseen both by the FCGS Director and by the GEM Advisory Committee, composed of interested faculty and staff. This advisory committee will meet once per semester to review the status of the program. The core of the initial committee will be the members of the current taskforce.

Each year, one member (faculty or staff) of the GEM Advisory Committee will serve as GEM advisor for each group of up to 10 students in the entering cohort, and will remain as these students' advisor throughout their three years in the program. The Assistant Director of Intercultural and Language Learning will also provide advising support for all GEM students, as well as take primary responsibility for organizing the Introductory and Capstone Seminars, although these courses will be team-taught with support from both faculty and