

# GLOBAL & CULTURAL AWARENESS

## Foundation Document Criteria for General Education Certification

Revised October 2014

### REQUIREMENT PURPOSE

The university's Mission Statement affirms that students at BYU should understand important ideas in their own cultural tradition as well as that of others, and concludes with the hope that BYU will play a role in improving the world. The Global and Cultural Awareness requirement proceeds from the assumption that we cannot improve that which we do not understand. In other words, since one of the aims of a BYU education is to enlarge the intellect through exposure to the broad areas of human knowledge, awareness of others, in particular traditions and cultures outside one's own, is an important and necessary part of a student's education. The Global and Cultural Awareness component is founded upon the Lord's injunction for us to become acquainted with . . . languages, tongues, and people (D&C 90:15), to understand things which are abroad . . . and the perplexities of the nations, and to gain knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms (D& C 88:79).

*The Aims of a BYU Education* document stipulates that students cultivate an informed awareness of the peoples, cultures, languages, and nations of the world. While the American Heritage requirement is specifically focused on American culture, and the Civilization sequence leads to increased awareness of the Western cultural tradition, the Global and Cultural Awareness requirement enhances that awareness with a greater understanding and appreciation of the varieties of human experience across time and space. Inherent in the notion of global and cultural awareness is the perspective that we are all spiritual offspring of the same God, that in addition to our common humanity we also possess a nascent divinity. The Global and Cultural Awareness requirement seeks to help BYU students come not only to see the relativity of many of their own, culturally-derived notions but also to go forth to serve, having had meaningful discussion about or hands-on experience in dealing with real world global issues and problems. Furthermore, seeing the world through others' eyes helps students gain empathy and charity toward diverse cultures.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will acquire *informed awareness* of a global culture outside their own, with the interplay of cultures, languages, and/or nations at an international level.
2. Students will experience *thoughtful reflection* on the above, as demonstrated in a structured, guided manner under the direction of a faculty member. Evidence of reflection implies written or spoken analysis that will include a consideration of the student's own responses to the culture or global issue, often involving

- comparison, and will demonstrate informed awareness.
3. Students will develop greater empathy and charity, and will begin to gain a global perspective by learning to see themselves from another's point of view.

**Expected long-term learning outcomes:**

1. Students will regularly seek information about other peoples, cultures, nations and religions from sources they have come to recognize as reliable.
2. Students will seek to find commonalities shared with others from significantly different cultural/ethnic backgrounds, and recognize and take advantage of opportunities to learn and interact with people different from themselves.
3. Students will engage respectfully with people with different backgrounds, beliefs or perspectives and be able to recognize and deal with prejudice, bigotry, ethnocentrism, false pride and other barriers to effective inter-cultural communication at the local, state, national, and international levels.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COURSE**

- a. The primary focus of the course should be developing an informed awareness of a global culture outside their own, with the interplay of cultures, languages, issues, and/or nations at an international level.
- b. Cultural and global issues should be presented and discussed in a manner which models respect for differing experiences and perspectives.
- c. Students should apply discipline-specific methodology to their thinking and writing on issues of global and cultural significance.