

Creating Courses about Global Forces: Global Challenges and General Education

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**Abstract**

This article describes the work of faculty members and administrators at California State University, Fresno to create courses in the General Education (GE) program taught around the *Global Challenges* framework developed by members of AASCU's Global Engagement Initiative. The first course, H102, was developed in 2008 for the upper division GE program and was designed specifically and exclusively for the Smittcamp Family Honors College. Two new courses were developed in 2013, one that fulfills a lower division GE requirement in critical thinking, and an upper division GE course that fulfills the Multicultural/International requirement. The authors (developers and instructors of the courses) describe experiences teaching the courses, including how resources are selected, strong and weak assignments, pre- and post-semester survey results, developing the course as part of the GE program, and the unique experience of teaching an interdisciplinary course with the ultimate goal of creating more globally engaged students.

*Keywords:* Global Challenges, General Education, Interdisciplinary, Honors, Critical Thinking.

## Introduction

California State University, Fresno (Fresno State) has been involved in the Global Engagement Initiative (formerly 7 Revolutions) at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) since it began in 2007. The primary mission of the initiative is to create a college curriculum to promote the study of important global trends and to help students become more knowledgeable and engaged in a rapidly changing world. The curriculum is designed around seven trends that are recognized as undergoing the greatest change: population, resources, information, technology, economics, conflict, and governance. The primary goals are to allow students to understand and appreciate how these trends are interrelated, how they affect and are affected by globalization, and how the challenges are expected to change in the near and deep future. Dr. Martin Shapiro has served as a member of this initiative (i.e., as a Global Engagement Scholar) since 2007, contributing to curriculum development, collecting and sharing resources, creating an online course, organizing workshops, and creating a toolkit for faculty and a book for students. Other Fresno State faculty members, including the other two authors of this article, have attended AASCU's institutes on *Global Challenges* and have contributed significantly to the development of curriculum, programs, and courses at Fresno State.

This article focuses on specific examples of how to infuse interdisciplinary *Global Challenges* courses into a well-established general education (GE) curriculum with specific learning outcomes (Fresno State, n.d.). We address three interdisciplinary courses that are now part of the GE curriculum at Fresno State: a lower division course on critical thinking, an upper division course on multiculturalism, and an upper division course designed specifically for students in Fresno State's Honors College. Though all three courses cover the *Global Challenges* themes—and though there is some overlap in certain assignments or activities—each course is unique in student participants, emphasis, and perspective. We will address how these interdisciplinary courses were developed, evaluated, and accepted by our GE University Committee, where the courses are housed, and specific content and assignments that work to fulfill the learning outcomes while embracing the *Global Challenges* theme.

### **Honors 102: Revolutionary Changes**

Fresno State's GE program is well tailored to meet very specific learning outcomes (Fresno State, n.d.). Any proposed new GE courses must undergo a thorough review by two committees: the first for the establishment of a new course and the second for its acceptance within the GE program. The Smittcamp Family Honors College, however, has greater freedom in developing and teaching newly designed courses and so was the best place to start in creating a course taught around a *Global Challenges* theme. The Smittcamp Family Honors College accepts approximately 50 highly motivated and engaged students each year from several hundred applicants. Students receive free tuition, credit for housing, and priority in registration, and take courses in a specially designed GE program that includes three upper division GE courses focusing on: Post-Colonial History (Honors 101), Revolutions in Natural and Social Sciences (Honors 102), and Ecological Social Effects (Honors 103). Dr. Shapiro team-taught Honors 102 once a year between 2005 and 2007, focusing on revolutions in the social sciences and physics. In 2008, however, Dr. Shapiro was given permission by the Director of the Smittcamp Family Honors College to modify a version of Honors 102 to focus on the current revolutionary changes described in the *Global Challenges* framework.

Once a year since 2008, Dr. Shapiro has taught Honors 102 as an interdisciplinary *Global Challenges* course, acquiring numerous unique experiences engaging with highly intelligent and motivated students with a variety of backgrounds and interests. Students are typically concerned about issues often addressed in this course, such as poverty, immigration, changes in population demographics, economic inequality, advances in technology, and the depletion and mismanagement of natural resources. Some students come to the course with pre-established ideas and opinions, which can make for lively, meaningful discussions but can also be distracting if only a few highly opinionated students seek to dominate conversations. Still, it is surprising how many students come to the course unaware of some of the major issues confronting the world and the struggles people in their own community face. Despite the fact that these are advanced students nearing the end of their academic careers, many of them report experiencing important and unexpected moments of clarity during the course. The following are quotes from student evaluations:

- “This course needs to be a general education course. EVERY student should be required to take a course like this. It not only made me a more well-rounded student, but human being and I feel like it is the one class I've gained the most lifelong knowledge from.”
- “Honors 102 has tremendously broadened my worldview and finally sparked my interest in things that take place outside of my filter bubble. For me personally this was a long overdue awakening but one that would not have occurred in such an overpowering way if this course was non-honors or taught by a different instructor.”

The lectures in H102 typically take up less than half of class time, with a concerted effort made to use the material as a platform for discussion. The course content comes from a wide range of online resources that have been collected, evaluated, and shared among other Global Engagement Scholars and instructors (e.g., videos and podcasts from TED.com, Radiolab, Intelligence Squared, and BBC). Articles from periodicals such as *Scientific American*, *National Geographic*, and *The Economist* are available to students directly through Fresno State's library. An excellent resource in lieu of a textbook is the National Intelligence Council's (NIC's) *Global Trends Report*, available as a free downloadable PDF (National Intelligence Council, 2012). Sections from this report are assigned to students along with the other resources throughout the semester. The material for a *Global Challenges* course is so diverse and complex that an instructor must act more as a guide to the material and less as an authority on the content, as is typical when teaching a course in one's major. This can make teaching the course more challenging and engaging at the same time. There are also scheduled group discussions covering material students are required to evaluate outside of class

There are three primary assignments that have been developed over the years that appear to be most effective: multimedia website term papers, “Make a Difference” service-learning projects, and PechaKucha presentations (see <http://www.pechakucha.org>). At the beginning of the semester, students pick randomly from a collection of topics (e.g., food deserts in urban areas, fracking and water use, robosourcing, Ogallala Aquifer, etc). They then research the topic and write an in-depth 12- to 15-page term paper that they also present as a multimedia website with embedded streaming videos, hyperlinked references, and well-cited images. For this assignment, students have used e-portfolio platforms

by Digication and Pathbrite or the website builder Google Sites. Ahead of the assignment due date, students are taught the Credibility, Accuracy, Reasonableness, and Support (C.A.R.S.) checklist for evaluating online content (Harris, 2015). Information literacy is an important aspect of this class as revolutions in information and technology are part of the global challenges. Students are also asked to cite all references within the e-portfolio, including all images, videos, podcasts, and websites as well as any other resources.

Students have reported that they enjoy the creativity afforded by multimedia presentations, which also can be shared with friends, family, and possible future graduate programs or employers as a representation of their best work. At the end of the semester, students present what they learned from their paper to the class in a presentation style termed PechaKucha. A PechaKucha talk is a PowerPoint presentation with exactly 20 slides and in which the transition between slides is automatically set at 20 seconds. In this style of talk, slides should display powerful images and few words. This forces the students to be well-rehearsed, and the talks are often fast-paced, exciting, and engaging. In Honors 102, students are asked to create two short-answer questions from their talks and post their questions and their PechaKucha PowerPoint talk on their website/e-portfolio. Each student is given a short rubric scoring card that he or she must fill out for each speaker. The scoring card asks questions about the clarity, creativity, and subject matter of each presentation. The student's final exam is a random selection of 10 questions which had been created by other students and from which the student can select six to answer. The exercise has value because students have to examine their material from a teacher's point of view, isolating the most salient features in their talk to put into their questions. Students can be very attentive and interested in the material if a member of their peer group presents the content. This is evident by the questions asked after each talk and in the comments written on the scoring cards. In this way, students learn from other students about the global challenges information as well as different styles of presentation. The students are attentive to others giving talks but do admit to a high level of anxiety in presenting. From an instructor's perspective, these are some of the most innovative presentations, with students competing, in a way, for creativity and dynamism.

Service-learning has been well-established as an effective way to increase civic responsibility and appreciation of diversity (Hurd, 2006), which are key

components to the *Global Challenges* curriculum. Service-learning has been a particularly effective and important part of the college experience at Fresno State (Leimer, Yue, & Rogulkin, 2009). The information presented in a *Global Challenges* course can be rather foreboding, centering on such issues as the depletion of natural resources and increasing economic inequality. Nevertheless, it is important that students be allowed to make a difference, even in a small way, within these areas. In Honors 102, students complete a semester-long service-learning project called “Make a Difference” developed by Lisa Anderson and Martin Shapiro. The project follows five steps: (1) Students identify a problem; (2) they educate themselves about the issue and about people and agencies addressing the problem; (3) they take action; (4) they create a way to inform the public (e.g., YouTube video, Prezi, PowerPoint presentation on Slideshare.com, Instagram page, Facebook page, etc.); and finally (5) they write a reflection. Each stage is documented with writing, photos, and/or links within an e-portfolio. Students are afforded a great deal of freedom in this assignment, from raising funds and awareness about a cause to changing behavior patterns in their own lives. An analysis of the types of projects performed break down into four basic types: educating others (41%), volunteering (23%), fundraising and awareness (23%), and changing personal behaviors as a commitment to social change (13%).

The following are some examples of each type of service-learning project. In the “education” project, students visited elementary schools and gave presentations about water use or climate change. One student created a climate change lesson plan that she shared on Merlot II. Students who “volunteered” worked at Fresno State’s food bank (the Bull Dog Pantry) or helped in a cleanup day at one of the local rivers. One student completed a “fundraising and awareness” assignment by hosting a Heifer International Party to inform friends and family about this NGO and raise money to buy livestock for a farming family, while another started her own Kiva page to raise money for micro-lending. One student carried out a “changing personal behavior” assignment by monitoring his family’s water use, implementing ways to conserve water, and then tracking the changes over the course of a semester, while another took on the very ambitious task of living on \$2.00 a day for a month to better understand food insecurity and poverty. She then kept very accurate notes of her purchases on a Facebook page and shared with family and friends issues related to her struggles and those in the world living in poverty.

Honors students in this upper division GE course have proved to be wonderfully engaged and focused. They thrive on assignments by which they can express their creativity and share what they have learned—as well as their opinions—about complex issues. Some students have chosen to focus their senior-level thesis requirement on topics they learned about in this *Global Challenges* class, such as predatory lending practices in the Central Valley of California and students' views and knowledge of economic inequality.

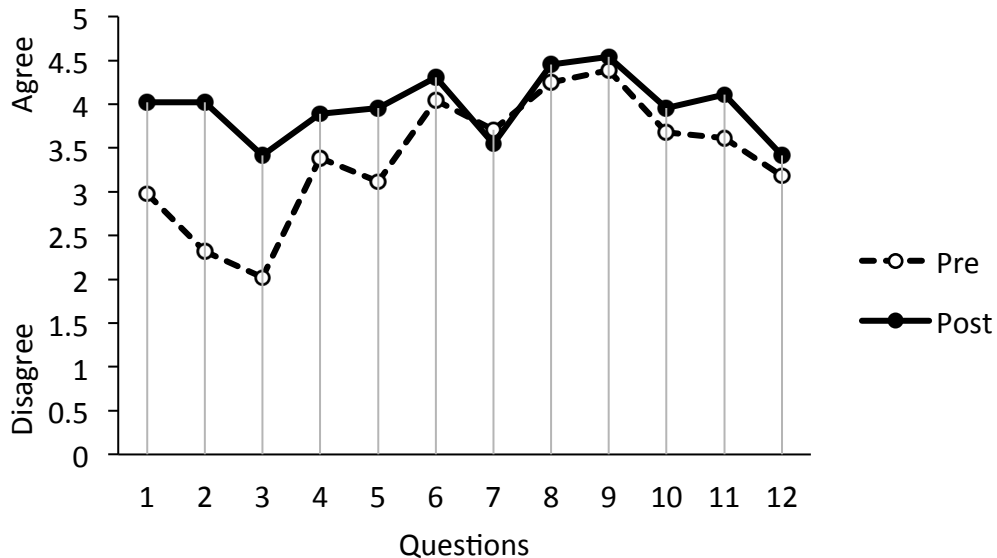
A pre- and post-semester survey was created by the Global Engagement Scholars and administered to two sections of Honors 102 students in 2009 and 2010. The students were given 12 questions relating to their attitudes and interest in global issues:

1. I know quite a lot about the main issues facing the world today.
2. I know quite a lot about the main issues that will likely face the world in 2025.
3. I feel confident in forecasting what the world will be like in 2025.
4. I am committed to civic involvement (e.g., voting, public policy issues, contacting local officials).
5. I am very knowledgeable about how to get involved in civic life.
6. I believe my actions as an individual citizen can make a difference in shaping the future.
7. I am optimistic about the future.
8. It is important to temporarily withhold judgment when exposed to new information.
9. I am curious about what happens in other parts of the world.
10. I feel a connection to people in different parts of the world.
11. Events happening in other parts of the world affect my daily life.
12. I read information about other parts of the world regularly.

A total of 46 students took the pre-semester survey, and 44 took the post-semester survey. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the results with a level of significance ( $\alpha$  value) set at 0.05. The within-subject factor was survey questions as each student answered all questions. The pre/post-



semester scores had to be considered as a between subject factor because results were not linked to the same student and so had to be treated as scores coming from different (between) subjects. As Figure 1 shows, there was a strong increase in agreement to questions from the beginning to the end of the semester,  $F(1,88) = 46.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , demonstrating the overall increase in knowledge and engagement the students felt after the course. There was also a survey question (within subject factor) effect  $F(11, 968) = 35.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and a question by pre/post-semester interaction,  $F(11, 968) = 10.985$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The interaction indicates that the change in response before and after taking the class was different between questions (e.g., there was a significant pre-post difference in question 1 but little difference in question 7). This allowed for a pre/post-semester post-hoc analysis for each question, and a significant increase in questions 1 through 5 and question 11 was found. As can be seen in Figure 1, question 1-5 pre-semester scores started rather low and related to a student's self-evaluation of their own knowledge, which students felt improved during the semester. Some of the other questions relating to optimism (question 7), curiosity (question 9), and students' ability to make a difference (question 6) started rather high, showing their initial interest and commitment to these topics. The increase in question 11 is suggestive of how students in this Honors course on global challenges further see the importance of events around the world affecting their lives.



*Figure 1.* Responses to pre- and post-semester survey. Responses averaged across students for each of the 12 survey questions (see above for specific questions). The data presented here represents two courses with 46 students taking the pre-semester and 44 students taking the post-semester survey.

### **Campus-Wide General Education Curriculum**

In light of the success of the Honors 102 course, along with the use of *Global Challenges* and Fresno State's ongoing commitment to AASCU's Global Engagement Initiative, the then provost, William Covino, and the dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dennis Nef, supported the push to infuse *Global Challenges* into the GE curriculum. Since then, the design of the general education program has been influenced by several sources. The Fresno State internal document entitled "General Education Policies and Procedures" (Fresno State, 2013) describes one of the primary goals of a general education: "The GE Program expands students' intellectual horizons, fosters lifelong learning, prepares them for further professional study and instills within them an appreciation of cultures other than their own." Infusing the *Global Challenges* courses into Fresno State's GE program has also been influenced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U's) Liberal Education and Americans' Promise (LEAP) initiative, which holds "Personal and Social Responsibility" as a primary learning outcome for a general education. Such responsibility includes:

- Civic knowledge and engagement – local and global.
- Intercultural knowledge and competency.
- Ethical reasoning and action.
- Foundation and skill for lifelong learning. (AAC&U, 2015)

In addition to being particularly relevant to the above learning outcomes, the courses described below also employ many of the High-Impact Educational Practices described in AAC&U's LEAP initiative, including: Diversity and Global Learning, First-Year Seminars and Experiences, and Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning. While the courses fulfill many of the goals of Fresno State's GE curriculum and engagement in innovative teaching practices, there were still challenging logistics to contend with in implementing interdisciplinary courses.

Because the courses cover a wide range of content, it was decided that they should not be housed in any one department; instead, that they would be interdisciplinary courses (INTD) housed in the Dean of Undergraduate Studies Office, with funds going to the department of the faculty member who volunteered to create and teach the course. Increasing focus on interdisciplinary studies and interdisciplinary courses is vital in preparing our students for the increasing complexity of a global society that is changing rapidly (Augsburg, 2006; Newell, 2007). Two such courses were approved in November 2013: INTD 50 (Critical Thinking) and INTD 177 (Multicultural/International). Unlike Honors 102, the two GE courses went through a rigorous review process by the University's New Courses Committee as well as the General Education Committee to ensure that the courses met the specific learning outcomes designated for Critical Thinking (Area A) and Multicultural/International (Area MI) (Fresno State, n.d.). The one point of dispute in this process related to a clarification that the material and approach to *Global Challenges* in INTD 50 and INTD 177 were significantly different enough to prevent redundancies for those students taking both courses. The emphasis of each class and the specific ways that they differ are described below.

### **INTD 50: Critical Thinking about Global Challenges**

Learning critical thinking skills is vital to an undergraduate education, and there is some indication that, generally, students are not acquiring these skills. Arum and Roksa (2010) surveyed over 2,000 college and university students and found that about 45% made no significant improvement in their critical thinking skills in their first two years, and after four years 36% showed no significant gain in their "higher order" thinking skills. It was our hope that learning about critical thinking in the context of relevant global trends and applying these skills to information literacy, globalization, and a sense of self-efficacy would improve the effectiveness of a critical thinking course.

INTD 50 is a General Education course designed to teach and promote critical thinking skills. All students at Fresno State are required to take a lower division critical thinking course to meet their General Education Area A3 requirement. Critical thinking courses can be, and are, taught in a variety of disciplines; thus, the interdisciplinary nature of the *Global Challenges* curriculum is well-suited for a course such as this. The four main learning outcomes required of the critical thinking courses at Fresno State are as follows:

1. Recognize, analyze, evaluate and construct arguments in ordinary language.
2. Distinguish between inductive and deductive reasoning.
3. Identify common fallacies of reasoning.
4. Analyze and evaluate the various types of evidence for various types of claims. (Fresno State, 2013)

The following discussion outlines how the *Global Challenges* curriculum has been implemented at Fresno State to successfully meet these learning outcomes. From a critical thinking standpoint, the *Global Challenges* topics of information and technology provide a good introduction to students about the importance of assessing and verifying the accuracy and validity of information. This becomes especially important as they develop an understanding of how information is disseminated so freely and quickly through online sources and social media (i.e., through technological advances). A very useful assignment in this arena is to ask students to examine a number of “viral” internet stories, videos, or “fact memes” that they are already probably familiar with and that are, in fact, either misleading or completely deceptive. There is no shortage of this type of misinformation floating around the internet, with new postings occurring daily. Recent examples of viral misinformation include the fake (but official-looking) advertisements for Apple iOS7 and iOS8 software updates claiming that the updates would either make iPhones waterproof or capable of charging quickly in microwaves (much to the dismay of those who attempted to use these new update features). Students are taught how to use technology to aid them in fact checking information and how to use critical thinking skills to evaluate numerous sources and information.

Each of the seven *Global Challenges* topics involves a number of issues for students to use as platforms for recognizing, analyzing, evaluating, and constructing arguments. Students in INTD 50 use an e-book on *Global Challenges* (Shapiro & Anderson, 2012) and the NIC *Global Trends Report* (2012), as well as other resources depending on the topic. Many of the issues can be presented in the form of an argument that students must analyze and evaluate based on current evidence and then ultimately derive a conclusion about that issue. For example, students can examine issues such as the human impact on climate change, the effects of globalization on different cultures, immigration issues, or the use of drone technology not only in conflict but in increasingly more common civilian uses. Students are often required to take a stance (either pro or

con) on a particular issue and construct an argument with supporting evidence that they present in a discussion-type forum. They must be able to examine the arguments and evidence for the other side of the issue, identify any of the logical fallacies in reasoning, and present their arguments using both inductive and deductive reasoning techniques. Students present their work in weekly assignments, including traditional essay assignments, and formats such as in-class discussions, online discussion boards, interactive blog pages, or journal entries.

Two major assignments are required for INTD 50 that allow students to critically view these issues from both a global and local perspective. The first assignment, called the Global Villager, provides students with an opportunity to view the issues from the framework of another culture by assigning each student a different global persona. For example, a student may be assigned the global villager persona of a six-year-old girl living in Mumbai, India. Each student is then required to examine the various global challenges not only from his or her own perspective (as a student in Fresno, California) but from the perspective of his or her assigned villager. This allows students to consider the effects of globalization in other parts of the world and to recognize how different perspectives might affect the outcome of an argument.

The second major assignment allows for a student who has identified a global challenge that he or she feels strongly about to then “Make a Difference” in relation to that particular issue (see earlier description of the “Make a Difference” project). For example, upon examining arguments about poverty and economic inequality (both global and local) students might become more aware of the problems associated with these issues and then want to do something to effect change in this particular area. Students are required in this assignment to not only inform others about the issue itself (by providing a strong argument supported by evidence) but to also create and implement a plan to help make a difference in this particular arena. Due to the open and individual nature of this assignment, students have come up with a variety of different ways to become more connected to current issues in the world around them. Given the high poverty rates in the Central Valley and the current water crisis in California, students often choose to address these two major issues; however, the way they do so is usually very different. Projects associated with poverty, for example, may involve more traditional volunteer work at a local food bank or homeless shelter, but students have also come up with creative individual projects. For instance, students have

held school supply and book drives to help children at local schools struggling with funding, worked on gleaning projects to supply food banks with leftover farm crops, and, in one case, created a “sandwich a day” project in which the student made and handed out a sandwich every day to homeless individuals she met on her walk to and from campus.

While INTD 50 is offered campus-wide, it is also a required course within the curriculum of Fresno State’s First Year Experience (FYE) program. This program generally comprises a cohort of 100 incoming freshmen who meet some criteria for “at risk” students (e.g., low test scores, required remediation, first-generation college students). Within the FYE program, INTD 50 is presented in four sections of 25 students each. The class size for this course is kept to a minimum due to the individualized nature of the projects as well as the need for some remedial support. Not surprisingly, these incoming students often know very little about *Global Challenges* or critical thinking methods (as is true of many incoming freshmen). By the end of the semester, students are much more willing to question, learn about, and address the issues that are likely to affect their own future. The students not only become more independent critical thinkers, but they also report that they have become much more aware of important global issues they previously knew little about. The pre/post survey was also given to the FYE students at the beginning and end of the full academic year in the FYE program, with 94 students taking the pre-semester survey and 83 filling out the post-semester survey. As can be seen in Figure 2, their responses were similar to those of the Honors students. There was an overall pre/post semester effect,  $F(1,176) = 12.11$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , a question effect  $F(11,1946) = 59.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and a pre/post X question interaction,  $F(11,1936) = 11.98$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . A series of post-hoc independent t-tests found a pre/post-semester difference in questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, and 12. As with the Honors students, these results show the increase in knowledge the students feel they have gained as well as the importance of world events in their lives.

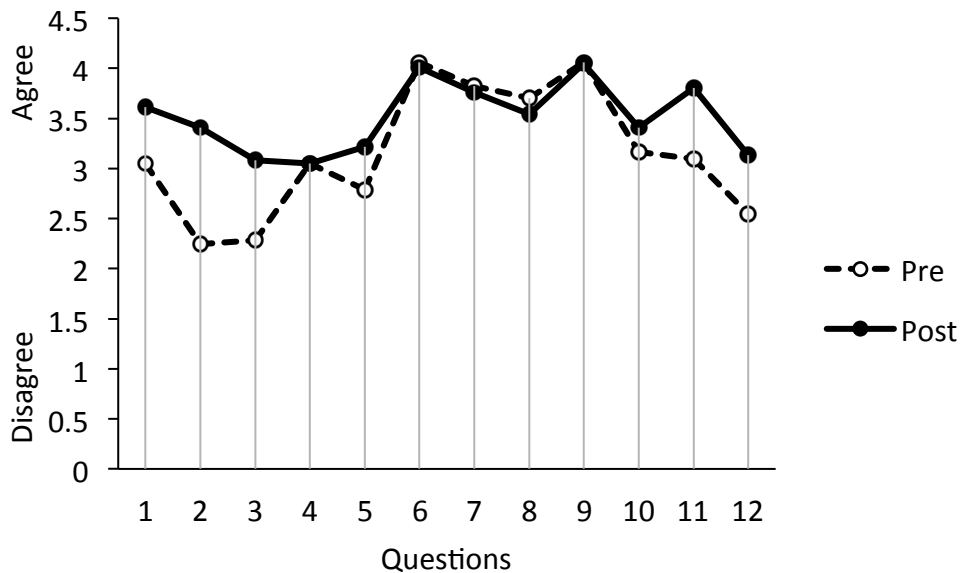


Figure 2. Mean responses to the pre- and post-year survey of students in the FYE program in the 2011-2012 academic year. (See above for survey questions.)

In addition to the pre/post survey, a qualitative assessment of the benefit of using *Global Challenges* in a freshman-level course can be found in their reflection assignment at the end of the course. In these reflections, the students overwhelmingly reported that they are now aware of important global issues they were ignorant to prior to the course, that they view this information as valuable and important, and that they feel committed to sharing their knowledge with others. The following are a few examples of student reflections:

- “For our future in saving our water supply, it has to be the conscious choice of the individual to want to make a difference. It definitely helped me understand the severity of resource conservation and how it really is important to everyone.”
- “To be honest, these challenges seemed so far away. You think only people in third world countries face these challenges but it's a lot closer to home than people think.”

- “The make a difference project has not only widened my understanding of the global challenges we face today but also has made me more passionate about taking some action in response to the challenges I find the most detrimental to our society.”

### **INTD 177: Global Challenges (Multicultural/International)**

All students at Fresno State are required to take an upper division course that fulfills the Multicultural/International (MI) area, which has two specific learning outcomes:

- Explain and interpret aspects of race, gender, culture, class, ethnicity or the relations among nations in a multicultural world.
- Identify systems of oppression, inequality, or discrimination within and among groups, cultures, subcultures or nations. (Fresno State, 2013)

The aim of INTD 177 is to examine the global challenges from a more in-depth perspective that displaces the United States as the central unit of analysis. Unlike INTD 50, which is taught from an emic perspective, this course is taught from a more etic perspective and is open to all upper division students. By privileging foreign sources of information and analyses, the course seeks to broaden students’ understandings of the complexity and diversity of how people around the world consider the significance and impact of the global challenges in their everyday lives. The course unpacked the different challenges by focusing on definitions and ways to study them, central theoretical concepts, contemporary academic articles on aspects of each challenge, diverse viewpoints, and the application of solutions to challenges. A short sociological book by Polish-British academic Zygmunt Bauman entitled *Collateral Damage*, which outlines different democratic challenges to our rapidly changing world, was used to enhance discussion of the overall significance of these challenges. INTD 177 was taught for the first time in the spring of 2014 and had 20 students (seven male, 13 female) from a variety of majors.

The course was structured around seven main assignment areas: quizzes on the readings; Global Villager; novel or nonfiction group discussions; discussion leading; PechaKucha talk; journal; and term paper. The most effective assignments were the book discussions, PechaKucha talk, and the term paper. Students were grouped by book based on their first three preferences. The books discussed were *Unbowed* by Wangari Maathai, *And the Mountains Echoed* by



Khaled Hosseini, *Out of Place* by Edward Said, *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* by Luis Sepulveda, and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Students experienced the greatest trouble with the books by Said and Roy largely because of the nonlinear narrative style and because the students were not familiar with the geographical and historical contexts. Students genuinely liked the other books and looked forward to the book discussion groups. PechaKucha presentations allowed students to examine a group that was actively working on finding a solution to an issue. This provided a hopeful balance to the often unrelenting sense of intractable global problems. The term paper offered students an opportunity to examine an issue in depth. Most students, however, focused on water scarcity close to home. In future classes, students will be required to write about an issue from another perspective, in keeping with the global viewpoints theme of the class.

Students did not like the journal assignment because they were not used to free writing. Entries were largely very brief summaries of the weekly class discussion. As with INTD 50, students were required to create a Global Villager, but they struggled to put much time and effort into the assignment. The discussion groups on the themes of the course initially worked well to help students get to know one another, but later in the course the discussion groups seemed to be viewed as busywork.

In future iterations of INTD 177, the number of assignments will be reduced and the remaining will be enhanced. The book discussions were immensely popular, so two book group readings may be assigned during the semester. The journals and Global Villager assignments will be dropped, and the group discussions on the different challenges will be enhanced by incorporating more active assignments. At times, the instructor's reliance on set lectures and TED talks seemed a bit formulaic. Students found the Bauman book too theoretical and complex, though they had vivid discussions with the instructor around Bauman's insights. The instructor is currently developing an electronic workbook for the class that will contain a variety of assignments and readings.

One of the main limitations of the approach to the course was that most of the students in the class were monolingual, and therefore sources for the course were limited to the English language (although there are wonderful books written in English by authors outside the United States [see above] as well as foreign press periodicals and newspapers written in English such as *China Daily* and *Al*

*Jazeera*). Another limitation was that few students had had significant experience abroad, which often made it difficult for them to grasp different cultural contexts, but perhaps this type of course encourages travel or studying aboard. Yes, despite these limitations, INTD 177 is an interesting course that is immensely rewarding to teach because the subject matter is constantly evolving. It puts instructors outside of their comfort zone but also enables deep and meaningful conversations.

### **Conclusion**

The importance of educating college students about global citizenship is more important than ever in an increasingly connected world (Summit, 2013). *Global Challenges* can provide an excellent framework for making material in a GE course engaging and important. The Global Engagement Scholars have provided a number of excellent resources for content and creative suggestions for assignments. There is a tendency, however, to try to incorporate too many activities and assignments or to attempt to cover too much material in the courses. Global Villager, PechaKucha talks, discussion groups, term papers, book groups, “Make a Difference” service projects, blogs, and journals are all great activities but can be overwhelming for students. Thus, it is highly recommended, especially when first teaching a *Global Challenges* course, that an instructor pick no more than three of these activities to support lectures, resources, and examinations.

It can be difficult to add courses to GE curriculum especially with material that crosses so many disciplines. Departments can view some GE courses as exclusive to their major and can see new courses that meet GE requirements as a threat to their FTEs. At Fresno State, department heads can be reluctant to release their best instructors to teach courses outside their major. We have found two solutions to remedy these problems. The first is for the dean of Undergraduate Studies or the provost to communicate with the heads of the departments to assure them that funds will be transferred to the department or college directly but also to emphasize the need and importance of interdisciplinary courses and the mission of the university to enhance student understanding of global issues. We have also found it easier to recruit part-time or adjunct faculty to attend trainings AASCU Global Challenges Workshops and to teach the courses. These individuals are often looking for more classes to teach, are enthusiastic about teaching, and are not overly committed to university service duties or research. Lisa Anderson, who teaches several sections of INTD 50, is an adjunct faculty member and has been a driving force for getting these INTD courses off the ground at Fresno State. The

## CREATING COURSES ABOUT GLOBAL FORCES:

courses described above could not have been created, approved by the GE committee, and made available to students without the strong support and encouragement of the provost, the dean of Undergraduate Education, the deans of the colleges, and the heads of the departments where the instructors reside. In addition, the instructors for *Global Challenges* courses have to embrace the importance of introducing students to these large global issues undergoing revolutionary changes and be willing to step away from the comfort of teaching courses within their area of expertise. Finding willing instructors, however, has not proven difficult at Fresno State in part because the material centered on *Global Challenges* can be life-altering for students and extremely rewarding for instructors.

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### Author Biographies



Dr. Martin Shapiro is a Professor of Psychology at California State University, Fresno. He specializes in psychophysiology and decision making. He has been a member of AASCU's Global Challenges Committee since 2007 and is an editor on both a manual for teachers and an e-book for students. He has taught a course on Global Challenges for the Smittcamp Honors College since 2008 and helped develop training for faculty members teaching in a First Year Experience Program with the theme of Global Challenges. He has presented papers at the American Democracy Project Conference on teaching Global Challenges for the past 6 years, and conducted several workshops for teachers including a two-day workshop at Fresno State in 2011.



Lisa Anderson, instructor in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Fresno, teaches courses in human evolution, critical thinking, cultural anthropology, applied anthropology and Pacific archaeology. She specializes in Pacific and Hawaiian archaeology, anthropology, and osteology. She is an instructor in Fresno State's First Year Experience Program where she teaches courses in critical thinking about Global Challenges. In 2012, she co-authored an e-book for students on Global Challenges.



Kris Clarke was born in Fresno, California and completed her undergraduate degree in English Literature at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Clarke immigrated to Finland in 1987 where she completed three postgraduate degrees in international relations/development studies and social work. She worked with the European Project AIDS & Mobility for seven years and also worked at the University of Tampere, Department of Social Policy and Social Work. She was a research fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies at the University of Tampere. She relocated to

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