

Brandon Stegall
Interdisciplinary Studies major proposal
Class of 2011

Cross-Cultural Leadership

One similarity that can be found in effective governments, successful businesses, and thriving social clubs is good cross-cultural leadership. In today's increasingly diverse times, it takes more skill to be a strong leader. The study of leadership is an emerging field that is becoming a necessity in an increasingly interconnected multicultural world. A strong leader needs to be able to understand the public and private interactions that occur within and between cultures. Effective cross-culture leaders are able to do this because they can successfully integrate leadership skills with cultural insight and communication skills, allowing them to act as a link between two different cultures. This will allow cultural barriers to be overcome and potentially lead to more fruitful cooperation and/or negotiation. The members themselves will, with guidance, learn to put aside cultural differences that could otherwise interfere with cooperation.

Interdisciplinary Studies: Cross-Cultural Leadership

While Hendrix does have a wide range of majors, it does not have one that educates students to incorporate communication and cultural insight into their political leadership skills. Although Hendrix has political science, anthropology, and sociology courses, political leadership skills are not directly taught. The combination of these disciplines provides a unique and creative approach to leadership training not currently available as a formal major at Hendrix.

My Cross-Cultural Leadership major will allow me the unique opportunity to explore different courses that help explain how culture and communication affects leadership. This major will fill an important niche in the Hendrix liberal arts curriculum because it allows me to learn

how to analyze political theories, examine cultural norms, and build upon my basic communication skills to improve my ability to connect with different cultures. I will have a deeper appreciation for differences and will be better equipped to handle and resolve disputes stemming from inherent cultural differences.

Courses Rationale

The classes for my Cross-Cultural Leadership will or may consist of three politics classes, five sociology/anthropology classes, and three theater arts and dance classes to make up a total of eleven courses. A leader need to be able to understand the history and how the political system works, understand the importance of cultural in society, and be able to communicate effectively. Consequently, I will take politics courses to understand theory behind political system and examine how they work. I will take sociology/anthropology courses to understand the role of culture. And I will take theater arts and dance courses to learn communication skills. Each area, from which my main classes were chosen, will help me become a skilled, culturally sensitive leader.

In my politics courses, I will investigate the many political theories that exist, how these theories affect culture and spread into phenomena, and how modern leaders employ these theories within their leadership role. These courses include:

- POLI 240-T *History of Western Political Thought*
- POLI 230- G *Public Administration*
- POLI 280-G *US Foreign Policy*

A good leader must be able to recognize the cultural differences among his supporters and bridge that gap. In order to further cultivate my understanding of these cultural differences, I will be taking five courses from the Sociology/Anthropology department. By taking courses

from both anthropology and sociology, I will be able to examine how people interact with each other, think as a functioning body, and how each individual is shaped by their cultural backgrounds. To cover this section I will be taking the following courses:

- ANTH 255 *Culture and Sexuality*
- ANTH 310 *Anthropology and Education*
- SOCI 250 *Gender and Family*
- SOCI 365* *Picturing Society: Reading in Social Thought*
- ANTH 300* *Ethnographic Methods*

The remainder of my courses for this major will come from the Theater Arts and Dance Department. The theater courses might seem out of place, but they can provide leaders with basic communication skills that they will need to be successful in any work environment. This is important because cultural differences are impossible to address in the absence of effective communication. Additionally, the ability to communicate effectively is central to one's ability to lead, even in the absence of cultural friction. The theater courses will help build my communication skills by enabling me to speak comfortably and process information effectively in front of an audience. In situations where a leader is present, such as court rooms, board rooms, government hearings, and even small scale community meetings, oratory skills quite similar to those needed to succeed in the theatre are required. The courses that will fulfill this component of my major area are the following:

- TART 110 01 *The Art of Public Speaking*
- TART 140 *Beginning Acting*
- TART 393* 01 *Special Topics in Performance; Presidential Speeches*

Committee Members

For this major, I would like to ask Dr. Shutt to chair the committee, and Professor Muse and Dr. Lee to sit in on the committee. In addition to each of these professors' current duties on campus, they are, or have been, engaged in situations that emphasize the combination of cultural sensitivity and leadership. Dr. Shutt has been involved in various multicultural groups on campus, Professor Muse has studied the many basic backgrounds to understand diverse cultures for theater performances, and Dr. Lee is an anthropology Professor who currently works on campus with the International student program. Each of these professors, in my belief, would appreciate the need for a Cross-Cultural Leadership major.

Cross-Cultural Leadership Courses Layout

11 major courses distributed as follows:

Theory

- POLI 240-T *History of Western Political Thought* (VA) (complete)

Methods

- ANTH 300* *Ethnographic Methods* (SB) [UR] (second semester, Junior year)

Politics (2)

- POLI 230- G *Public Administration* (CW, SB, CW) (complete)
- POLI 280-G *US Foreign Policy* (CW, HP, SB, W2) (complete)

Anthropology (2)

- ANTH 255 *Culture and Sexuality* (Complete)
- ANTH 310* *Anthropology and Education*(SB)

Sociology (2 of the following)

- SOCI 250 *Gender and Family* (CW, SB)
- SOCI 365* *Picturing Society: Reading in Social Thought* (SB, W2)[UR]

Theater ART and Dance (3)

- TART 110 01 *The Art of Public Speaking* (EA) (Core) (complete)
- TART 140 *Beginning Acting* (complete)
- TART 393* 01 *Special Topics in Performance; Presidential Speeches* (complete)

Senior Capstone Independent Study

- **INTE 499*: *Independent Study-Leadership and Culture***

Senior Capstone Experience:

- **During the Senior year, the student will complete:**
 - *An independent study project*
 - *An analytical thesis incorporating learn material with field and project experience (minimum 25 pages, double space)*
 - *An presentation of research findings*
- **The senior thesis and project will be an extension of the research done in the Ethnographic Methods course.**
- **Working in conjunction with faculty advisors, I will refine my research topic no later than August 2010.**
- **The grade for this capstone experience will be based on the content and quality of the thesis (70%), and the presentation of the research at an appropriate venue (30%)**
- **The grade will be determined jointly by my committee.**