



## Grand Challenge Learning at The University of Illinois

*Grow, Connect, Learn*

### What is Grand Challenge Learning?

Grand Challenge Learning (GCL) is a new way for students to participate in General Education at Illinois. GCL courses explore some of society's biggest problems—or "Grand Challenges." GCL introduces students to how people from all across campus think about and respond to three grand challenges: **Inequality and Cultural Understanding, Health and Wellness, and Sustainability, Energy, and the Environment.**

Too often, students are encouraged to see "Gen Eds" as a box to be checked off on the way to their degree, with little connection to their lives or major fields of study. GCL invites students see Gen Ed differently: As a place to develop into critical thinkers and citizens who value deep and interdisciplinary learning, and who can work in teams on creative and innovative projects that solve "real world" problems, while also fulfilling graduation requirements.

When students have an early opportunity to learn how to solve problems, and also to work closely with faculty members and diverse student cohorts, their chances at success improve. Therefore, GCL courses are taught by full-time faculty interested in creating inclusive classrooms that help students from all majors, schools, and colleges work together and learn from each other. Make the most of your Illinois experience with GCL!

### Quick Facts

GCL classes are small, with only 20-25 students who come from all over campus.

Courses are taught by full-time faculty experts with whom students will work closely.

Most GCL courses feature experiential, or "hands-on," learning. Students volunteer with local organizations, visit relevant sites, and make things like documentaries and interactive computer games to apply what they've learned in the course.

Students will create an ePortfolio they can use to showcase and reflect on their work throughout their time at Illinois.

### Grand Challenge Learning Prepares Students To:

- Connect and understand issues studied by academic disciplines and fields across our campus.
- Develop solutions to, and generate new ideas and creative works about, real-world problems important to students and their communities.
- Think critically and reflectively about social and cultural differences such as race, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, language, & disability.
- Identify how complex, interdependent systems affect and are affected by the local identities and ethical choices of individuals and institutions.

### Students Say:

—"I learned about inequality in a personal setting, which allowed me to better understand the varying depths to which inequalities impact the people around me."

—"Grand Challenge Learning changed how I see the world by making me more aware of the issues regarding water cleanliness and availability, locally and globally"

—"Each classmate and professor comes from a different background and when we came together in discussion sections, I learned about many new cultures and how each person has been affected by certain areas of health and wellness"

—"This was one of those classes you never forget. It was a very eye-opening and humbling experience to be around those who care as deeply as I do about these issues."

—"The experiential learning aspect of the course allowed me to immerse myself into the community by working on documentaries we showcased at the end of the semester."



Students in GCL 199: IALS: What's Autism Got To Do with It? in Fall 2015



# Fall 2017 Grand Challenge Learning Classes

Course	Title	Gen Eds Met	Instructor
GCL 124A	<b>Sustainable Earth</b>	Physical Science, US Minority Cultures	J. Tomkin
Discover the impact of sustainability challenges on marginalized and under-represented groups while also learning the fundamentals of physical science. Includes on- and off-campus field trips.			
GCL 126B	<b>Sustainability and Social Science: Urban Sustainability</b>	Social Science	D. Allred
Investigate how to create safe and equitable communities without compromising the earth's natural resources. Students assess hometown neighborhoods.			
GCL 128C	<b>Sustainability in Fiction</b>	Literature & the Arts	C. Bosak-Schroeder
Explore how ancient people understood their role as stewards of the earth. In addition to reading ancient texts, students will volunteer with a local nature organization and examine their own environmental beliefs through reflective writing.			
GCL 143A	<b>Mapping Inequalities</b>	Quantitative Reasoning II, Social Science, and US Minority Cultures	J. Pinar
Contribute to the coding of the "The Illinois Map," an open-ended, virtual learning environment that uses empathy and immersion to explore the racial history of Illinois.			
GCL 148B	<b>Historical Perspectives on Social Justice: Cultures of Disability</b>	Historical Perspectives	J. Bentz
Work within your community to learn how Americans with disabilities have lobbied for access and opportunity for themselves and their families.			
GCL 186D	<b>Health &amp; Society: Death and Dying</b>	Social Science	T. Mansell
From creating a bucket list to planning a memorial, you will learn about social, legal, and ethical issues related to death and dying. Includes visits to cemeteries and mortuaries.			
GCL 185A	<b>Health, Wellness, and the Black Experience</b>	Social Science, US Minority Cultures	S. Smith
Explore how African American communities develop resiliency in the face of health disparities affecting the black community.			
GCL 195C	<b>Fictions of Equality: Crime, Punishment, &amp; Documentary Film</b>	Literature & the Arts, Western Comparative Cultures	L. Johnson
Watch and analyze documentary films to learn about restorative versus retributive justice, fairness and unfairness within the legal system.			
GCL 200	<b>Frameworks for Inequality*</b>	Historical & Philosophical Perspectives, US Minority Cultures	A. Burgos, D. Gilbert, R. Ginsburg, F. Mirafab, K. Oberdeck
This class gathers faculty from education, the humanities, and the social sciences to help students build a deeper understanding of how different approaches to understanding inequality work together to account for particular cultures, communities, and political systems and to develop solutions to inequalities.			
GCL 210	<b>Frameworks for Sustainability*</b>	Historical & Philosophical Perspectives, Western Comparative Cultures	T. Birkenholtz, L. Lucero, B. McCall, M. Sivapalan, M. Viswanathan
This class gathers faculty from the physical sciences, engineering, business, and social sciences to help students build a deeper understanding of how different approaches to sustainability work together to create solutions for a more sustainable world.			
GCL 220	<b>Frameworks for Building Healthy Communities*</b>	Historical & Philosophical Perspectives, Western Comparative Cultures	L. DeThorne, M. Edwards, J. Inda, W. Stewart
This class gathers faculty from the life sciences, humanities, and social sciences to help students build a deeper understanding of how different approaches to health work together to account for particular lifestyles, families, cultures, and communities, and to develop goals and strategies to enhance health and wellness.			

\*All 200-level GCL classes meet twice per week: first for a lecture that includes all students and faculty, and next in individual faculty-led seminars. Through this structure, students benefit from the expertise of multiple faculty while joining a seminar with one professor and a small network of peers.