

Santa Monica College Global Citizenship Theme for 2011–12

During the first half of March 2011, the SMC Global Citizenship Council invited the college’s employees and students to participate in an online poll to select the third annual global-citizenship theme for the coming academic year. From a list of seven nominated choices, the selected theme for 2011–12 will be: **Health, Wellness, and the Pursuit of Happiness**. This follows the annual themes of Water in 2009–10 and Food in 2010–11.

About the Vote

A total 189 employees (faculty, classified staff, and administrators) and 997 students responded to invitations to vote that came via email and SMC Global Citizenship’s websites (smcglobal.org, Facebook, Twitter). After reading a brief summary of each of the seven nominated themes, respondents were asked to choose their first, second, and third choices. These votes were totaled by awarding three points to a first-choice vote, two points to a second-choice vote, and one point to a third-choice vote. Separate totals were tallied for employees and students, and weighted sums of the two groups were calculated so that each group contributed 50% to the overall score. The table below displays the final point tallies, with separate columns for the employee vote, the student vote, and the overall total.

	Employee vote (n=189) weighting 5.28	Student vote (n=997) weighting 1.00	Total Vote
Health, Wellness, and the Pursuit of Happiness	997	1,102	2,099
Poverty and Wealth: The Inequities of Globalization	1,108	955	2,063
Consumption and Waste: Are We Drowning in Stuff?	1,092	965	2,057
Music: The Universal Language	839	942	1,781
Peace, Conflict, and Security	659	867	1,526
Networks: Information and Change in the Internet Age	596	576	1,172
Migrations: Journeys to and from Home	638	478	1,116

Additional notes on the online vote:

- The overall winning theme, *Health, Wellness, and the Pursuit of Happiness*, was also the top choice of the students.
- The leading vote-getter among employees, *Poverty and Wealth*, finished in a very close second place in the overall tabulation. *Consumption and Waste* also was not far behind in third.
- Both students and employees demonstrated broad support of the winning theme. More than half of the respondents in both groups listed it among their top three choices—the only of the seven nominees for which this was the case.
- The fourth-place theme overall, *Music*, received the most first-choice votes among students, while the second-place theme, *Poverty and Wealth*, received the most first-choice votes among employees. In both cases, these were the first-choice selections of 20–21% of their respective group. Among all 1,186 respondents, 232 selected *Music* as their first choice, 213 selected *Consumption and Waste*, and 208 selected the winning theme of *Health, Wellness, and the Pursuit of Happiness*.

About the Selected Theme

The online ballot included a paragraph-length summary of each nominated theme. Here is the description that appeared for the winning selection:

Health is a centerpiece of the United Nations' efforts to promote human development, and modern society has made profound strides in fighting infectious disease and raising life expectancies around the world. Yet we still find the provision of care and the promotion of healthy living to be a perennial challenge, one that knows no boundaries but nonetheless reveals gaping inequities within and between countries worldwide. Moreover, even when physically healthy, we struggle to feel truly well; despite living (on average) longer and more comfortable lives than countless generations of human beings before us, a true sense of happiness and well-being often eludes us. What does it mean to be healthy? What does it mean to be happy? And how can we get there?

As was the intention for the ballot descriptions of all seven nominated themes, this paragraph was intended only as a suggestive, and hopefully provocative, point of departure, and the entire SMC community is invited to develop the ideas of Health, Wellness, and Happiness, and apply them to their work and studies at the college as we collectively pursue the goal of global citizenship—itsself a concept of uncertain definition.

To further assist us in exploring the dimensions of global citizenship embedded in next year's annual theme, here is a listing of the readings, films, and other events suggested in the online poll by respondents who selected *Health, Wellness, and the Pursuit of Happiness* as their first-choice theme:

Suggested Readings:

Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
Edith Beer, *The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust*
Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
Cupcake Brown, *A Piece of Cake: A Memoir*
Dan Buettner, *Thrive: Finding Happiness the Blue Zones Way*
Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*
Deepak Chopra, *Reinventing the Body, Resurrecting the Soul: How to Create a New You*
Dalai Lama, *The Art of Happiness*
Victor Davich, *8 Minute Meditation: Quiet Your Mind. Change Your Life*
Katherine Dunn, *Geek Love: A Novel*
Rob Faigin, *Natural Hormonal Enhancement*
Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia*
Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Art of Power*
Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*
Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living*
Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*
Joseph Murphy, *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*
Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters: A Novel*
Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*
Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*
Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*
T.R. Reid, *The Healing of America*
Luis Rodriguez, *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.*
Miguel Ruiz, *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom, A Toltec Wisdom Book*
Miguel Ruiz, *The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery*
Sharon Salzberg, *Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation*
Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*
Irwin Sherman, *Twelve Diseases that Changed the World*
Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*
Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*
The Holy Bible, The Quran, and other texts of classical religion

Suggested Films:

Across the Universe
The Adjustment Bureau
All That Jazz
Babies
The Beautiful Truth
Black Orpheus
The Constant Gardner
Dirt! The Movie
Eat Pray and Love
Fast Food Nation
Food, Inc.
The Handmaid's Tale
I Heart Huckabees
Inside Job
The Living Matrix
Outbreak
The Princess Bride
The Pursuit of Happyness
The Royal Tenenbaums
Sick Around the World
Super Size Me
Waste Land

Suggested Lecturers and Activities:

Bill Clinton, Christiane Wolf, Darryl-Keith Ogata, Andrew Weil, Jeffrey Smith, LA Marathon runners, Miguel Ruiz, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, President Obama, Yvonne Ortega, Ursula Goodenough, "Doctor Oz", guided meditations, prayers from various religions, meditation training, group exercise and/or dance, knitting/crochet learning groups, Planned Parenthood, Vegetarian/Vegan lifestyle speakers and cooking demonstrations, Yoga

The Other Nominated Themes

All of the six other nominated themes received significant support in the online poll, with at least 80 first-choice votes each and more than 300 mentions as a top-three choice. All should thus be considered excellent candidates for the Global Citizenship theme in future years. Here, briefly, is how they were described on the ballot, along with the most frequently suggested related books and films:

Consumption and Waste: Are We Drowning in Stuff?

Consumption is central to the modern global economy, and its never-ending hunger for growth. How, why, and what we consume drives our demands for natural resources; defines and redefines our cultural identities; reflects our changing notions of the good life; reveals the inequalities within our societies; and generates landscapes scarred by pollution and waste. How we handle our waste and manage our consumption choices and habits is one of the great global issues of our age.

Suggested resources: No Impact Man, The Story of Stuff, Waste Land

Migrations: Journeys to and from Home

Like many of our fellow inhabitants of Earth, human beings are a mobile species. We commute daily. We travel seasonally. And many of us make a lifelong journey from one home to another. As we relocate, we never completely lose connection with the places we leave behind, while nonetheless adapting to our new surroundings and emplacing our transplanted roots. All the while many others are migrating around us, and each of those migrations reshapes and redefines the homes in which we have settled. With unprecedented freedoms and technologies that facilitate global migrations, our individual and collective senses of home have never been more fluid.

Suggested resources: El Norte, The Motorcycle Diaries, The Namesake

Music: The Universal Language

Music, and the bodily movements that often accompanies it, is our universal language. While this language takes a wide variety of forms, illustrating the boundless extent of our human creativity and cultural diversity, it nonetheless can also strike a chord that resonates within all of us, bridging gaps such as age and nationality and socio-economic class that so often divide us. Music displays the wondrous order (and chaos) of the natural world, and it can also powerfully reflect, create, and challenge, the order and chaos—the harmony and the dissonance—of human society. More than anything else, music helps us communicate, and thus connect, with each other.

Suggested resources: Amadeus, August Rush, It Might Get Loud, Musicophilia

Networks: Information and Change in the Internet Age

While the roots of our modern, global era can be traced back decades, and even centuries, the emergence of the Internet has redefined globalization. For better and for worse, the likes of Google and Wikipedia have transformed the rules of information: who creates information, who can access information, and how and by whom is information converted into influential knowledge. Even more powerfully, equipped with a growing array of social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) and ever more mobile ways

to access them, people are weaving dynamic, intricate webs of interaction that are already revolutionizing culture and society in ways both trivial and profound.

Suggested resources: MediaShift, The Social Network, TED.com

Peace, Conflict, and Security

In San Francisco, 25 June 1945, delegates from around the world signed the Charter for the United Nations. Among the goals stated in this document are to “practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.” Needless to say, these goals elude us. What are the sources of our conflicts—from the interpersonal to the international—and of the all-too-often violent means with which we try to resolve them? How do we define peace? Or security? How do modern science and technology complicate issues of peace and security, even while potentially offering us means for resolving conflict and promoting peace and security in non-violent ways?

Suggested resources: Gandhi, War and Peace

Poverty and Wealth: The Inequities of Globalization

As the old saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats. Never before has the average human being been more affluent than today, and the UN’s 2010 progress report on its Millennium Development Goals states that the world is still on target to reduce the proportion of humanity living in extreme poverty in 2015 by half from the level of 1990. But the fight against poverty is far from over, and even under these optimistic projections, it is still expected that nearly a billion people worldwide will be living in 2015 on the equivalent of less than US\$1.25 per day. At the same time, the wealth-generating effects of globalization have so far proven to be disproportionately concentrated on a relatively elite global minority, yielding measurements of economic inequality not seen since the Gilded Age. This begs the practical and ethical question: is fighting poverty enough? What are the causes of the widening gap between rich and poor, and should we do something about it?

Suggested resources: Capitalism: A Love Story, Development as Freedom, The End of Poverty, También la Lluvia (Even the Rain)