

WHEATON COLLEGE

Student-Initiated Connection Proposal

Connections Learning Outcomes: As a result of connections students will be able to:

1. Understand how different academic disciplines analyze topics and solve problems
2. Apply methods or concepts from more than one discipline when analyzing topics or solving problems
3. Communicate using more than one different disciplinary perspective
4. Identify other disciplinary connections both in and outside the classroom

DIRECTIONS for structuring and submitting a Self-Initiated Connection Proposal:

The final date to submit the proposal is the "**last day to drop a course without record**" deadline of the semester in which you plan to take the last course of the Connection. Refer to the academic calendar on the Web for the specific date this semester.

- A proposed two-course Connection must link courses from at least two different Areas, a three-course Connection must link courses from three areas. **The six areas are:** History (ARHS), Creative Arts (ARCA), Humanities (ARHM), Social Sciences (ARSS), Natural Sciences (ARNS), Math/CS (ARMC).
- One single course cannot be used in two Connections.
- You cannot use English 101, Writing, or First Year Seminar, in a Self-Initiated Connection.
- When including an Independent Study in your proposal, you must also submit a statement that includes a full description of the Independent Study, plus the reading list. *It is the responsibility of the student to provide this information.*
- **Attention Seniors:** Proposals may not be submitted in your final semester.

Student Name: ROSS JUDE CIMAGALA

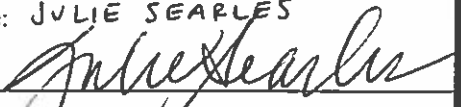
Date: 10/22/2017

Wheaton ID: W00346061

Class Year: 2019

Title of Your Proposed Connection: The Blood Dancing in Our Veins

1. Attach the syllabi from all courses included in this Connection.
2. In a brief essay, identify the inter-connection you have found among these courses. Your essay should address the **Connections Learning Outcomes** found at the top of this page.
3. The faculty teaching each course must read your essay and approve this proposed Connection in the box below.
4. Submit this form, the accompanying essay, and the syllabi to the Committee on Educational Policy, care of the Office of the Provost, Park Hall.

Course #	Course Title	Area	Semester Taken	Faculty Approval
<i>(Example)</i> SOC 230	<i>(Follow this format when filling out your proposal.)</i> Race and Ethnicity	ARSS	Fall 2014	Please print your name and sign below.
B10211	Genetics		Fall 2017	"I have read this proposal and approve it." Print Name: Signature:
MUSC222	West African Mande Dance & Music		Fall 2017	"I have read this proposal and approve it." Print Name: JULIE SEARLES Signature: 
HIST143	Africans on Africa: A Survey		Fall 2016	"I have read this proposal and approve it." Print Name: Signature:

Approved

Date _____

Chair, Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Registrar

revised 08/2015

****Connection Proposal Sign Off****

Dolita Cathcart <dcathcar@wheatonma.edu>

Fri, Oct 20, 2017 at 9:51 AM

To: Ross Jude Cimagala <cimagala_rossjude@wheatoncollege.edu>

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this email as my signature approving Ross Jude Cimagala's self-initiated 3-way connection of the following courses: Genetics, Africans on Africa and West African Dance.

Thank you,
Dolita Cathcart, PhD
History Department
[Quoted text hidden]

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Dolita Cathcart, PhD
Associate Professor
History Department
Coordinator
African, African American Diaspora Studies Program
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Ross Cimagala

Self-Initiated Connection Proposal

10/20/2017

The Blood Dancing in Our Veins

Michael Jackson once said, “To live is to be musical, starting with the blood dancing in your veins.” He may or may not have been aware of the science behind what constitutes a living being, but I aim to propose a connection between *Africans on Africa*, *Genetics*, and *West African Mande Dance and Music* in order to show that he has a point. These classes have all showcased how time works to transform humanity, and have helped to improve my understanding of the human species overall.

Professor Cathcart’s *Africans on Africa* was a survey of the intercultural relations and history between the numerous nations that lie within the African continent, as well as foreign relations from before, during, and “after” colonization. In *Genetics*, Professor Ranjan teaches us about the environmental and internal factors that mutate our DNA, and the grand role which the miniscule molecule plays in every living organism on this planet. *West African Mande Dance and Music*, taught by Professor Scarles, incorporates the driving rhythms and intricate footwork of traditional Mande music and dance to support our readings on the history behind and continuing presence of the music itself.

Previewed in the title, as well as the first few classes of the course, we discussed in *Africans on Africa* how the seed of humanity lies in the heart of Africa, with humans migrating to other continents throughout the course of history. We also learned of the African Diaspora, where Europeans, seemingly unaware of their African ancestry, forced roughly 20 million Africans into slavery and transported them across the Atlantic Ocean. These two events both

represent key processes in genetics: the founder effect and bottleneck effect, both of which affect the transfer of alleles, or genetic mutations, to following generations. In *Genetics* we recently got an in-depth look at the cause and effects of sickle-cell anemia, a topic which was touched on in *Africans on Africa*, discussing its relation to the HbA and HbS genes that are responsible for hemoglobin production, and how it arose due to the environmental pressure of malaria.

West African Mande Dance and Music also discusses several topics from *Africans on Africa*, but with a focus on Mande society. From podcasts about the African diaspora to New York City to readings about the origin of *wassoulou* music, it is clear that there has also been a dispersal of culture along with genes. The two run parallel, as history and time steadily evolve them alongside one another over the course of centuries. The founder effect, where an organism enters a new place and spreads its genome amongst a new population, does not only apply to genetics, but to music as well. As time passes and the influence becomes decreasingly heterogeneous, the lines between what were two different things begin to blur to create something new. A reading on the *Komo* society of blacksmiths in Mali mentioned how members would only marry others from within the society to preserve their mystical power, and in Suzanne H. MacRae's article "'Yeleen': A Political Fable of the 'Komo' Blacksmiths/Sorcerers" she states how "professional training is limited to the offspring of blacksmiths," (59). This could be thought of in genetics as a form of selective breeding, or artificial selection.

Lastly, I would like to refer to Kendrick Lamar's "DNA" as an example of how the three courses are connected. Kendrick Lamar is an African-American rapper, who frequently uses themes of slavery and the African diaspora in his audible and visual music representations. He says how he has "got loyalty, got royalty inside [his] DNA," an idea that also lies within Mande

culture in that lineage and caste affect one's place in society, both of which members are born into. Rap in general represents the evolution of music out of Africa, with its roots in the other African-influenced styles of jazz and R&B.

In conclusion, *Africans on Africa*, *Genetics*, and *West African Mande Dance and Music* have given me a new perspective on how humans evolve over time, both physically and culturally. The courses combined grant insight on the different factors that have influenced how we see the world today, and how much has changed since we as a species took our first steps out of Africa. Our blood has always "danced" in our veins; it just continues to learn new moves.