Thematic Coherence Program -- Draft

Upper Division Themes – 9 units
Retain concept of UD Themes. Sunset old themes? Limit number of themes to enhance coordination? Capstone? Integrate with majors?

Lower Division General Education Electives – 18 Units
Area B lab, Math, Critical Thinking, Area E … Flexibility in this area allows for high unit majors to fulfill American and the World and Lower Division Theme and still take major specific courses, e.g. Calculus. Also allows for major exploration through Area C, D electives.

Lower Division Thematic Clusters – (9 units)
Four-Five Thematic “threads” in Lower Division GE with three courses: Areas B (non-lab), C, D. Limited number of themes and courses, some of which might count across themes. Themes decided by faculty but might include: Sustainability, Globalization, Technology, Media and Society, Science and Society, Identity and Community.

Each theme integrates Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and one Writing Intensive course.

America and the World – 12 units
History/Governance of the global political/economic system and America’s place in it. Fulfills Code requirements (Areas C & D). Includes Academic Writing, Oral Communications in CourseLINKS that culminate in Town Hall Meeting or other civic engagement activity.
Highlights of Thematic Coherence GE Program – Draft

- As with all proposed GE models, the Thematic Coherence program adheres to the overall outlines of the mandated (by EO 1033) GE Program of the CSU: 48 units, 39 lower division, 9 upper division with various areal distributions, the inclusion of a laboratory science, etc.

- The Thematic Coherence program strives to provide students with a clear, coherent pathway through GE, while retaining flexibility to “double count” and otherwise tailor GE courses to the major, e.g. allowing flexibility in choice of Math course by specific major, Area B lab course for majors, etc.

- Includes “America and the World” – a set of four courses that focus on the position of the United States in the global political economy. The “Code” American Institutions requirements are fulfilled here. By including 12 units, even students who, via AP, place out of English composition or American History, would still take “half” of this set of courses, creating a common experience and teaching new material. Linking Oral Comm and Writing in this “link” will provide a content focus for the communications courses – giving students something to write about. This set of courses would include the Town Hall Meeting pedagogy one of the semesters and perhaps another civic engagement activity in a second semester. (I view these courses as spread over an academic year.)

- Lower Division Thematic Clusters are analogous to Upper Division themes in their interdisciplinary nature and thematic focus. Important that there be a limited number of these (to retain coherence) and that students are not “locked” into a theme.
  - Providing students flexibility to switch undermines coherence of themes, but is a reality we must accommodate.

- Lower Division Electives allow both for major exploration (through Areas B, C, D and E) as well as flexibility for students to take major-specific GE courses, e.g. Calculus or a particular lab science.
  - Note, Thematic Coherence program assumes that we will have only one lab course in the Natural Sciences, as required in EO 1033, not the two we currently have.
  - Critical Thinking is placed here, though we might examine other creative ways to link CT with other content courses.

- Upper Division Theme has the nine units of required upper division GE. We might reduce the number of themes to facilitate coordination and include capstone courses in themes. Students could carry thematic focus from lower to upper division, or explore a new theme.

Note: By including “Code” requirements in GE, we free up six units for students. This will lead to fewer GE exceptions for high unit majors and permit students to pick up Minors, take electives within and outside their majors.