

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES CORE CURRICULUM (CASCC)

The curriculum of the College of Arts & Sciences is designed to give students the breadth of study necessary to be broadly educated citizens aware of a wide expanse of human knowledge and experience, and to help students discover and develop new interests and useful skills. In addition to broad exposure to ideas, the curriculum also requires students to spend part of their studies delving deeply into a particular area of study through the choice of a major.

The curriculum is centered on the ethos of the liberal arts. Through study in the College of Arts & Sciences, students will develop facility with tools such as writing, oral communication and information literacy. These skills will be developed through the study of academic disciplines that interpret, reflect and critique human experience, as well as learning of human knowledge about and human connection to natural phenomena. These disciplines will be studied individually and in reference to one another to provide students with a collection of intellectual and essential skills to understand and contribute to subjects both timeless and contemporary. Students will be prepared to appreciate the world we inhabit and, more significantly, be prepared to be responsible and engaged citizens of our interconnected world.

Within the structure of the curriculum, students will have latitude to determine their exact course of study with the support of faculty advising. Such latitude is inherent in the design of the curriculum so as to promote intellectual exploration and growth.

Components of the College of Arts & Sciences Core Curriculum (CASCC)

Foundational Experiences

- 1 Foundation Seminar
- 1 Integrated Perspectives Course
- 1 Foreign Language Course *
- 1 Lab Science Course *
- 1 Quantitative Reasoning Course *
- 1 Race, Power & Inequality Course *
- 1 Nature, People & Justice Course *
- 1 Global Connections Course *

Disciplinary Exploration

- 2 Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division Courses
- 2 Social Sciences Division Courses
- 4 Arts & Humanities Division Courses

Disciplinary Depth

- The Major(s)
- Academic Conventions of Writing, Speaking and Information Literacy
- Culminating Experience

* The foreign language; lab science; quantitative reasoning; Race, Power & Inequality; Nature, People & Justice; and Global Connections courses may double count in the Disciplinary Exploration section of the curriculum.

AP and IB credits may only be used to fulfill Disciplinary Exploration requirements. Credits transferred from other institutions may be used to fulfill CASCC requirements (Foundational Experiences or Disciplinary Exploration) only when approved by the appropriate department chair and/or the director of the CASCC. Any course that fulfills a CASCC requirement may also count toward a major or minor or to fulfill the writing requirement. Courses satisfying major requirements may satisfy other requirements.

The following descriptions articulate the learning outcomes for each type of course within the components of the curriculum.

Foundational Experiences

The curriculum requires that all students take one course from each of the respective designations.

Foundation Seminar

(one writing-intensive W1 course, taken in the fall of the first year)

1. Students will develop writing, reading, speaking, listening and information literacy skills necessary for collegiate-level academic work.
2. Students will develop capacities for independent academic work and become more accountable for their own learning.

Integrated Perspectives Course

(one team-taught interdisciplinary course, taken during the sophomore or junior year, from the list of designated courses)

1. Students will recognize, construct and evaluate connections among different intellectual methods, ways of learning and bodies of knowledge.

Foreign Language Course *

(one course from the list of designated courses)

1. Students will study language as a complex multifunctional phenomenon – as a system for communicating thought and information and as an essential element of human thought processes, perceptions and self-expression – that allows students to understand different peoples and their communities.
2. Students will examine the world, their own culture and their own language through the lens of a foreign language and culture.

Lab Science Course *

(one course from the list of designated courses)

1. Students will develop a unified understanding of scientific theory and practice in modern natural science.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the development of science as an intellectual pursuit and of the ways in which scientific ideas are formulated, modified and come to be accepted.
3. Students will demonstrate skill in the application of scientific techniques and methods, including the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and communication of results.

Quantitative Reasoning Course *

(one course from the list of designated courses)

1a. Students will demonstrate college-level knowledge of a body of mathematical and/or statistical techniques suitable for modeling and analyzing real world questions/situations, and will gain some experience in such modeling, including experience in building, describing, testing, analyzing and making predictions from such models.

OR

1b. Based on a focused course experience, students will apply basic mathematical and/or statistical techniques at a college level of sophistication in the analysis and modeling of real-world questions or problems, including experience in building, describing, testing, analyzing and making predictions from such models.

AND

2. Students will formulate questions and propositions for quantitative analysis, translate the question into a form appropriate for the chosen quantitative model, and interpret and evaluate the results of the model in ways meaningful to the problem at hand. Students will demonstrate the ability to assess the validity and limitations of quantitative models and an understanding of the role of the assumptions made in the construction of these models.

Race, Power and Inequality Course *

(one course from the list of designated courses)

1. Students will acquire contextualized knowledge about the processes (historical, social, political, etc.) by which different forms of power and privilege construct, maintain and enforce structural oppression related to race and identity.
2. Students will acquire the vocabulary and analytical tools necessary to examine critically the disproportionate impact of structural inequality on marginalized peoples and communities.
3. Students will use concepts and methodologies from at least one discipline or interdisciplinary field to interrogate complex interrelationships between individuals, groups and power structures, especially as they have manifested and been contested over time.

Nature, People and Justice Course *

(one course from the list of designated courses)

1. Students will acquire contextualized knowledge about the processes (historical, ecological, biophysical, geological, social, political, economic, cultural, etc.) that have produced significant disruptions to the structures and functions of environmental systems that support life.
2. Students will use concepts and methodologies from at least one discipline or interdisciplinary field to critically examine the consequences of environmental change.

3. Students will reflect critically on their roles – both as individuals and as members of society – in producing, mitigating and adapting to significant disruptions in human-environmental systems, and identify potential courses of action necessary to create a more just and equitable world.

Global Connections

(one course from the list of designated courses)

1. Students will use concepts and tools of inquiry to examine the beliefs, history, social experiences, social structures, artistic or literary expressions, and/or traditions of one or more cultures or societies located outside the United States.

OR

2. Students will use appropriate tools of inquiry to understand the interdependent nature of the global system and the consequences this interdependence has for political, economic and social problems.

Disciplinary Exploration

The curriculum requires that all students take the following number of courses from the respective divisions of the College of Arts & Sciences. Collectively, disciplinary exploration is intended to give students wide exposure to the breadth of study across the span of disciplines represented in the College of Arts & Sciences. The assignment of divisional designation will be determined by the divisional designation of the instructor teaching the course.

2 Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division Courses

2 Social Sciences Division Courses

4 Arts & Humanities Division Courses

Disciplinary Depth

The Major(s)

The disciplinary depth component of the curriculum provides students with the opportunity for sustained study in an academic discipline. Students learn to think deeply about a set of linked topics and to use the methodology of academic investigation in a specific field or a set of subfields. As a result, they extend and develop their own intellectual ideas with more sophisticated and informed analysis. They acquire the intellectual confidence that comes from mastery of a body of knowledge and develop the skills to apply their learning beyond their coursework.

The academic major provides students with a framework for such focused disciplinary study. Through a set of linked courses, students develop expertise in their discipline. Students in major courses have common academic backgrounds, and therefore upper-level major courses can address academic material at a sophisticated level.

Intellectual Competencies That Are Incorporated in the Major

The college faculty has identified writing, speaking and information literacy as essential intellectual abilities that need to be mastered by competent graduates. These skills are interdisciplinary, and students will have multiple opportunities to practice and improve them in many settings over their four-year education. However, in-depth and discipline-specific study affords students an opportunity to practice these skills at a high level; therefore, every major incorporates intellectual skills-development into required coursework.

1. Students will develop their writing abilities through coursework in the University Writing Program, which requires that students take a minimum of three writing courses (two of which are linked to writing in particular disciplines). Courses in the major will allow students to apply their writing ability to address and investigate issues at a more sophisticated level due to their mastery of the subject matter.
2. Students will develop skills in formal presentation at a level reasonable for a college graduate in the particular major. Ways in which this skill can be obtained and practiced include but are not restricted to: a course with student presentations, honors thesis defense, talk in a student colloquium series, presentation at a conference, or presentation of significant course projects.
3. Students have achieved basic competency in finding, analyzing, evaluating and effectively using various sources of information in the foundation seminar and other courses. Courses in the major will build on these skills and introduce students to field-specific information retrieval techniques and to critical evaluation of content as customary in the field.

Information Literacy:

1. Students will determine and articulate a need for information, be able to frame the research question, and select resources appropriate to specific research needs;
2. Students will construct and refine search strategies to locate, access and retrieve information efficiently;
3. Students will critically evaluate resources and content, and understand the legal and ethical standards of information access and use;
4. Students will use technology effectively to organize, communicate and present information to support academic work.

Culminating Experience

In addition to completing a body of specialized coursework, students in each major will complete an approved Culminating Experience, usually in their senior year. Second-semester juniors may complete a Culminating Experience in a major with permission of the adviser and the department chair or program coordinator. The successful Culminating Experience will draw together a student's disciplinary experiences and provide a more coherent appreciation of the major's academic discipline. The structure of the Culminating Experience is left to the discretion of the faculty in the department or program offering the major (subject to the review of the Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee). Types of Culminating Experiences will vary by major, but they may include a senior seminar, interdisciplinary course, independent study project, community-engaged learning, or an honors thesis.