

Bachelor of Arts Majors

The Bachelor of Arts degree program provides both a minimal and a maximum number of courses to be studied in the major. Accordingly, in addition to meeting the College Core Curriculum requirements and objectives, the student is encouraged, and has ample opportunity, to pursue electives which will supplement and further broaden the educational experience.

The end and aim of such an extended, and extensive, liberal studies education is the development and orientation of an intelligent and a responsible individual. The liberal studies are the starting point and constant preoccupation of men and women who are committed to the belief that knowledge is important for its own sake and that the pursuit of perfection is worth all the work that it requires. After college, students who have elected liberal studies may discover great practical advantage, for they have laid the foundations for an understanding of their cultural heritage, of the contemporary world, of the hierarchy of values, and of themselves. They also have learned much about their own abilities, their strengths, and their limitations.

For the student who has professional ambitions, and who therefore faces the prospect of spending from three to six years in specialized graduate study, the curriculum of liberal studies is invaluable. Graduate schools as well as training programs in industry are coming to expect a liberal education as a qualification for admission.

Liberal education is not incompatible with specialization. It is liberal education that gives a broader usefulness to specialization. Graduate and professional schools and employment training programs expect that specialized instruction be based on a liberal foundation. Because it establishes the conditions for development of an individual's potential, such a foundation becomes a means of achieving a higher degree of professional and technical competency. It stabilizes the balance of judgment and supports the resourcefulness and the creativity of the specialist.

The process of attaining the Bachelor of Arts degree serves in achieving the goals of a liberal education. Each student who is a candidate for this degree, with the assistance of a faculty adviser, is required to plan a personal program of study. It is obvious that the planning of such a program is itself a task of considerable difficulty and that it may well be the most demanding responsibility a student must face. When it is wisely carried out, it will represent a major achievement of the undergraduate years.

The major will be declared during the second semester of the sophomore year. (Occasionally a student will undertake a double major, which entails meeting all obligations of each of the two fields selected.)

The Established Departmental and Interdepartmental Majors

Students who wish to pursue a major in a discipline may do so by selecting from among many established programs: animal behavior, anthropology, studio art, art history, biology, chemistry, classics, comparative humanities, computer science, East Asian studies, economics, education, English, environmental geology, environmental science, environmental studies, French, geography, geology, German, history, international relations, Italian studies, Latin American studies, linguistics, mathematics, music, philosophy, physics, political science, psychology, religion, Russian, sociology, Spanish, theatre, and women's and gender studies. Students select a major during the fourth semester of study, at which time the program of studies is established in consultation with an academic adviser and approved by the department or interdepartmental program chair concerned. A major normally requires a minimum of eight courses.

Maximum Concentration

Within the 32 courses required for the Bachelor of Arts degree, a maximum of 12 courses may be taken in a single department. However, this 12-course limitation does not apply per se to the following departments: art and art history; classics; languages, cultures, and linguistics; sociology and anthropology; or theatre and dance. In these departments the limitation applies to each of the programs in which a major is offered.

In those rare instances in which serious deficiency in a student's major program occurs, the student affected may submit a petition through the faculty adviser and department chair to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences requesting that an exception be made to the 12-course limit. This right of petition is to be exercised only when a serious deficiency develops in a student's chosen major and after the seriousness of the deficiency has been assessed in the light of the student's demonstrated pursuit of a broad, liberal education. Evidence of such pursuit should include the use of elective courses, which go beyond the minimal requirements, to more fully realize the disciplinary breadth and the broadened perspective objectives (as noted in the discussion of those requirements). The petition must be recommended by a faculty adviser and endorsed by the student's department chair.