

A&S GAZETTE

School of Arts & Sciences

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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

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Introduction

The goal of the School of Arts and Sciences is to provide liberal arts and pre-professional education for undergraduate students that is grounded in scholarly excellence and that gives students the knowledge, understanding, analytical tools, and communication skills that they need to become reflective citizens within a diverse and rapidly changing world.

The Arts and Sciences faculty believe that these educational goals for our students are best achieved through a process that involves two elements—the General Education Requirements offer an introduction to the broad range of subject matters and modes of thought and analysis found across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, and this broad introduction is then complemented by in-depth studies in one or more major fields of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, selected from amongst the programs of study devised, offered, and supervised by one of our departments or interdisciplinary programs.

The General Education Curriculum is designed to allow students to pursue their own interests at the same time that they are introduced to contemporary and diverse views of a broad range of human cultures, modes of thought, and bodies of knowledge. It is also designed to ensure that as many of the General Education courses as feasible are truly courses within the disciplines (or at intellectually rich interdisciplinary interfaces) that draw on the unique resources of a research university.

Courses taken in the first few years at the University also, however, have an important role in the development of the skills needed for work in the major or for post-baccalaureate life, work, and study, and the curriculum begins with requirements that are primarily designed to ensure that each student acquires such skills.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

Written communication remains the hallmark of our culture and is central to almost all disciplines and professions. The achievement of writing proficiency is a life-long process, but it is especially important that undergraduate education accelerates and directs that process towards the achievement of levels of writing skills that will provide a base appropriate for professional or graduate education or for professional employment. This requires a joint commitment by students and faculty to the development of effective writing skills throughout each student's time in the School of Arts and Sciences. To provide a foundation for the effective implementation of this joint commitment, the School requires that each student complete the following writing courses that span his/her undergraduate years:

- 1. An Introductory Composition Course.** This is a college-level composition course such as the Seminar in Composition course offered in the English Department. Additionally, students may be required to take the intensive version if it is determined that this is necessary to strengthen their writing skills, or they may be required to take Workshop in Composition or Intensive Workshop in Composition. As an alternative to Seminar in Composition the student may choose from amongst those Freshman Writing Seminars offered by departments and approved for this purpose by Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Council. Students must pass introductory composition courses with a grade of C- or better to fulfill the requirement, and the requirement must be completed by the end of the first two terms of full-time enrollment.

The Director of Composition may exempt students with superior writing skills from the introductory composition requirement.

- 2. Two Writing Intensive Courses.** After the completion of an introductory composition course each student must complete two courses that are designated as writing intensive (W-courses) or one W-course and a second English composition course. W-Courses are designed to promote writ-

ing within a discipline through the use of writing assignments spread over the course of a term. If this is done through a term paper the student will be required to produce a draft for discussion and revision no later than a month before the end of the course; all W-courses require a minimum of 20-24 pages of written work that has been through at least one cycle of revision. Each student must satisfy one element of this requirement within his or her major field of study.

QUANTITATIVE AND FORMAL REASONING REQUIREMENT

Mathematics is well described as the queen of sciences, providing the universal language of measurement, quantitative analysis and quantitative reasoning, and providing that predictive power that is the base of our science and our technology. All students are required to take and pass with a grade of C- or better at least one course in university-level mathematics (other than trigonometry) for which algebra is a prerequisite, or an approved course in statistics or mathematical or formal logic in a department of the School of Arts and Sciences.

A student who has demonstrated proficiency in mathematics adequate for placement in an upper-level course in mathematics is exempt from this requirement.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS WITHIN THE HUMANITIES, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE NATURAL SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS

A liberal education is intended to provide a foundation for future study and work and for life-long learning, and our aim is to educate students so that they become perceptive, reflective, and intellectually self-conscious citizens of their world. To achieve this liveliness of mind each student must engage in a program that is both rich in content and rigorous in analysis or practice; such a program is traditionally grounded in the disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences while benefiting from the insights that derive from contemporary interdisciplinary approaches.

Within the disciplines of the humanities the study of literature, theater, music, and the visual arts engage students in reflection on human experience and artistic responses to that experience. Philosophy introduces the writings of philosophers who have provided through the ages carefully argued and reasoned responses to enduring questions about the meaning, nature and purpose of the world, and the creative expression option offers each student the

opportunity to learn to do as well as to analyze and appreciate.

Engagement with languages and cultures other than one's own is an essential component of a liberal education. Globalization has added practical value to the importance of acquiring competence in a foreign language and an understanding of other cultures, and we require that each student acquire elementary proficiency in one foreign language and complete at least three foreign culture/international courses. The scope of the student's study of cultures is broadened through the requirement that he or she become familiar with at least one Non-Western culture, and we also encourage students to take a course that will specifically address diversity and intercultural relationships in preparation for life in an increasingly diverse society.

The complex ways in which human beings interact and the evolution of those interactions over time are central topics for the social sciences, and each student will take one course in a social science that exposes the student to the methods that practitioners of that discipline apply to the study of social interaction. Each student will also take a course that fosters an understanding of how every present is conditioned by one or more pasts through an analysis of historical change.

Finally, each student will be given an introduction to the scientific understanding of the natural world, and how science formulates and answers questions about the natural world, in three courses based in at least two of the scientific disciplines.

The specifics of the General Education Requirements are as follows:

- 1. A Course in Literature.** The student will be introduced to the techniques of literary analysis through a course in which the readings include a broad range of literary texts. The course will have no prerequisites unless the literature is in a language other than English. If the course is also to count for W-course credit, the student must have satisfied the Composition requirement before enrolling in the literature course.
- 2. A Course in the Arts.** This will be a course that introduces the student to the modes of analysis applied to music, theatre, or the visual arts, and might be a survey, genre, period or artist course; the course will have no prerequisites.
- 3. A Course in Philosophy.** A course in which classic works of philosophy are read. The course will

emphasize close reading, analysis, and evaluation of these works and of the positions developed in them. This course may be offered in departments other than the Department of Philosophy or the Department of History and Philosophy of Science provided the readings consist principally of works of established importance and value that exhibit a philosophical approach and examine first principles in an intellectually probing manner.

4. **A Second Course in Literature, the Arts, or in Creative Expression.** This will be a second course in literature or the arts, or a course in which the student is given training in creative expression in writing, the theatrical arts, studio arts, filmmaking, photography, musical performance, musical composition, or dance.
5. **A Sequence of Two Foreign Language Courses.** Each student is required to complete successfully with a grade of C- or better two terms of university-level study in a single foreign language, unless they can demonstrate elementary proficiency in a foreign language through: the completion of three years of high school study of a single foreign language with a grade of C or better, successful completion of a special proficiency examination, or transfer of credit for two terms or more of approved university-level instruction in a single foreign language with grades of C or better.

A student whose native language is not English, or who is bilingual, is exempted from this requirement.

6. **Three Foreign Culture/International Courses.** Each student must complete three foreign culture/international courses chosen from at least two of the categories within the regional, comparative, or global classifications used for these courses. Regional courses can address a single culture or society within a particular country or focus on cultures or societies in any region of the world other than the United States, comparative courses utilize a comparative perspective in examining problems, issues, or topics that crosscut regional or national boundaries, and global courses focus on global processes by examining worldwide issues or topics comprehensively.
7. **Non-Western Culture Requirement.** At least one of the courses used to satisfy the international culture requirement or another General Education Requirement (e.g. historical change) must address a culture or cultures other than those of the Medi-

terranean, Central and Western Europe, and French or English speaking North America.

8. **A Course in Historical Change.** A course dealing with a crucial human time sequence, such as: economic, political, social and cultural change within a society, or from one society to another; change in science, and the idea of science; change in literature and the arts. This course may be offered in departments other than the Department of History. The course will fulfill the integrative function of history, by treating a particular set of changes, or a field of knowledge or expression, in terms of a wider society, which is itself changing.
9. **A Social Science Course.** A course that treats topics considered of fundamental importance in the social or behavioral sciences (including social psychology). Appropriate topics include: the study of basic social institutions and processes, models of economic behavior, the nature of political systems, and behavioral approaches to human development. Approved courses will introduce students to the subject matter and methodology of a particular discipline and will involve them in the modes of investigation, analysis, and judgment characteristically applied by practitioners.
10. **Three Courses in the Natural Sciences.** These will be courses that introduce students to scientific principles and concepts (rather than offering a simple codification of facts within a discipline, or a history of a discipline). The courses may be interdisciplinary, involving faculty from at least two departments in their development and implementation, and no more than two courses may have the same department as the primary departmental sponsor of the course.

Listings of Approved General Education Courses

Courses that have been offered in recent years and that have been approved by Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Council as meeting the General Education Requirements are listed in the General Education Catalog; some of these courses are offered regularly but students should be aware that many are only scheduled occasionally. The Schedule of Classes is the only reliable indicator of which courses will be available in any given term, although student advisors in the School's Advising Center and departmental advisors are familiar with which courses are regularly scheduled.

BASIC SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

The diversity of talents and educational backgrounds that our students bring to their undergraduate studies means that some will need additional work on one or more of the basic writing and mathematical skills required for university-level courses before these skills are adequate for success in General Education Courses. These skills will be addressed as follows:

- 1. Writing Skills.** Students who need additional writing preparation will be required to take and pass, with a grade of C- or better, a course in Workshop in Composition or Intensive Composition Workshop by the end of the first term of full-time enrollment. Students who are placed in Seminar in Composition may be required to take the intensive version of the course to strengthen their writing skill.
- 2. The Mathematical Proficiency** of all incoming students will be assessed. Students who need additional mathematical preparation will be required by the end of the first two terms of full-time enrollment to take and pass, with a grade of C- or better, a course in algebra.

Students will be exempt from the mathematics proficiency test if they have achieved a satisfactory grade on the Advanced Placement examination in calculus in high school, have earned a C- or better in calculus through College in High School, have completed an approved equivalent of Algebra or another approved mathematics course, or have scored 600 or better on the Math SAT.



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