

Toward 2016
Fordham's Liberal Arts Core Curriculum
A Proposal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The initial courses of the core curriculum begin the process of attaining the above goals and objectives with an emphasis on language mastery (English composition and Language preparation).

Composition and Rhetoric (1 course; with 1 semester of preparation if necessary) EN 1100 Composition and Rhetoric II; or, for those who do not place in EN 1100, EN 1010 Composition and Rhetoric I + EN 1100 Composition and Rhetoric II. Students advance from EN 1010 to EN 1100 after a satisfactory level is achieved in the first course.

INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLINARY WAYS OF KNOWING AND CONCEPTS
Freshman/Sophomore Courses

The second step continues the development of writing and oral expression as well as social awareness in the study of ways of knowing characteristic of liberal arts disciplines.

Mathematical/Computational Reasoning (1 course) The principal courses for the fulfillment of this core requirement are MT 1100 Finite Mathematics and CS 1100 Structures of Computer Science. The core requirement can also be fulfilled by the following more sophisticated courses: MT 1203 Applied Calculus, MT 1206 Calculus, MT 1700 Math Modeling, CS 1400 Discrete Structures, and CS 1600 Computer Science I.

Natural Science (2 courses in sequence; physical science and life science) Science majors meet this requirement through disciplinary introductions. Arts students are offered modular or integrated courses on various topics. The physical science section, which is taken first, covers energy (kinetic and potential, electromagnetic, thermodynamics), matter (atomic and molecular structure, chemical bonding), and interactions (strong, weak, electromagnetic, gravitational). The subsequent life science sections cover evolution, genetics and genetic engineering, human biology including nervous and sensory systems, environment, and behavior and learning (classical, operant, and observational). All sections have labs. The core course in Mathematics/Computer Science is a prerequisite.

Philosophy of Human Nature (1 course) A philosophical reflection on the central metaphysical and epistemological questions surrounding human nature, which includes discussion of some or all of the following problems: the body/soul distinction and the mind/body problem; the problem of knowledge (relativism, skepticism, the objectivity of knowledge; faith and reason); free will and determinism; and self and

society (subjectivity, personhood, sociality, historicity, and tradition). At least 60% of each section of the course is devoted to readings from Plato, Aristotle, Augustine or Aquinas, and Descartes. Each section includes some writings by at least one contemporary figure.

Faith and Critical Reason (1 course)

An introduction to fundamental theological issues including the dialectic between religion and modernity that has shaped our cultural heritage, and some of the ways that various cultures and individuals have confronted the pressing questions of meaning in human life. When appropriate, comparisons with religious traditions other than Christianity are made.

Fine and Performing Arts (1 course)

By seeing or hearing visual or musical works and understanding them students learn to appreciate the non-verbal and how such works both are influenced by and exercise influence on their cultural milieu. The courses take advantage of and encourage students to appreciate the extensive cultural offerings of New York City. The requirement is met through a course selected from among the following: Introduction to Art History, Urbanism, Introduction to Music History, Opera: An Introduction, and Invitation to Theater.

Language and Literature (in a classical or modern language other than English; 1 course, with 1-3 semesters of preparation available)

2001-level courses in a classical or modern language other than English fulfill the language requirement. In order to achieve a level of mastery of a foreign language that will allow students to comprehend a text of average sophistication in its oral and written form and to be able to comment on it orally and in writing in a coherent and correct manner, the courses provide either a critical analysis of selected cultural and literary texts, with composition, conversation, and review of pertinent grammatical structures, or advanced reading in classical authors.

Language skills preparation. Students who need preparation before taking the requirement have four entry points for placement purposes (1001-Introduction I; 1002-Introduction II; 1501-Intermediate I; 1502-Intermediate II). All those beginning a language at the most basic level take an intensive one-semester course (3 class hours, 2 lab hours, 2 tutorial hours; 5 credits) in order to accelerate their progress. Those who begin language preparation at the introductory level with the 1001-02 intensive course but progress only to the 1002 level, not the 1501 level, and do not accelerate their learning through other means, may complete the language requirement with the sequence 1001, 1002, 1501 and 1502. No student is required to take more than four courses.

Exemptions. BS and BFA students, and BA students in FCLS and those majoring in Natural Science will not have a language requirement unless required for their major.

Texts and Contexts

(literature in English; 1 course)

The introductory core course in English literature, which may include literature in translation, will teach the arts of literary interpretation by developing techniques of close reading, an appreciation of the relations among literary works and the contexts in which they are written and read, and an ability to write critically about the interplay between text and context. The sections of this course will offer students choice among thematic and topical foci, which will be specified in each section title and spelled out in the section's description. All sections will be offered in the *Eloquentia perfecta* format (see below), which emphasizes writing and presentation. EN 1100 Composition and Rhetoric II is a prerequisite for this course.

Understanding Historical Change (1 course)

Through the introduction to the discipline of history, students will begin to achieve knowledge of the structure of societies, how they function, and how they change. Each section of the course will consider how to assess evidence, identify and evaluate differing and often contradictory explanations and arguments, and appraise the relative scale and importance of particular changes in the past. Students will be able to choose from different sections of the course each with the title Understanding Historical Change, and a descriptive subtitle such as Classical History, American History, etc.

Social Sciences (1 course)

Students will be introduced to the ways of knowing characteristic of the social sciences through introductory courses in Anthropology, Communications, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. The courses will usually focus on a substantive concern of the social science and include historical overviews, consideration of the variety of research methods typically used (esp. empirical research), reviews of the major theoretical orientations and models, and real world implications and applications to practical problems.

ADVANCED DISCIPLINARY STUDY

The third phase enables students to deepen and extend their disciplinary study and enrich their major courses, which they will be taking concurrently, through a diverse spectrum of advanced courses, thereby assuring the achievement of intellectual perspective with breadth. The following upper-level courses will build on the knowledge, skills and methodological foundations of the disciplinary introductions to develop and extend their awareness of questions and approaches outside their majors. Courses at this level will be numbered in the 3000 range, and may be taken when students have completed the introductory disciplinary courses in the area, beginning in sophomore year.

Philosophical Ethics (1 course) This course involves philosophical reflection on the major normative ethical theories underlying moral decision making in our everyday lives. The principal focus of the course is a systematic introduction to the main normative ethical theories, i.e., eudaimonism, natural law ethics, deontological ethics, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and feminism. The differences among these approaches are illuminated by studying various moral issues. In each section of the course, at least half the readings will be selected from Aristotle and Kant. Each section will include writings by at least one contemporary figure.

Sacred Texts and Traditions (1 course) The second theology course, selected from a group of offerings called Sacred Texts and Traditions, builds on the foundation of critical reasoning about traditions in the first Theology course through analytical study of one religious textual tradition. The sections of this course will offer students a variety of texts from which to choose. All sections will draw on the disciplines of history, literary analysis and theology, interpreting religious traditions and texts as both historically embedded and always evolving responses to the experience of the transcendent in human life.

Advanced Disciplinary Courses in Literature, History, and Social Science (2 courses) Following the introductory Literature, History and Social Science courses, these courses will enable the student to achieve a sharper focus and more detailed knowledge of complex literary, historical and social methods, materials, interactions and processes. To fulfill the requirement, two advanced disciplinary courses will be chosen from two of the disciplines within the group; i.e.,

- an advanced Literature course and an advanced History course;
- or • an advanced History course and an advanced Social Science course;
- or • an advanced Social Science course and an advanced Literature course.

They will be taken before or simultaneously with the capstone requirements described below. Courses in the Social Sciences can be used to fulfill only one of the advanced disciplinary courses.

CAPSTONE COURSES

The final stage of learning through the core curriculum builds on themes introduced in earlier courses. One course completes the sequence of courses in Literature, History, and/or Social Science, and enables students to recognize interrelations among disciplinary ways of knowing through interdisciplinary study. The second course reflects on the infusion of values in knowledge and human life, thereby forming a broader perspective that will provide a framework for the development of socially responsible wisdom after graduation. Courses at this level will be numbered in the 4000 range, and may be taken when students have completed or are completing the Advanced Disciplinary courses.

Interdisciplinary Seminar in Literature, History, and/or Social Science (1 course) For this capstone in the literary, historical and social scientific sequence, students will select an Interdisciplinary seminar from among courses identified with an “I” as the fourth letter of the course designation. Courses will use interdisciplinary study to examine the role of disciplines in knowledge formation. Each course will feature at least two disciplines that conceive and study a common topic or problem. The Interdisciplinary seminars will be team taught by professors representing contrasting disciplines, or taught by a single individual who has expertise in both disciplines. One discipline featured in each interdisciplinary course must use methods that are literary, historical, or based on a social science, which may include participants from English, History, the Social Sciences, Classics, African and African American Studies, Modern Languages and Literatures, and interdisciplinary programs. The second or other disciplines in each course must be different from the first, but may be literary, historical, social scientific, or drawn from any other discipline, such as the sciences, fine arts, philosophy or theology. These courses will be capped at 19 students per instructor.

Values Seminar (1 course) Students will select from among courses identified with a “V” as the fourth letter of the course designation. In these courses, students will learn to identify, take seriously, and think deeply and fairly about complex ethical issues in contemporary and former times. Faculty from all departments in the Arts and Sciences will develop these capstone seminars. These small, writing intensive topical seminars will be offered in the *Eloquentia perfecta* format (see below).

DISTRIBUTIVE REQUIREMENTS

Eloquentia Perfecta Seminars Special sections of disciplinary core classes will be designated as *eloquentia perfecta* (or EP) seminars. They will dedicate at least one fifth of class time to student writing and oral expression. Once the core is phased in, students will be expected to take four EP seminars during the undergraduate years; all

sections of Texts and Contexts and all the Values seminars will be offered in this format.

Global Studies (1 course) Global studies courses are intended to ensure that students come to respect, understand, and appreciate the significant variations in customs, institutions and world views that have shaped peoples and their lives. Courses with a global focus may be drawn from core, major or elective offerings and will be indicated by a “G” as the fourth letter in the course designation. They will be applicable both to the Global Studies requirement and to the core and major requirements that a student must complete in the course of his or her college career.

American Pluralism (1 course) American Pluralism courses will afford students the opportunity to develop tolerance, sensitivities, and knowledge of the following forms of American diversity: race, ethnicity, class, religion and gender. American Pluralism courses may be drawn from core, major or elective offerings and will be indicated by a “P” as the fourth letter in the course designation. They will be applicable both to the American Pluralism requirement and to other core or major requirements that a student must complete in the course of his or her college career.

Service Learning The central goal of service-learning is that students will test the skills and knowledge they acquire in their courses (e.g. in the humanities, language, and sciences) through service to the community outside the University. Courses integrating service as a learning resource will be listed in the catalogue as a “service-learning” sections (SL), and students will understand in advance that service hours in the community are required. As the core is implemented, each student will be encouraged to take at least one course as an Integrated Service Course, although they will not be required to do so.