

## General Studies Program

Liberal education values intellectual curiosity and an approach to learning informed by multiple perspectives. The General Studies Program is the primary means of achieving such breadth and perspective. The program consists of Encounters (The First-Year Experience) and the Distribution Requirements. The First-Year Experience provides both an integration of varieties of knowledge and a significant context for thought and written expression. Through the Distribution Requirements, students gain insights into disparate areas of knowledge and ways of knowing emphasized in different disciplines, while also coming to understand the ways in which disciplines often overlap or merge with one another. Students are encouraged to explore connections and divergences between fields and approaches to knowledge through their distribution studies. Courses in each area will vary in the emphasis they give to the elements described and in the approach they take to their study.

All students, with the exceptions noted below for transfer students, are required to successfully complete the two-semester sequence of the First-Year Experience (General Studies 145, 146) during their first year of study at Whitman College. General Studies 245 is optional. In addition, the Distribution Requirements must be completed.

### Distribution

All students are required to complete the following Distribution Requirements:

1. The **cultural pluralism** requirement focuses primarily on underrepresented cultural perspectives. In addition, courses in this area foster a greater understanding of the diversity or interconnectedness of cultures. Such courses must offer in-depth coverage of, and must focus on, at least one of the following: cultural pluralism; power disparities among social groups; methodological or theoretical approaches used in the interpretation of cultural difference; marginality within categories such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or class; and/or the perspectives of non-dominant groups.

#### Cultural Pluralism – Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Engage with ideas and people that expand one's cultural perspectives.
- Articulate how different cultural backgrounds affect interactions or relationships with others.
- Articulate complex relationships arising from the intersection of various aspects of culture, such as language, gender, history, values, politics, religious practices, and unequal distributions of power and resources.
- Navigate differences by drawing on relevant cultural frames of reference and adapting perspectives accordingly.
- Apply different methodological and theoretical approaches to interpret cultural difference.

Students must complete **two courses totaling at least six credits** designated as fulfilling the requirement in cultural pluralism. These courses include:

Anthropology 101, 201, 233, 238, 246, 247, 248,  
257, 258, 259, 300, 306, 313, 328, 347, 358  
Art History and Visual Culture Studies 210, 235,  
243, 246, 248, 353, 354, 356, 357, 495  
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies — all courses  
BBMB 430  
Chinese — all courses  
Classics 140, 309  
Dance 118

Economics 258, 266, 345  
English 200, 246, 247, 376  
Environmental Studies 259, 306, 309, 313, 335, 339  
Film and Media Studies 307, 340, 345  
French — all courses  
Gender Studies — all courses  
General Studies 245  
German — all courses (except 352)  
Greek — all courses

History 109, 110, 112, 121, 127, 128, 188, 205, 209, 210, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220, 223, 225, 230, 235, 241, 247, 248, 254, 268, 283, 287, 288, 300, 302, 305, 310, 313, 314, 319, 322, 323, 325, 332, 344, 346, 348, 349, 364, 370, 384, 387, 389, 393, 494, 495  
 Interdisciplinary Studies 220  
 Japanese — all courses  
 Latin — all courses  
 Music 115, 129, 160, 258, 354, 360  
 Philosophy 216, 235, 251, 318, 360, 361  
 Politics 100, 114, 119, 207, 208, 209, 228, 236, 242, 250, 254, 301, 304, 305, 311, 312, 317, 318, 319, 325, 333, 334, 337, 349, 353, 359, 363, 365, 367  
 Psychology 239, 309, 311, 319, 336  
 Race and Ethnic Studies 105, 301, 305  
 Religion 100, 103, 109, 110, 134, 153, 154, 160, 204, 207, 208, 209, 213, 214, 217, 219, 221, 228, 229, 236, 245, 304, 305, 307, 310, 321, 358, 387  
 Rhetoric Studies 250, 270, 341;  
 Sociology 110, 117, 205, 209, 229, 250, 257, 258, 259, 267, 269, 270, 271, 278, 279, 287, 290, 294, 309, 318, 337, 341, 360, 367, 369  
 Spanish — all courses (except 491, 492)  
 Theatre 210  
 World Literature 217, 222, 301, 309, 312, 315, 320, 322, 325, 328, 330, 338, 343, 349, 359, 395

*Note:* Some departments offer special topics in any given year that may or may not be applicable toward the cultural pluralism requirement. For more information, see the individual course descriptions.

Many courses taken while on a study abroad program or on a domestic urban studies program may be approved to fulfill this requirement. Contact the Off-Campus Studies Office or the General Studies Committee for more information.

2. Courses in the **fine arts** develop creative problem solving skills, the ability to exercise artistic expression, and an understanding of theoretical and analytical approaches to the process of making a work of art. Courses in this area engage students in artistic production and help students critically analyze their own or others' works of music, visual and verbal art, dance, film, media and theater.

### **Fine Arts – Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Solve problems in creative ways
- Recognize the techniques used in at least one art form
- Understand different theoretical approaches to artistic production
- Develop their ability to express themselves artistically
- Critically analyze their own and others' artistic work.

Students must complete **a minimum of six credits in the fine arts**. This requirement is satisfied by courses in:

Art — all courses	Film and Media Studies 260, 360
Art History and Visual Culture Studies — all courses	French 260
Classics 224, 226, 377	Music — all courses
English 150, 250, 251, 252, 320, 321, 322, 323, 389	Philosophy 239, 302
Environmental Studies 319, 347	Rhetoric Studies 110
	Theatre and Dance (except 235, 372)

*Note:* Courses designated Independent Study may not be used to satisfy the fine arts distribution requirement. ***A student may not use more than eight credits from any one department to satisfy the requirements in humanities and fine arts.***

3. Courses in the **humanities** focus attention on the ways that human beings have understood and interpreted the world around them as well as the processes by which humans come to see life as meaningful. Study in the

humanities equips students with the tools to analyze and interpret texts, artistic works, material objects, beliefs and values through close reading and consideration of components such as cultural and historical context, genre, and language.

### **Humanities – Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Read texts, be they literary, philosophical, artistic, religious, or material in nature, with precision and generosity
- Analyze and interpret texts with precision, assessing their form and content both on the texts' own terms and through critical lenses informed by other texts
- Understand how language, genre, cultural and historical context can shape a text and our interpretation of it
- Effectively communicate, through written and spoken words, insights drawn from the works they are reading and interpreting
- Recognize and appreciate the aesthetic, moral, and linguistic dimensions of complex problems

Students must complete **a minimum of six credits in the humanities**. This requirement is satisfied by courses in:

Art History and Visual Culture Studies — all courses	Gender Studies 250, 330, 331
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 315	History 313
Chinese — all courses	Japanese — all courses
Classics — all courses	Latin — all courses
Composition — all courses	Linguistics 107
Dance 118, 218, 234	Philosophy — all courses (except 200,260 and 488)
English (except 150, 250, 251, 320, 321, 322, 389)	Politics 121, 352
Environmental Studies 217, 226, 227, 230, 235, 247, 308, 309, 335, 339, 340, 347, 349, 350, 358, 360, 365	Race and Ethnic Studies 305
Film and Media Studies (except 260, 360)	Religion — all courses
French — all courses	Rhetoric Studies — all courses (except 110, 121, 221, 222, 255, 263)
German — all courses (except 352)	Sociology 341, 344
Greek — all courses	Spanish — all courses
	Theatre 235, 330, 357, 372, 373, 377
	World Literature — all courses

*Note:* Courses designated Independent Study may not be used to satisfy the humanities Distribution Requirement. ***A student may not use more than eight credits from any one department to satisfy the requirements in humanities and fine arts.***

4. Courses with a significant **quantitative focus** students develop the skills necessary to critically analyze numerical or graphical data, to develop abstract quantitative frameworks, and to develop a facility and acumen with quantitative reasoning techniques and their applicability to disciplines across the liberal arts.

### **Quantitative Analysis – Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Perform computations associated with a model and make conclusions based on the results
- Represent, communicate, and analyze ideas and data using symbols, graphs, or tables
- Analyze and interpret data using statistical methods

Students must complete **one course of three or more credits in quantitative analysis**. This requirement is satisfied by the following courses:

Astronomy 110, 177, 178, 179	Music 327, 426
Chemistry 100, 102, 125, 126, 140	Philosophy 200, 260, 488
Computer Science 167, 210, 220, 270, 317	Physics 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 155, 156, 165, 166, 245, 246
Economics 227, 327, 479	Psychology 210
Environmental Studies 207	Sociology 208
Mathematics and Statistics 125, 126, 128, 225, 247	

*Note:* Courses designated Independent Study may not be used to satisfy the quantitative analysis Distribution Requirement.

5. Courses in the **sciences** give students the background necessary to inquire about how the natural world is structured and operates. Students will be exposed to methodologies and techniques that allow them to form hypotheses, then to examine, justify, or refute their hypotheses through scientific evidence and analysis of observations.

#### **Sciences – Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Demonstrate familiarity with one or more scientific methods of inquiry
- Articulate fundamental theories in a science using precise terminology of the field
- Formulate a hypothesis, given a problem or questions, and design a valid experiment to test it.
- Collect, interpret, and analyze scientific data
- Apply the principles of scientific inquiry to civic and personal issues.

Students must complete **a minimum of six credits in science**, including at least one course with a laboratory. This requirement is satisfied by courses in:

Astronomy — all 100 and 200- level courses  
 BBMB — all courses  
 Biology — all courses  
 Chemistry — 100, 102, 125, 126, 135, 136, 140, 245, 251  
 Geology — all 100 and 200- level courses (except 158, 258)  
 Physics — all 100 and 200- level courses (except 115, 116)  
 Psychology 360

*Note:* Any laboratory or course with a regularly scheduled laboratory may be used to fulfill the laboratory component of this requirement — see the individual course descriptions.

*Note:* Courses designated Independent Study may not be used to satisfy the sciences Distribution Requirement.

6. Studies in the **social sciences** help students analyze complex relationships and interconnections within and/or among individuals, social formations, texts and institutions across time and/or across local, national, and/or global contexts.

#### **Social Sciences - Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Compare and contrast social institutions, structures, and processes across a range of historical periods, cultures, and societies around the globe.
- Analyze complex behavior and relationships within and across individuals and social contexts.
- Demonstrate familiarity with social science methods in the context of

- explaining or predicting individual and collective behavior and decision-making.
- Apply social science principles to personal, social, and/or organizational issues.

Students must complete **a minimum of six credits in the social sciences**. This requirement is satisfied by courses in:

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 160

Anthropology — all courses

Classics 221

Economics — all courses

Environmental Studies 259, 306, 307, 313, 322 329,  
353,362, 369

Gender Studies 330, 331, 333

History — all courses

Politics — all courses

Psychology — all courses (except 210, 360 and  
some courses designated Seminars or Tutorials —  
see the individual course descriptions)

Race and Ethnic Studies 305

Rhetoric Studies 341, 360

Sociology — all courses

Spanish 448

*Note:* Courses designated Independent Study may not be used to satisfy the social sciences Distribution Requirement.

### **Additional information regarding Distribution Requirements:**

All courses in sports studies, recreation and athletics, and those courses in environmental studies not specifically designated in the distribution areas listing above, do not count toward the completion of the Distribution Requirements.

A student may not apply any individual course toward more than one of the distribution areas, *with the exception of the courses used to fulfill the requirement in quantitative analysis*. For example, a student may use History 212 to meet either the requirement in social sciences or the requirement in cultural pluralism but not both. In the event that the same cross-listed class applies to different distribution areas, the course may be applied to either distribution area referenced by the indicated departmental registration rubric. For example, Classics 224 cross-listed with Art History 224 may be applied to the fine arts or humanities distribution area.

Distribution Requirements may not be satisfied by credits obtained for work in the high school (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate). With the exception of Economics 493/494, courses taken with the P-D-F grade option cannot be used to satisfy Distribution Requirements.

Five of the six Distribution Requirements should be completed by the end of the sixth semester of college work. The total requirements must be fulfilled not later than the student's seventh semester or at the time 110 degree credits have been earned if this occurs prior to the seventh semester.

Transfer students entering with fewer than 58 acceptable credits (i.e., below junior level) must complete the First-Year Experience unless, upon appeal, the Board of Review finds that they have passed comparable courses at another institution.

### **145, 146 Encounters (The First-Year Experience)**

**Fall, Spring**

**Staff**

**4 credits**

A two-semester introduction to the liberal arts and the academic construction of knowledge. Organized around a variable theme, this course takes as its broad topic the examination of encounters between peoples and cultures, and the formation and transformation of dominant and competing worldviews. The study of primary sources, discussion, writing, and the construction of knowledge across academic fields will be emphasized. The two semesters will be taught as a single year-long course. The P-D-F grade option may not be elected for this course. The theme for the 2018-19 academic year will be "Encounters: Transformations." Distribution area: none.

#### **Encounters – Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the skill of close reading of important texts from a range of cultures.
- Critically analyze texts with an increasing level of sophistication.
- Develop a writing process that includes an understanding of the recursive nature of writing.
- Write thesis-driven, evidence-supported essays.
- Present ideas orally in a coherent, cohesive and persuasive manner.

Students who wish to change Encounters sections may do so only at the semester break, prior to the beginning of second semester, by making a request to the Registrar. Students are not allowed to choose which section they would like to enter. Those students who seek to change sections will be assigned to other sections by the Registrar.

**245 Critical Voices**  
**Not offered 2018-19**

**4 credits**

This course calls into question the dominance of traditional western world views by critically examining the historical and ideological roles played by “others.” The aim is to cultivate an eye for difference, to learn to listen to these voices in their own contexts. Such voices include those geographically “non-western,” as well as those excluded or subordinated by way of race, gender, and/or class within Europe and North America. *Prerequisites:* General Studies 145 and 146.