

# General Education Requirements

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Students in the Class of 2017 and subsequent years are required to meet the general education requirements outlined below. Students in the Class of 2016 are presumed to meet the general distribution requirements<sup>1</sup> in the catalog at the time each matriculated; individual students in this class may, however, opt to meet the following requirements by filing the appropriate form with the Registrar's Office.<sup>2</sup>

The overarching goals of Sewanee's general education requirements and the broader curriculum are congruent with the University's mission of encouraging students to grow in character as well as intellect. Sewanee trains students to be citizens prepared for a lifetime of leadership and compassionate service and provide opportunities in their classes and on this campus to take responsibility for their own lives and the lives of peers. Students are challenged to cooperate and collaborate, to engage in civil dialogue, and to analyze complex problems and produce creative solutions. The thoughtful engagement of students in coursework and other learning endeavors, on campus and beyond, builds the foundation for their active citizenship and for lives of personal fulfillment involving commitment to service, achievement, and a reverent concern for the world.

Sewanee's general education curriculum encourages intellectual curiosity and exposure to significant traditions and ways of seeing the world that our disciplines and interdisciplinary programs present. General education requirements are typically accomplished in the first two years of enrollment.<sup>3</sup>

Mentoring of students by faculty, which includes close discussion of available courses and programs, offers solid footing for the student's choice of major and the longer-term rewards of lifelong learning.

## Learning Objectives <sup>4</sup>

### **Learning Objective 1. Reading Closely: Literary Analysis and Interpretation.** *One course.*

The ability to read closely provides a foundation for informed and reflective critical analysis that is fundamental to lifelong learning and literary experiences of lasting value. Instruction in reading closely equips students to pay careful attention to the constitutive details and stylistic concerns of significant works of literature so as to arrive at a meaning that can be defended with confidence. In addition to promoting responsible ways of taking a literary work of consequence on its own terms, courses satisfying this requirement enable students to become proficient at identifying, interpreting, and analyzing new ideas, perennial topics, universal themes, and vivid descriptions of sensory and internal experiences.

### **Learning Objective 2. Understanding the Arts: Creativity, Performance, and Interpretation.** *One course.*

The need to create, experience, and comprehend art is a defining human activity. Learning in the arts fosters aesthetic development, self-discipline, imaginative insights, and the ability to make connections between seemingly disparate ideas and issues. Many courses provide insight into the discipline, craft, and creative processes that go into making a work of art, while others focus on analyzing and interpreting the products of that artistic creativity. Developing the ability to think in intuitive, non-verbal, aural, or visual realms enhances creativity, and provides students a way to address problems that do not have conventional solutions.

### **Learning Objective 3. Seeking Meaning: Wisdom, Truth, and Inquiry.** *One course.*

The quest to answer fundamental questions of human existence has always been central to living the examined life. Through this learning objective, students examine how people in diverse times and places have addressed basic human questions about the meaning of life, the source of moral value, the nature of reality and possibility of transcendence, and to what or whom persons owe their ultimate allegiance. Courses that explore texts and traditions dedicated to philosophic questions and ethical inquiry, or that examine religious belief and practice as a pervasive expression of human culture, encourage students to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be human.

### **Learning Objective 4. Exploring Past and Present: Perspectives on Societies and Cultures.** *Two courses.*

Curiosity about society and its institutions is central to the engaged life. In addition, informed citizens should have an understanding of individual and collective behavior in the past and present. To address the challenges facing the world today, citizens must understand how these challenges arise and the roles that individuals, communities, countries, and international organizations play in addressing them. Learning how to pose appropriate questions, how to read and interpret historical documents, and how to use methods of analysis to study social interaction prepares students to comprehend the dynamics within and among societies. These skills enable students to examine the world around them and to make historically, theoretically, and empirically informed judgments about social phenomena.

### **Learning Objective 5. Observing, Experimenting, and Modeling: The Scientific and Quantitative View.** *Three courses. One must include substantial quantitative, algorithmic, or abstract logical reasoning. One must be a science course with a substantial experiential or experimental component.*

The study of the natural world through careful observation, construction and testing of hypotheses, and the design and implementation of reproducible experiments is a key aspect of human experience. Scientific literacy and the ability to assess the validity of scientific claims are critical components of an educated and informed life. Scientific and quantitative courses develop students' ability to use close

observation and interpret empirical data to understand processes in the natural world better. As they create models to explain observable phenomena, students develop their abilities to reason both deductively and inductively.

**Learning Objective 6. Comprehending Cross-Culturally: Language and Global Studies.** *One 300-level or higher foreign language course OR foreign language through the 200 (3rd semester) level together with one course in a related culture.*

The cross-cultural comprehension requirement at Sewanee helps to prepare students for full citizenship in our global society. Upon completion of this requirement, students have developed a range of communicative strategies in a foreign language, recognition of another cultural perspective, and the capacity for informed engagement with another culture. These skills lead students to understand a variety of texts: oral, visual, and written. Students practice writing, public speaking, conversing, critical thinking, and textual analysis. Success in a foreign language gives students knowledge that they can apply broadly to academic and non-academic settings. The study of at least a second language is and always has been a hallmark of liberal arts education, providing not just access to the thought and expression of a foreign mentality and culture, but also a useful way to reflect on one's own mentality, language, and culture.

**Writing-Intensive Course.** *Students complete a foundational writing-intensive course by the end of sophomore year.*

**Foundational Writing-Intensive Course.** This course aims to provide extensive training and practice in expository writing. The course may be offered through any department or program, with effective writing as one of its chief goals. Students will complete between four to seven intensive writing assignments, some of which are revised in consultation with the instructor. This foundational course focuses on writing style, processes, and techniques throughout the semester; it includes not only training in argumentation, organization, and stylistics, but also attention to technical matters such as grammar, punctuation, citation, and usage.

**Physical Education and Wellness.** *Two courses, not counted among the thirty-two full academic courses required for graduation, are required. One of these must be completed by the end of the freshman year and the second by the end of the sophomore year.*

As the Greeks and Romans understood, healthy bodies and minds are closely connected and need to be cultivated together. Students are expected to take these courses in order to learn about the proper care of the body, the value of regular exercise, or to obtain an appreciation of individual and team sports.

<sup>1</sup> The general distribution requirements are available here ([http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2015-2016/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/general\\_distribution\\_requirements](http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2015-2016/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/general_distribution_requirements)).

<sup>2</sup> More information about general education requirements is available at: [registrar.sewanee.edu/students/general-education-attributes-in-the-college-of-arts-and-sciences/](http://registrar.sewanee.edu/students/general-education-attributes-in-the-college-of-arts-and-sciences/).

<sup>3</sup> Courses judged to be suitable for general education are tagged with one or two attributes (G1-G6), each attribute corresponding to one of learning objectives 1 through 6. Listing of the relevant attribution(s) for every qualifying courses can be found online, within the full roster of currently-offered courses on the Registrar's webpage, and this list is updated every semester. It should be remembered that, under the new general education model, students can continue to fulfill certain of their distribution requirements by taking courses in the interdisciplinary humanities program.

<sup>4</sup> Students under the new general education requirement who perform exceptionally well on Advanced Placement exams (scores of 4 or 5) or high-level International Baccalaureate exams (scores of 5, 6, or 7) are considered to have fulfilled appropriate learning objectives. More information is available at: [registrar.sewanee.edu/students/articulation-of-ap-and-ib-exams/](http://registrar.sewanee.edu/students/articulation-of-ap-and-ib-exams/).