

# General Education Requirements

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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 provides opportunities in their classes and on campus to take responsibility for their own lives and the lives of their peers. Students are challenged to cooperate and collaborate, to engage in civil dialogue, and to analyze complex problems in the pursuit of 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 the 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>1</sup>

Mentoring by faculty, which includes close discussion of available courses and programs, offers students solid footing to choose a major and to reap the longer-term rewards of lifelong learning.

## Learning Objectives <sup>2</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.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 1 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g1/>).

### 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.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 2 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g2/>).

### 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.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 3 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g3/>).

### 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.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 4 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g4/>).

**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.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 5 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g5/>).

Approved courses for the Quantitative, Algorithmic, or Abstract Logical Reasoning component of Learning Objective 5 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g5q/>).

Approved courses for the Experiential or Experimental component of Learning Objective 5 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g5e/>).

**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.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 6 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g6/>).

Approved culturally-specific courses for Learning Objective 6 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g6cultures/>).

**Learning Objective 7. Encountering Perspectives: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** *One course.*

Following Sewanee's communal aspirations, captured in its motto *Ecce Quam Bonum*, this requirement examines the process of becoming a responsible member of one's community through the ability to engage with and learn from perspectives and experiences different from one's own. These perspectives may include intersecting experiences such as race, class, ethnicity, geographic origin, gender identities and expressions, sexual identity, political and religious orientation, and ability. Courses fulfilling this requirement will explore these perspectives while also considering the history of cultural, political, and economic struggle or privilege that have shaped how people define themselves or have been defined. These courses will promote greater self-knowledge as students examine multiple perspectives and reflect on the formation of identities.

Approved courses for Learning Objective 7 (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/g7/>).

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

A Foundational Writing-Intensive Course is built around casting thoughtful academic writing as a critical component of the thinking and learning processes. Not just an end goal, writing in these courses is seen as integral to discovering connections between and among ideas as well as offering creative and continual engagement with the course material. As any department might offer a Foundational Writing-Intensive Course, the structures of writing instruction may differ from course to course. However, all students will be expected to write at least 20-25 pages of prose that communicate what they have discovered in a clear and compelling manner. Moreover, any GFWI course will devote significant and dedicated class time throughout the semester to writing instruction, including argument and organization, use of evidence, mastery of academic English grammar and style, consideration of a piece's intended audience, and will prioritize strategies for responding to feedback through careful revision practices.

Approved Foundational Writing-Intensive Courses (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/degrees/general-education-program/gfwi/>).

**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 first 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> Courses approved to satisfy general education learning objectives I through 7 are tagged with one or two attributes (G1-G7), each attribute corresponding to its respective learning objective. **Only these approved courses may be used to satisfy learning objectives in the general education program.** With the sole exception of the physical education and wellness requirement, independent studies (444s) and similar courses may not be used to satisfy general education requirements. While credit for courses offered in the School of Theology and approved by the College of Arts and Sciences may be applied as elective credit to undergraduate degrees in the College, such courses may not be used to satisfy general education requirements. General education attributes for scheduled courses can be found online, within the class schedule at the University Registrar's web site. General education attributes are not assigned retroactively.
- <sup>2</sup> Students who perform exceptionally well on Advanced Placement exams (scores of 4 or 5), high-level International Baccalaureate exams (scores of 5, 6, or 7), or A-level exams (grades of B or higher) are considered to have fulfilled appropriate learning objectives. More information is available here (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2021-2022/arts-sciences/academic-policies-procedures/transfer-credit-study-abroad/>).