Arcadia University Undergraduate Curriculum

The Undergraduate Curriculum provides an integrative and global experience for all Arcadia University undergraduate students throughout their academic careers. Its design allows it to fit all undergraduate programs – day or evening, traditional or nontraditional, native or transfer.

The Undergraduate Curriculum consists of four elements:

- Arcadia students choose a **Major** from among 45 fields of study in the arts and humanities, sciences, social sciences, and business. The major is the integral part of the curriculum that helps each student to develop an area of expertise.
- Students participate in four types of required **Curricular Experiences**: a First-Year Experience, two University Seminars, a Global Connections Experience and Reflection, and a Senior Capstone Project.
- Students take courses in four, theme-based **Areas of Inquiry**. These Areas of Inquiry are (in alphabetical order): Creative Expressions; Cultural Legacies; Natural & Physical World; Self & Society.
- Students develop a series of **Intellectual Practices** both by taking stand-alone courses dedicated solely to these Intellectual Practices and by taking other designated courses throughout the University that focus on these Intellectual Practices in various content areas. These Intellectual Practices are (in alphabetical order): Global Connections; Modern Language; Quantitative Reasoning; Visual Literacy; Writing.

Because most Undergraduate Curriculum requirements focus on educational ends rather than particular means to those ends (e.g., specific courses), students have significant flexibility in determining how and with what courses these requirements may be satisfied. In addition, courses throughout the University may, when appropriate, fulfill multiple requirements simultaneously. In this way concepts, content and requirements are integrated throughout the students’ experience. For example, many courses will satisfy both an Area of Inquiry requirement and an Intellectual Practice requirement. Similarly, some courses students take within their majors will also satisfy Undergraduate Curriculum requirements. In particular, students will often fulfill multiple Areas of Inquiry and Intellectual Practices requirements by taking courses within their majors.

### 4 COMPONENTS, 22 DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS

**The Major**

- Intellectual Practices
  1. Writing (4)
  2. Visual Literacy (1)
  3. Modern Languages (102 level)
  4. Quantitative Reasoning (2)
  5. Global Connections (2)

**Areas of Inquiry**

1. Natural and Physical Sciences (2)
2. Cultural Legacies (2)
3. Self in Society (2)
4. Creative Expressions (1)

**Curricular Experiences**

1. First Year Seminar (1)
2. University Seminar (2)
3. Global Connection Experience and Reflection (1)
4. Senior Capstone (1)
The specific requirements of the Undergraduate Curriculum, in addition to the major, are as follows:

**Curricular Experiences**

**First-Year Experience:** All students participate in a First-Year Experience, usually during their first semester at Arcadia, which includes a First-Year Seminar linked with required first-semester writing courses. The First-Year Seminar provides students the opportunity to choose from among a range of special-topics courses. These seminars, which always fulfill at least one Area of Inquiry requirement, give students a first exposure to college by emphasizing in-depth learning and critical thinking in a supportive, small-class environment. Students enrolled in a particular First-Year Seminar participate in co-curricular activities and form a Learning Community of shared experiences and interaction. All First-Year Seminars adopt common intellectual activities that first-semester writing courses also utilize.

**University Seminars:** University Seminar courses focus on integrative learning objectives by providing vital and distinctive opportunities for students to make intellectual connections – connections between normally discrete disciplinary ideas and connections between those ideas and the world beyond the classroom. Students are required to take two (2) University Seminars after the completion of their First-Year Experience and before the beginning of their Senior Capstone Project. These University Seminars always fulfill at least one Area of Inquiry requirement and at least one Intellectual Practice requirement.

**Global Connections Experience and Reflection:** Students are required to have a sustained, cross-cultural experience that places them in cultural settings different from those in which they have previously lived. Ways that this requirement can be satisfied include studying abroad or immersion in approved domestic cross-cultural settings such as off-campus study, internships, service learning or student teaching. In addition, during their cross-cultural experience students must participate in a supervised reflection – typically by compiling an electronic portfolio – that requires them to document their experience and analyze its meanings.

**Senior Capstone Project:** The capstone project involves substantial written or creative work and the challenge of analyzing and integrating what has been learned in the student’s major field of study. In varying ways capstone projects guide students to reflect on their personal growth and the accomplishments of their undergraduate studies. For most students the specific criteria for the projects are set by the individual departments, generally as part of one or more required major courses. Seniors present their capstone projects to the University community.

**Areas of Inquiry**

Students take courses that allow them to explore four different theme-based Areas of Inquiry. Most courses throughout the University will satisfy one Area of Inquiry requirement, and First-Year Seminars and University Seminars may satisfy more than one Area of Inquiry requirement. The Areas of Inquiry – with the number of requirements per area in parentheses – are (in alphabetical order):

**Creative Expressions** (1): Students participate in the creative process through the expression and application of their imagination and by developing original ideas based on and in the context of personal, social, and political experiences and information. These project-based courses – typically in the fields of fine arts, performing arts and creative writing – explore and develop ideas by means of production, review, revision, and presentation.
Cultural Legacies (2): Students study human experience and expression through the exploration of the history and interpretation of past cultures and cultural texts. By examining aspects of past cultures such as their politics, religions, ethical systems, and literary and artistic production, students engage in asking and answering central questions about understanding the past including how these cultural legacies influence and are relevant to contemporary societies.

Natural & Physical World (2) – at least one (1) of which must include a laboratory component): Students learn about and participate in answering questions about the natural and physical world. This includes applying observation and experimentation based on physical events that are predictable and quantifiable. By definition, science describes both the outcome of study in the form of knowledge and the process by which the knowledge is acquired.

Self & Society (2): Students explore the multiple forces that create, shape and sustain the development of self-identity, and they examine how individuals and groups live together, form societies, and distribute resources and power. Students focus on understanding the mechanisms and processes that shape who we are and what we can become and on analyzing how and why societies and social institutions function, evolve, and include and exclude.

Intellectual Practices
Students develop Intellectual Practices by taking stand-alone courses dedicated solely to these practices and by taking other designated courses throughout the University that focus on these practices in various content areas. Many courses throughout the University, including all University Seminars, will satisfy at least one Intellectual Practice requirement. These Intellectual Practices are (in alphabetical order):

Global Connections: In addition to participating in a Global Connections Experience and Reflection, students must take two (2) additional courses that carry a Global Connections designation. Courses throughout the University carrying this designation focus on examining and reflecting upon issues related to interconnectedness, interdependence, and inequity within and among nation-states of the world. Global Connections courses also explore issues of social justice, social welfare, and economic rights across national borders, and they assist students in understanding the United States as part of the world.

Modern Language: Students must complete the 102 level of a language other than English, which may require up to two (2) courses depending on students’ prior experience. Assignment or exemption is based upon a placement inventory administered by the University or by transfer credit evaluation. International students are exempt from the modern language requirement.

Quantitative Reasoning: Students must complete one (1) mathematics course beyond Mathematics 100 and also take one (1) additional course that carries a Quantitative Reasoning designation. Assignment to or exemption from the mathematics course is based upon a placement inventory administered by the University or by a transfer-credit evaluation. Courses throughout the University carrying the Quantitative Reasoning designation devote significant attention to exploring and developing students’ ability to ask and act on questions related to the analysis of data, the application of mathematical models, or the cultural and political roles of mathematical thinking.

Visual Literacy: Students must take one (1) course that carries a Visual Literacy designation. Courses throughout the University carrying this designation focus on the viewing and interpretation of visual information and images from a variety of sources as well as the expression of meaning through visual means.
Writing: Students must complete English 101 (Thought and Expression I). In addition, students must take three (3) courses that carry a Writing designation. One of these three must be a specially-designated Research Writing course typically located either within students’ majors or in the English Department (English 102: Thought and Expression II) and which must be taken after English 101 and before the end of students’ second year. Another one of these three will in most cases be taken in students’ final year as part of a Senior Capstone Project within their major. By emphasizing how expression enhances learning, understanding, and communication, courses throughout the University carry the Writing designation that focus on the craft and process of written presentation through revisions based on critical commentary.