Pathways to the Majors: Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration between Liberal Arts and Sciences and Professional Schools

LIU POST

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LIU Post Thematic Core Curriculum

Divided into a first-year experience and upper-level thematic courses from across all schools and colleges, The LIU Post core curriculum provides students with a dynamic introduction to the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for personal and professional success.

➢ A first-year experience intentionally designed to support students in the often challenging transition from high school to college life.

➢ A focus on teaching essential professional skills as well as the psychological and emotional attitudes that will enable students to take up leadership roles in their chosen fields.

➢ Innovative interdisciplinary courses that furnish foundational knowledge about self, society and the natural world.

➢ Dedicated and dynamic faculty collaborating across schools and colleges to bring students an exciting and enriching learning experience.

➢ Opportunities for students to begin taking courses in their major in their first semester by enrolling in unique first-year seminars.
## Post Thematic Core Curriculum (32-33 credits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Experience (13 credits)</th>
<th>Thematic Clusters (19-20 credits)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post 101 – 1 credit</td>
<td>Scientific Inquiry and the Natural World (IA, QR) – 4 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>First-Year Seminar - 3 credits</td>
<td>Creativity, Media and the Arts (CC, CT) – 3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing I - 3 credits</td>
<td>Perspectives on World Cultures (IK) – 3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing II - 3 credits</td>
<td>Self, Society, and Ethics (ER, CT) – 3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning -3 credits (Any Math course)</td>
<td>Power, Institutions, and Structures (ER, CT) – 3 credits</td>
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<td>Additional course from one of the clusters -3 or 4 credits</td>
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Core Skills Expressed as Learning Objectives

- **Written Communication:** Students will express clear, sophisticated, and well-organized ideas in a style consistent with the purpose of the writing and through conventions appropriate to discipline and audience.

- **Oral Communication:** Students will present information or ideas in clear, compelling, and systematic ways that engage an audience and promote full understanding.

- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Students will demonstrate numerical fluency in a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday issues by analyzing data presented in charts, graphs, and tables, and creating sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence.

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will carefully and comprehensively understand and analyze issues, opinions, ideas, texts, and events before accepting or formulating a position.

- **Ethical Reasoning:** Students will evaluate their own ethical judgments, the judgments of others, and the prevailing values and norms of their time and place by considering various perspectives and formulating reasoned positions about ethical issues.

- **Inquiry and Analysis:** Students will systematically analyze objects, events, theories, issues, and works through the collection of evidence and draw informed conclusions about them.

- **Information Literacy:** Students will identify authoritative information sources based on information needs, design searches strategically to access relevant information, ask questions that lead to new areas of inquiry, and view themselves as contributors to the scholarly conversation.

- **Technological Competency:** Students will demonstrate functional use and/or effective design regarding at least one platform, system, or form of technology.

- **Creative Capabilities:** Students will combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or disciplines in original ways either by making or appreciating creative work.

- **Intercultural Knowledge:** Students will place diverse understanding of social justice in their corresponding cultural contexts and exhibit empathetic and aesthetic understanding of diverse ways of life.
First-Year Seminars

➢ The first-year seminar is a four-credit class with twenty first-year students. It is conducted in a discussion format and focuses on a particular theme or set of problems with a disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus.

➢ Students enrolled in the first-year seminars will have mentoring and guidance from classroom and library faculty members working in collaboration to foster student learning.

➢ Students in a first-year seminar will be enrolled in a linked section of Post Foundations taught by the same faculty member teaching the first-year seminar or a student life representative.

➢ Along with the additional support from a campus life representative and a peer mentor, library faculty with expertise in the discipline will be available to assist students with their research.

➢ Learning Goals: Critical Reading, Oral Communication
Some Examples of First-Year Seminars

- Writing in the Digital Age
- Small World: The Fiction, Poetry, and Drama of College Life
- Life and Labor: Workers in American Society
- Humankind and the Natural World
- The Nature of Friendship
- Outbreak! Veterinary and Human Disease Emergencies
- Introduction to Sociology: Transitions to Adulthood
- Game Change: Rethinking Sports and Athletics
- What it Means to Be a Nurse
- Effective Strategies for Student Success
- Frankenstein: The Monster, the Myth, the Movies
- Introductory Spanish I
- Power and Politics
- The Dynamic Earth
Post Foundations: A Holistic Approach to Student Engagement

Post Foundations is best thought of as an extended orientation with an academic emphasis. This one-credit class is taught by a first-year seminar instructor or student life representative who team teaches the course with a peer mentor. Students will discuss the main features of a learning environment and the behavior, practical skills, and intellectual aptitudes that must be developed in order to succeed in it. The aim of the class is to introduce students to the defining characteristics of a culture of learning.

Learning Goals: Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Ethical Reasoning
Peer Mentors

- Post Foundations currently makes use of peer mentors assigned to each class section.
- Peer mentors are part of a teaching team aimed at student engagement.
- The peer mentors serve as leaders in organizing the service learning component of the course.
- Peer mentors enroll in a three-credit course called Post Foundations Leadership to prepare them for their role.
IDS 100: Post Foundations Leadership

- Post Foundations Leadership is offered in two parts: a one credit course in the spring in which the mentors design the service learning project for the fall and a two-credit course in the fall.
- Peer Mentors learn the values of leadership as they develop the skills needed to engage first-year students.
Recent New Directions: Introducing Research into the Core

- Selected first-year seminars will be incorporated into clusters of courses with a shared research experience.
- The research experience will be designed to introduce students to research in their first semester.

Example: Resilient Communities on Long Island

The courses in this research cluster treat a series of interrelated concerns connected to the interactions between humanity and the natural world and include issues such as building resiliency regarding climate disasters, environmental threats to resiliency such as water and air pollution, health-related consequences of pollution and climate change, resiliency among vulnerable communities like farmworkers and victims of labor injustice. These courses are linked together by a common research experience designed for first-year students. The research project will respond to a social problem related to building resilient communities on Long Island.
Horizontal Integration with Professional Schools

➢ Thematic clusters enable the design of courses tailored to the academic needs and interests of students in programs across schools and colleges.

Examples:

ENG 142: Leadership and Literature fulfills the thematic cluster requirement for Self, Society, and Ethics and is offered as a recommended option for Business Administration and Accountancy students in the College of Management. Students read works of literature as case studies in leadership while engaging in reflective work about their own potential as leaders.

ENG 144: Empathy and the Human Imagination fulfills the thematic cluster requirement for Perspectives on World Cultures and is offered as a recommended option for Health Sciences students in the School of Health Professions and Nursing. In connection with the program's emphasis on Narrative Medicine, students read works of literature through the interdisciplinary framework of recent work on empathy in neuroscience, social psychology, aesthetics, philosophy and evolutionary science.

PHI 9: Business Ethics fulfills the thematic cluster requirement for Self, Society, and Ethics and is offered as a recommended option for Business Administration and Accountancy students in the College of Management. Students are introduced to ancient and modern systems in moral philosophy and apply these theories to specific case studies drawn from the field of business.
Horizontal Integration with Professional Schools (cont.)

ENG 188: Writing in the Workplace fulfills the thematic cluster requirement for Power, Institutions, and Structures and is offered as a recommended option for Business Administration and Accountancy students in the College of Management. Students are taught the basic rhetorical models used in business settings.

ENG 35: Childhood and Literature and ENG 36: Adolescent Literature fulfill the thematic cluster requirement for Self, Society and Ethics and are offered as recommended options for Childhood and Adolescence Education students, respectively. Students read literary works focused on the experience of childhood and adolescence.
Learning Communities

Learning Communities also serve as a vehicle for horizontal integration with professional schools through linking a three-credit course from Liberal Arts and Sciences with required courses in a particular major.

Example:
ENG 36: Adolescent Literature and EDI 17: Developmental Psychology
- Adolescent Literature fulfills the core requirement for Self, Society, and Ethics
- Developmental Psychology fulfills a requirement for Education majors
- Collaboration between instructors enhances the student experience
Creating an Inclusive Process: Academic and Political Challenges

- Creating an inclusive process
- A process guided by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Including key faculty from the professional schools
- Including administrators and student affairs representatives
- Getting buy-in from advisors
Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Negotiating tensions around workload and fears of the diminished importance of individual disciplines
- A mandate and short time-line from the Board of Trustees
- Finding productive ways of including administration and student affairs in the process
- Creating a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan