

Undergraduate Programs, Shared Curriculum Requirements

Whitworth University's shared liberal arts curriculum expresses the values of Whitworth's General Education Rationale by bringing together a traditional liberal arts education, steady engagement with contemporary culture and ideas, and a vigorous exploration of faith and worldview, with a special emphasis on investigating Christian belief.

Courses in the shared curriculum encourage students to *explore*, *reflect on* and *apply* knowledge within four distinct but interrelated inquiry groups: **Belief**, which works especially at the intersection of faith, worldview and reason; **Culture**, directly engaging literature, history and the multicultural complexities of our diverse world; **Expression**, which encourages students to create and interpret different forms of expression; and **Science** (p. 4), developing scientific and quantitative literacies and habits of mind. A fifth area of study – called **Praxis** – promotes habits of mind and wellness.

Individual courses within each inquiry group expose students to distinct but interrelated approaches to pursuing and applying knowledge; courses within the curriculum as a whole allow students to explore knowledge from and across diverse perspectives, preparing them to collaborate at work and in the community, to engage with contemporary problems, and to contribute to the world in a meaningful way.

Students must complete all shared curriculum requirements outlined below. Courses designated on Self-Service as fulfilling a shared curriculum requirement are valid for that semester only. The list of courses fulfilling shared curriculum requirements evolves and changes over time; therefore, it is important for students to check the listings on Self-Service when planning their class schedules.

Note: A student may not use the same course to satisfy more than one of the shared curriculum requirements.

Belief Inquiry

The Belief Inquiry Group (BIG) is dedicated to engaging Christian belief faithfully and critically, while welcoming the diversity of belief among our students and fostering a community of rigorous inquiry. The BIG nurtures curiosity, autonomy and humility in students as they explore their own beliefs and consider the beliefs of others. These courses ground, enrich and deepen worldview development by equipping students to apply philosophical, theological and ethical reasoning to questions about what is true, what is good and beautiful, and how we should live.

Courses within the Belief Inquiry Group are designed to enable students to:

Explore

- Demonstrate knowledge of ideas related to biblical, theological and/or philosophical study. **OR**
- Demonstrate understanding of concepts related to metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology, politics and/or ethics, and the relevance of these concepts to the development of a worldview.

Reflect

- Analyze different literary, theological and/or philosophical frameworks as they are applied to an issue and/or text. **OR**
- Analyze aspects of one's worldview in relation to metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology, politics and/or ethics, with supported reasons for holding such a worldview.

Apply

- Produce an analysis of a contemporary issue and/or text, applying literary, theological and/or philosophical reasoning. **OR**
- Produce an argument that applies one's worldview to a given topic with supported reasons for holding such a view.

Component Descriptions:

Biblical Literature (3 credits): Courses in this area equip students to interpret biblical texts with attentiveness to their historical, literary and theological contexts; to articulate the Bible's central themes and overall message; and to reflect on the potential relevance of the Christian gospel for themselves and for various aspects of contemporary life.

Core 150: Ancient & Modern Worldviews in Christian Perspective (3 credits): This course engages students in the examination of their beliefs regarding the nature of God, humanity and the world. It covers these topics by helping students understand the nature and formation of worldviews, providing an overview of non-Christian religious traditions, articulating the Christian tradition through the biblical story and the three primary branches of Christianity, and critically examining a number of contemporary worldview-shaping factors.

Core 250: Worldview & Role of Reason (3 credits): This course engages students in study of sources of knowledge (epistemology), with emphasis on the role of reason. Beginning with foundations in ancient Greece and extending through the growing ascendancy of the Christian Church, the Enlightenment, and periods of challenge, contributions of rationalists and challenges to rationalism are explored. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own intellectual assumptions, including the role that reason plays in knowing what is true and discerning what is good.

Core 350: Worldviews in Policy (3 credits): This course asks students to consider public, social and institutional policy against the backdrop of worldview and ethics. It emphasizes the application of worldview claims to the private and public spheres of life, with special consideration of practical and ethical questions.

Faith, Reason and Contemporary Issues (3 credits): Courses in this area apply theological or philosophical reasoning in the examination of contemporary issues and activities. These courses feature in-depth discussion informed by explicitly Christian perspectives. Students will develop and articulate well-informed arguments in support of their own developing views.

Cultural Inquiry

The Cultural Inquiry Group (CIG) invites students to encounter and analyze the complexities of human culture, community, diversity and identity. Students in CIG courses study the formation, expression, documentation and analysis of identities, communities, histories, beliefs, stories and ideas. These courses are designed to help students develop open, fair and discerning minds as they study and empathize with people whose cultures and experiences differ from their own. A CIG course may carry an additional tag signifying that it focuses on a domestic/United States (“U”) or global (“G”) context. “U” and “G” courses are designed to help students develop their intercultural competencies by thinking critically about power, privilege, hierarchy, identity or interdependence.

Courses within the Cultural Inquiry Group are designed to enable students to:

Explore

- Identify and explain a set of tools and methods for analyzing and assessing texts, images, objects and/or activities. **OR**
- (req. for “U” or “G” tag) Describe how aspects of human diversity may exist or be articulated within social and historical structures, belief systems and/or cultural expressions.

Reflect

- Demonstrate how and to what extent texts, images, objects and/or activities embody and/or express ideas, beliefs and values, including those related to the formation of cultures and/or identities. **OR**
- (req. for “U” or “G” tag) Explain how a theoretical, disciplinary or faith perspective may be used to understand and/or respond to issues of power, privilege, hierarchy, identity and/or interdependence present in social and historical structures and cultural expressions.

Apply

- Produce/compose an analysis of a text, image, object and/or activity, making use of an approach appropriate to the course. **OR**
- (req. for “U” or “G” tag) Making use of an approach appropriate to the course, produce/compose an analysis that examines issues of power, privilege, hierarchy, identity and/or interdependence present in social and historical structures or cultural expressions.

Component Descriptions:

Historical Analysis (3 credits): Courses in this area consider the multifaceted and open-ended nature of historical inquiry. Using historical/historiographic methods, these courses ask students to contextualize and evaluate primary sources and balance these with recent scholarly texts to better understand the complexity of historical conversations. These courses ask students to think critically about the past in order to better understand current cultural dynamics.

Literature and Storytelling (3 credits): Courses in this area feature careful analysis of literary or narrative texts and explore the embodiment of human experience, thought and values in storytelling and written expression. These courses will ask students to explore how the expressive choices of writers and storytellers are connected to historical and cultural contexts and to consider how the understood significance of texts, symbols and events may be affected by the interpreter.

Culture and Diversity (3 credits): Courses in this area investigate the formation and shaping of diverse cultures, communities, beliefs and identities. These courses ask students to examine primary and/or secondary sources, respond to relevant scholarship, and/or participate in experiential learning activities and respectful discourse.

“U” and “G” Tags: Students must take one course tagged with “U” and one course tagged with “G” to satisfy requirements (see "Descriptions for Tagged Courses" for more information).

Expressive Inquiry

The Expressive Inquiry Group (EIG) encourages students to create and interpret different forms of intentional expression. Students will engage with written, oral, nonverbal, multimodal and artistic forms of expression, with careful consideration of audience, environment and aesthetics. Students will apply the same considerations as they learn to communicate in at least one language besides English. These courses allow students to develop confidence in expressing themselves and gain insight by reflecting on the expression of others.

Courses within the Expressive Inquiry Group are designed to enable students to:

Explore

- Identify the characteristics of effective written, oral, nonverbal, multimodal and/or artistic expression. **OR**
- Describe how creator, audience, purpose and context influence effective communication.

Reflect

- Evaluate the effectiveness of an action, text, object or performance in conveying a message, expressing an idea or eliciting a response. **OR**
- Analyze messages for why and how they are created or function within specific cultural contexts and/or in relation to specific audiences.

Apply

- Produce written, oral, nonverbal, multimodal, artistic compositions that are effective within their purpose and/or language. **OR**
- Evaluate and adapt their rhetorical and/or creative approaches to respond to specific situations and audiences.

Component Descriptions:

Written Communication (3 credits): Courses in this area focus on the gathering, analysis and ethical use of information. Students will be asked to evaluate and produce written communication across multiple genres, communicative approaches and media platforms.

Oral Communication (3 credits): Courses in this area focus on the ability to listen to, interpret, create and share verbal and nonverbal messages in a variety of situations. These courses ask students to craft effective communication that is respectful, weighs ethical obligations and constraints, and manages conflict.

Fine Arts (3 credits): Courses in this area typically focus on theatre, dance, music, creative writing and the visual arts as forms of expression. These courses help students develop their capacity to express themselves creatively through an artistic medium and/or gain understanding of an aesthetic tradition.

World Languages (4 credits): Courses in this area instill a basic level of proficiency in a language other than English, including some essential knowledge of the relevant culture(s). They focus on communication: This may be primarily spoken, written, gestural or a combination of methods. This requirement is satisfied with proficiency in the target language equal to two semesters of coursework at the university level.*

*At Whitworth, this means either the 101-102 sequence, a 111, or equivalent testing (contact the world languages & cultures department (<https://www.whitworth.edu/world-languages-and-cultures/>) for more information). Guidelines for proficiency in languages taught in courses that do not emphasize oral proficiency, such as ASL, Greek and Hebrew, are set by the relevant department.

Scientific Inquiry

The Scientific Inquiry Group (SIG) promotes curiosity, discernment and integrity in the scientific pursuit of questions and answers. Courses in this area cultivate scientific and quantitative literacies as they introduce students to the different ways natural scientists, social scientists and mathematicians ask questions, make observations, gather and analyze data, and solve problems. Through their work in the SIG, students will develop the skills and intellectual habits they need to become informed, critical interpreters of the social and natural sciences.

Courses within the Scientific Inquiry Group are designed to enable students to:

Explore

- Identify one or more appropriate approaches or methodologies for the relevant area of study. **OR**
- Demonstrate information and/or quantitative literacy.

Reflect

- Evaluate the effectiveness of methods used and solutions obtained or proposed in relation to a problem or set of problems. **OR**
- Evaluate the prior qualitative or quantitative work of scientists and its importance to ethical, theological or cultural questions.

Apply

- Problem-solve using qualitative or quantitative methods. **OR**
- Conduct analysis or develop a practical application based on the results of existing research or using appropriate research methodologies.

Component Descriptions:

Natural Science (3 credits): Courses in this area emphasize understanding and application of the scientific method as an analytical, problem-solving tool. These courses use both theoretical and experiential components to expose students to the strengths and weaknesses of scientific methodology and to the relationship between scientific inquiry and faith.

Social Science (3 credits): Courses in this area seek to describe how and why humans behave as they do individually and/or corporately. These courses will ask students to analyze the methodologies and research skills associated with the social sciences.

Math/Statistics (3 credits): Courses in this area provide an overview of topics in quantitative reasoning, analysis and problem-solving. These courses ask students to apply these skills to a variety of disciplines and recognize the influence of mathematics on human culture.

Praxis

The Whitworth shared curriculum is designed to help students explore, reflect and apply knowledge in ways that encourage virtuous character as well as good intellectual habits and skills. To accomplish these goals and prepare for lifelong learning and service, students learn to develop and balance foundational habits of mind and wellness.

Component Descriptions:

Habits of Mind (2 credits): The Habits of Mind sequence begins with SC 125 (First-Year Seminar) or SC 325 (Transfer Seminar), which focuses on students' transition into higher education in general, and Whitworth specifically. It continues into SC 126, an interdisciplinary one-credit seminar that allows students to examine how different areas of knowledge might come together to solve problems or explore ideas. This set of courses is designed to help students contemplate the breadth of opportunities that occur both inside and outside the classroom at Whitworth and begin to chart a path that allows them to take full advantage of that breadth.

Courses in Habits of Mind are designed to enable students to reflect on the importance of connection between academic disciplines, extra/co-curricular activities and student life experiences in relation to their individual plans for those areas of university life.

Habits of Wellness (3 credits): Habits of Wellness courses allow students to build strategies for physical and emotional health, both of which are essential not only to a successful academic experience, but for lifelong health. This requirement is satisfied through the completion of three physical wellness courses and one course with an "E" tag for emotional wellness.

- **Physical Wellness:** These courses introduce students to physical wellness through a combination of physical activity and the study of its effect on a variety of facets of human health. They include physical education and dance courses.
- **Emotional Wellness (“E”) tag:** Students must take one course tagged with “E” to satisfy this requirement (see “Descriptions for Tagged Courses” for more information).

Courses in Habits of Wellness are designed to enable students to explore different ways to establish healthy balance in physical and emotional wellness as well as address symptoms of imbalance in their lives.

Descriptions for Tagged Courses

“U” – United States Diversity: These courses focus on issues of power, privilege, hierarchy, identity and/or interdependence specifically within the United States. This content is consistently explored through readings, class discussions and assignments/assessments throughout the course. These courses are found in the Cultural Inquiry Group and are tagged with a “U”.

“G” – Global Diversity: These courses focus on issues of power, privilege, hierarchy, identity and/or interdependence in one or more countries outside of the United States, or on a global scale. This content is consistently explored through readings, class discussions and assignments/assessments throughout the course. These courses are found in the Cultural Inquiry Group and are tagged with a “G”.

“E” – Emotional Wellness: These courses introduce students to emotional wellness by exploring the factors that lead to imbalances in emotional health as well as strategies to restore healthy balance.

Note: Only courses in the Cultural Inquiry Group (CIG) can have the “U” or “G” tag because these courses must adopt shared learning outcomes from the CIG. For some students, however, the tags may seem to float. For example, a student has completed her CIG requirements, but none of the courses were tagged with a “U”. If she takes a course for the Fine Arts requirement, and that course also satisfies the Culture and Diversity requirement with a “U” tag, she can get credit for the “U” from that course.

School of Continuing Studies Shared Curriculum Requirements (38 total credits)

Belief Inquiry (6 credits)

Core 300: This course engages students in the examination of their beliefs regarding the nature of God, humanity and the world. It examines, contextualizes and critiques views of the role of reason in human thought and aspects of a Christian worldview, including key theological concepts. (Note: Students can also meet this requirement with Core 150, 250 or 350.)

Students take ONE of the following:

- Biblical Literature
- Faith, Reason and Contemporary Issues

Cultural Inquiry (6 credits)

Students take TWO of the following:

- Historical Analysis
- Literature and Storytelling
- Culture and Diversity

Note: Students need both “U” and “G” tags (see “Descriptions for Tagged Courses (p. 5)” for more information).

Expressive Inquiry (12 credits)

- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Fine Arts
- World Language

Scientific Inquiry (9 credits)

- Math/Statistics
- Natural Science
- Social Science

Praxis (5 credits)

- Habits of Mind (3 credits): This component is satisfied with GE 335 (Transitions to Adult Learning), which emphasizes academic preparedness, critical thinking and communication skills.
- Habits of Wellness (2 credits): This component is satisfied with two credits in Physical Wellness.

Note: Students need “E” tag (see "Descriptions for Tagged Courses (p. 5)").