

Liberal Learning

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The College of New Jersey aims to educate students for citizenship in a modern democracy. Proceeding from the College's mission and its "Guiding Principles for Academic Work," Liberal Learning has three interdependent structural elements. The first sparks intellectual and scholarly growth characterized by students' increasing ability to pose intellectually challenging questions, confront significant problems, and apply focused rigor in seeking promising resolutions. This element ensures that learners gain habits of mind necessary to study and understand human knowledge and how it applies to complex problems. The second element enables students to relate beliefs, values, and intellectual habits to their civic role in society. Such vision requires deep understandings of ways race, ethnicity, and gender have shaped local and global communities. The third element fosters familiarity with essential knowledge about broad sectors of human inquiry. Such familiarity enables students to be conversant in the broad range of intellectual discourse.

There are three elements to the Liberal Learning Program:

I. Intellectual and Scholarly Growth

All first-year TCNJ students take a seminar introducing them to serious scholarship and the life of the mind. FSP/First Seminar enables them to demonstrate fundamental dispositions and abilities to engage in academic inquiry. Course sections are based on themes selected by each professor, designed to be intellectually stimulating and inclusive of students across all programs. Professors serve as mentors, assisting students in thinking about college and life. A student's First Seminar cannot fulfill major requirements.

A student's ability to demonstrate a well-developed, confident identity as a good writer is accomplished through completion of: WRI 102/Academic Writing; FSP; a second- or third-year writing intensive course or writing-enhanced curriculum in the major or Liberal Learning; and a capstone or other fourth year writing intensive course in the major. However, students may be exempted from WRI 102 if they have earned scores of 580 and above on both the SAT Critical Reading test and on the SAT Mathematics test, through Advanced Placement tests, or through the College's placement process. Details for these criteria are available in the section of this Bulletin titled "Writing Program."

Achieving speaking proficiency is measured by a student's ability to demonstrate a well-developed, confident identity as a good speaker, and is the responsibility of each major program.

A level of second language proficiency enabling students to access perspectives and information from communities other than their own is met by completing the third introductory second-language course—or testing out of it. Proficiency at the third-semester level in a second language is required for all programs in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and in selected programs in the School of the Arts and Communication and the School of Business. Proficiency at either the second- or third-semester level (depending on program) is required in the School of Science. Consult an advisor for information about specific program requirements.

Information literacy is measured by a student's ability to determine the need for, and to gain access to, information, as well as to develop the means of evaluating and using it with proficiency. It is accomplished through an on-line, non-credit course (IDS 102) required as a co-requisite with First Seminar or as a stand-alone requirement for transfer students. Students must demonstrate this proficiency prior to graduation, but are encouraged to do so as early as possible.

II. Civic Responsibilities

Students should have an understanding of the nature of race and ethnicity, gender, and global communities, and the impact of each on our lives in the contemporary world. Also, students should seek to sustain and advance the communities in which they live by engaging in an informed and academically based service experience. The fulfillment of these goals is achieved by completing designated major or Liberal Learning courses or through an approved program or equivalent sustained experiences. No single course, program, or sustained experience may satisfy more than two of the four civic responsibility categories. A list of courses meeting the civic responsibilities requirement can be found online at the [Liberal Learning website](#).

The four areas of civic responsibility are:

- understanding the nature of race and ethnicity
- understanding the nature and impact of gender
- achieving global awareness
- community-engaged learning

III. Broad Sectors of Human Inquiry—Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and History, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning:

This element of Liberal Learning develops students' abilities to understand and advance their knowledge in three broad sectors of human inquiry: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and History, and Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning. Each of the three *broad sectors* of human inquiry is sub-divided into two *domains* as follows:

Arts and Humanities

- Literary, Visual and Performing Arts
- World Views and Ways of Knowing

Social Sciences and History

- Behavioral, Social or Cultural Perspectives
- Social Change in Historical Perspective

Natural Science and Quantitative Reasoning

- Natural Science
- Quantitative Reasoning

Courses taken for major or minor requirements may be used to fulfill the broad sector requirements as appropriate, and courses taken to meet the broad sectors of human inquiry requirements may also fulfill civic responsibilities requirements, as indicated in PAWS.

There are five ways whereby students can meet the Liberal Learning breadth requirement:

- **Menu option**
Students complete a total of eight courses: one course in each domain and two additional courses from different broad sectors. First Year Seminar sections do **not** fulfill any of the six domains, and therefore, do **not** fulfill any breadth requirement. In satisfying their Natural Science requirement students must take at least one laboratory course. When two Natural Science courses are taken, they may be in one or two disciplines (unless otherwise specified by major requirements).
- **Interdisciplinary Concentrations**
These concentrations consist of six to eight courses addressing a common theme. Courses comprising a concentration must include at least two of the three broad sectors of human inquiry, with no more than four courses from the same broad sector. When an interdisciplinary concentration does not include two courses from each broad sector, additional courses, as necessary, from the appropriate sectors must be completed. Every student must also complete at least one course each in quantitative reasoning and natural science with laboratory. When two additional courses are required from the same sector, students must select courses with different prefixes.

The concentrations listed below are currently available. Complete descriptions for each can be found in the section of this Bulletin for “College-Wide Programs: Interdisciplinary Concentrations” as well as on the webpage on [Interdisciplinary Concentrations](#).

African Studies	Gender, Nation, and Democracy
African Diaspora Studies	Health Communication
African American Studies	International Political Economy
Asian Studies	Law and Society
Caribbean Studies	Religious Studies
Classical and Early Modern	Sexualities
British Literary Studies	Social Justice
Classical Studies	Society, Ethics, and Technology
Cognitive Science	Women in Learning and Leadership
Environmental Studies	Women’s and Gender Studies
European Literary Studies	
Gender and Violence	

To enroll in an Interdisciplinary Concentration, consult with a faculty sponsor of the concentration, who will explain its academic focus and requirements and, with the student, determine its compatibility with the student’s major program and other academic goals.

Two courses can be counted between an Interdisciplinary Concentration and a Major, and one course can be counted between an Interdisciplinary Concentration and a Minor.

Students intending to complete an interdisciplinary concentration must obtain signatures from their major advisor(s) and one of the faculty sponsors of the concentration on the [Interdisciplinary Concentration Form](#). The completed and signed form must be submitted to the Office of Records and Registration.

- **Dual major**
Students majoring in education are dual majors, meaning that they complete two majors together. Students must complete at least two courses from each broad sector and one course each in quantitative reasoning and natural science with laboratory. When two additional courses beyond those included in the two parts of the dual major are required from the same sector, students must select courses with different prefixes. Similarly, if a student needs only one additional course from a sector, its prefix must be different from the other course.

Some education majors must take specific Liberal Learning courses that are required by state licensure requirements. Please consult your major advisor for guidance on your Liberal Learning requirements.

- **Double major**
A double major has a first major and an optional second major. Students must complete at least two courses from each broad sector and one course each in quantitative reasoning and natural science with laboratory. When two additional courses beyond those included in the two majors are required from the same sector, students must select courses with different prefixes. Similarly, if a student needs only one additional course from a sector, its prefix must be different from the other course.
- **Self-designed major or interdisciplinary concentration**
Students can create their own second majors or interdisciplinary concentrations. Students must complete at least two courses from each broad sector and one course each in quantitative reasoning and natural science with laboratory. When two additional courses beyond those included in the two majors are required from the same sector, students must select courses with different prefixes. Similarly, if a student needs only one additional course from a sector, its prefix must be different from the other course.

To self-design a major, a student must secure the sponsorship of at least two faculty members who teach in disciplines included in the proposed concentration. The student must then submit a formal proposal and plan of studies to Dr. Richard Kamber at rkamber@tcnj.edu, who will meet with the student to work out the details of the proposal.

To self-design an interdisciplinary concentration, a student must secure the sponsorship of at least two faculty members who teach in disciplines included in the proposed concentration. The student must then complete the Interdisciplinary Concentration Form and submit it to the Office of Records and Registration.