

GENERAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

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Why is General Education important?

The General Education Curriculum at the University of Denver seeks, along with the University's major, minor, and degree programs, to provide an outstanding educational experience that empowers students to integrate and apply knowledge from across the disciplines, in the process imagining new possibilities for themselves, their communities, and the world. The General Education Curriculum is solidly grounded in the strengths that the experiences and areas of knowledge of our various academic disciplines provide, while illustrating the connections between ways of approaching knowledge. Its courses contribute to our intellectually vibrant campus community and create, in turn, our challenging, inclusive, ethical, and liberating learning environment that encourages making connections among modes of learning, from our students' initial First-year Seminar to the General Education Curriculum's culminating Advanced Seminar. By taking courses in diverse experiences and areas of knowledge, our students cultivate critical and creative thought, applicable to our global culture.

What are the overall requirements in the University of Denver's General Education Curriculum?

The General Education Curriculum at the University of Denver plays a central role in every undergraduate student's education. On the next page is a matrix that shows, in one location, the whole of DU's General Education requirements, along with short statements that explain why the courses in the various parts of the curriculum are important in today's world – what students will be able to achieve through these classes. The matrix is followed by descriptive paragraphs that explain why each class a student takes is important, and where it fits in the educational plan of the University.

An undergraduate at the University typically takes between 52 to 60 credits in the General Education Curriculum, corresponding to 13 to 15 courses: First-Year Seminar (1 course); Writing and Rhetoric (2 courses); Language (1 to 3 courses); Ways of Knowing (8 courses); Advanced Seminar (1 course). Because certain programs have slightly different requirements in the General Education Curriculum, and because AP and IB courses, or transfer courses from other universities and colleges, may change the distribution of the requirements for individual students, always consult an advisor while planning out courses at the University and abroad.

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(Students are required to satisfy a 4-credit requirement for each box ☐ in the matrix below.)

AREAS OF INQUIRY → EXPERIENCES ↓	The Natural & Physical World	Society & Culture
First-Year Seminar	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover what it means to be an active member of an intellectual community by meeting rigorous academic expectations through critical reading, discussion, research, and/or writing. • Practice newly acquired skills in an active learning environment where writing, performing, laboratory experiments, quantitative analyses, or other forms of experiential and/or creative activities will shape the goals and activities of the seminar. • Establish a strong academic advising relationship with their faculty mentor that extends beyond obtaining information about academic requirements and the mechanics of how to register for courses. 	
Writing & Rhetoric	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze strategies used in a variety of rhetorical situations and employ those principles in their own writings and communications. • Analyze research and writing strategies used in a range of academic traditions and use those strategies in their own writings. • Adapt, to specific situations, a strong repertory of writing processes, including generating, shaping, revising, editing, proofreading, and working with other writers. 	
Language	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a greater proficiency in a language, as based on their initial evaluation in their language of choice. • Demonstrate greater knowledge about a culture as embodied in that language. 	
Ways of Knowing: Analytical Inquiry	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply formal reasoning, mathematics or computational science approaches to problem solving within mathematics or computational science, and other disciplines. • Understand and communicate connections between different areas of logic, mathematics or computational science, or their relevance to other disciplines. • Communicate formalisms in logic, mathematics or computing sciences. 	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to create or interpret the texts, ideas, or artifacts of human culture. • Identify and analyze the connections between texts, ideas, or cultural artifacts and the human experience and/or perception of the world.
Ways of Knowing: Scientific Inquiry	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate concepts and principles specific to a field of study in natural science or technology, and effectively apply scientific methods to ask questions, design and perform experiments, or judge arguments. • Recognize science as a process that considers uncertainty when drawing conclusions from scientific evidence and making predictions from existing data. • Apply and distinguish between qualitative and quantitative forms of analysis and evidence, and demonstrate skills for using and interpreting quantitative information in various formats based on validation and replication of results. 	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe basic principles of human functioning and conduct in social and cultural contexts. • Describe and explain how social scientific methods are used to understand these underlying principles.
Advanced Seminar	<div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these courses, students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate and apply knowledge and skills gained from general education courses to new settings and complex problems. • Write effectively, providing appropriate evidence and reasoning for assertions. 	

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR:

First-Year Seminars are designed to provide students with an in-depth academic experience that will be rigorous and engaging. Students will develop the kinds of academic skills that will prepare them for successful college work, which might include one or more of the following: critical reading and thinking, writing, discussion, argument and debate. Faculty members have selected course topics about which they have particular expertise and enthusiasm. For students to be able to engage with faculty in the exploration of these topics is an extraordinary opportunity for academic and personal growth. Instructors of the First-Year Seminars will also serve as students' academic advisors and faculty mentors for the entire first year. Students meet individually with their mentor during winter and spring quarters for advising and registration help.

WRITING AND RHETORIC:

Being able to convey written information and ideas in ways that are compelling to specific audiences is essential both in college and beyond. Beginning in the winter quarter of their first year, students take two sequenced writing courses, usually WRIT 1122 and WRIT 1133. Together, these courses teach strategies for writing to well-educated readers in diverse academic and nonacademic situations. Students learn rhetorical principles, the analysis and use of readings and source materials, and techniques for generating, revising, and editing texts for specific situations. They also learn to present and justify positions and to produce researched writing in various scholarly traditions, including textual/interpretive (the analysis of texts or artifacts such as images or events), qualitative (analyses based on observations or interviews), or quantitative (information gained through measurement). In each course, students complete several writing exercises and, through sustained practice and systematic instructor guidance, they complete at least four polished papers, totaling some 20 to 25 pages. By the end of the two-course sequence, then, students have completed at least 40 to 50 pages of polished writing. These courses lay the foundation for writing in further General Education courses (including the Advanced Seminar), writing in students' majors, and writing in professional and civic life after graduation.

LANGUAGE:

The faculty of the University of Denver believe that studying culture through language at the university level is crucial in our globalized world, and courses in this area reflect that belief. Students in these courses usually must complete three quarters of study in a language at the first-year level. If a student shows exceptional skill and places higher than first-year, that student needs to complete a one-quarter course (4 credits) in the language above the first-year level (or that student may choose to start a new language and complete the first-year sequence in that language). In these courses, students will learn linguistic skills in a language other than English in the setting of an internationalizing university that encourages multi-skill language learning. Students taking such courses also will be studying a different expression of culture through language, thereby learning both about a new culture and about themselves and their personal and social and cultural backgrounds. Students will learn to appreciate human diversity as it is expressed linguistically and transculturally in our society.

WAYS OF KNOWING**Analytical Inquiry and The Natural & Physical World:**

Mathematics, formal reasoning, and more recently, computational sciences, have been crucial foundations for many disciplines by enabling and supporting formal modes of inquiry, particularly for disciplines related to the natural and physical world. For example, today's physics and engineering knowledge would be impossible without accompanying advances in mathematics. Similarly, advances in the life sciences, like genomics, rely heavily on computational sciences. Students must take one course in this area, which is designed to provide students the knowledge of how to understand and use principles of mathematics and computational sciences as a formal means of inquiry in the natural and physical world.

Analytical Inquiry & Society and Culture:

Through these courses, students gain knowledge essential for today's global society, recognizing that human cultures are specific to time and place and that the practices and values of different societies vary widely. By gaining greater understanding of diverse cultural products, they will be better able to understand the world today and their own place in it. Students take two courses in this area, exploring culture and society from two different perspectives. In these courses, students learn how to analyze the products of human cultures, including works of art, music, literature, philosophy, and history. They engage critically with such works through exposure to the vocabulary, concepts, and methods used to analyze those works. They explore how ideas and creative expressions both shape and are shaped by human experiences.

Scientific Inquiry and The Natural & Physical World:

Science and technology play increasing roles in the most profound challenges and the greatest opportunities that we face as global societies. Gaining knowledge of the practice and promise of science is an essential responsibility of each educated citizen. While science provides the most thoroughly tested tools for developing accurate knowledge of nature, developing technologies shape our daily living and provide opportunities to ask questions that were not imaginable by previous generations. Courses provide students with a 3-quarter experience that builds knowledge and application of scientific approaches in one core area. The three-quarter format with accompanying laboratories allows in-depth explorations that have significant social implications and that encourage development of reasoning skills and reflective judgment. By working between classroom and laboratory to understand the nature of science in the natural and physical world, students will apply scientific methods, analyze and interpret data, and justify conclusions where evidence is conflicting. Students will also explore the strengths and weaknesses of scientific knowledge, and reflect on the connections between the natural sciences, developing technologies, and other ways of knowing and constructing human experiences.

Scientific Inquiry and Society & Culture:

Knowledge of principles of human functioning and conduct in social and cultural contexts is essential for living in a culturally diverse and interdependent society. Understanding scientific approaches to discovering these principles enhances informed decisions for the public good, and provides a way of thinking about problems and issues that complements other areas of inquiry and experiences. Through courses in this area, students learn about principles of human functioning and conduct in social and cultural contexts and come to understand how these are studied using scientific methods. Students take two courses in different subjects studied from the perspectives of the social sciences; they are thus exposed to varying approaches and levels of analysis (e.g., physiological, evolutionary, mental, social, and cultural processes).

ADVANCED SEMINARS:

While knowledge and professional skills found in a student's major and minor are important foundations for accomplishment, successful individuals also must be able to navigate a complex political, social, cultural and economic environment that challenges more traditionally limited concepts of higher education and competencies. To help students better understand the demands of contemporary life, instructors teach an advanced seminar based in their area of expertise and passion. The topic will be approached from multiple perspectives in a course designed for non-majors. Studying in this setting, students demonstrate their ability to integrate different perspectives and synthesize diverse ideas through intensive writing on that topic. This course must be taken at the University of Denver.