Writing and Information Literacy

All UMD students become skillful writers and users of information resources through a strong focus on writing that spans the four years of their college careers. A strong foundation in written communication and information literacy is provided through two required courses:

Writing Studies 1120 College Writing (3 credits) is part of the LE Core and normally taken during the freshman year.

Oral Communication

UMD students gain foundational skills in oral communication through this LE course requirement, ideally taken in the freshman or sophomore year.

Advanced skills in this area are then further developed within the student’s major field of study at the 3000- and/or 4000-level during the junior and/or senior years. Each program will identify a course or courses where this will be achieved.

Courses approved for liberal education credit in Part I b of the LE Core, Oral Communication, will have as their primary focus the development of the knowledge and skill sets necessary for effective oral communication. While this requirement can be satisfied by courses offered by the Department of Communication, we also encourage other departments and programs, ideally with the assistance of professionals trained in communication pedagogy, to propose oral communication courses tailored to the needs of their students.

Languages

Courses approved for liberal education credit in Languages will develop students’ communicative skills and/or language competence in languages other than English.

Logic and Quantitative Reasoning

UMD students develop skills in logical and/or quantitative reasoning and learn to apply them to everyday situations through this LE course requirement, ideally taken in the freshman or sophomore year.

Courses approved for liberal education credit in Logic and Quantitative Reasoning will develop students’ logic and/or quantitative reasoning skills and enable them to apply these skills to a variety of everyday situations.
**Natural Sciences**

The natural sciences focus on the observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theory of natural phenomena. Disciplines typically included in this domain are biology, chemistry and biochemistry, the geological sciences, astronomy, the environmental sciences, and physics.

Liberal education courses in the natural sciences teach students how to formulate and test scientific hypotheses, interpret experimentally obtained data, and draw conclusions from the data. They also create a link between scientific ideas and problems that arise in the everyday world.

**Social Sciences**

The Social Sciences are those branches of knowledge that investigate how cultural, social, and structural factors influence human social behavior. Disciplines typically included in this domain are anthropology, geography, political science, psychology, sociology, and economics; interdisciplinary fields and sub-disciplines that make important contributions to social science inquiry include education, communication, women’s studies, and cultural studies.

Liberal education courses in these fields introduce students to the major theoretical perspectives in the given field, such that students understand the meaning and application of key concepts, learn how to both test and build theory, and articulate policy implications of theory. Students are introduced to standard methodological approaches utilized by social scientists so that they learn how to formulate hypotheses, collect data, interpret and analyze data, and draw conclusions.

**Humanities**

The Humanities are those branches of knowledge concerned with human thought and culture. They typically include language, literature, history, and philosophy, as well as important interdisciplinary fields and sub-disciplines such as English; linguistics; foreign languages, literature, and cultures; cultural studies; and communication.

In humanities courses, students learn to describe, analyze, interpret, and otherwise critically examine the products and processes of human culture, including material artifacts, activities, and systems of meaning and value (such as particular philosophical, linguistic, and intellectual traditions or innovations). Humanities courses typically situate the objects of study historically and within the context of a particular culture or cultures. Humanities courses introduce students to the theories and methods of inquiry relevant to a particular field, or fields, of humanistic study, and they make students aware of the controversies within that discipline. Humanities courses therefore encourage students to examine objects of humanistic study closely, analytically, and critically in order to deepen their appreciation for the diversity and complexity of human culture.
Fine Arts

The Fine Arts use imagination, creativity, and discipline-specific skills to reflect the complexity of human life. They typically include art, creative writing, dance, graphic design, music, and theatre.

Fines Arts courses develop the student’s ability to think and act with creativity, demonstrating intellectual curiosity, imagination and flexibility. These courses also develop the student’s ability to appreciate the aesthetic value of static and kinetic fine art.

Global Perspectives

Courses approved for the Global Perspective requirement focus on developing an awareness of contemporary global topics and transnational connections. Global topics entail interrelationships among cultures, societies, nations, and other social units worldwide, and they include transnational processes such as migration, urbanization, trade, diplomacy, and information flow. Courses can come from a variety of disciplines, including interdisciplinary approaches involving two or more departments. Courses will examine global topics facing at least one country other than the United States, with an emphasis on shifts in cultural, economic, political, and social relationships. Students will have the opportunity to consider matters such as the rights and responsibilities of global citizenship and to develop greater cross-cultural competence.

Cultural Diversity in the United States

Courses approved for the Cultural Diversity in the United States requirement focus on creating awareness of diverse cultural values and increasing a commitment to knowledge and competence across various cultures, with an emphasis on those represented in the United States. Courses can come from a variety of disciplines, including interdisciplinary approaches involving two or more departments. These courses provide students with an opportunity to broaden their knowledge of the culturally complex social fabric of the United States and to enhance their abilities to interact with the diverse groups that make up our nation.

Sustainability

Courses approved for Sustainability requirement focus on developing an awareness of the interaction of the natural environment with societal needs and desires. Courses can come from a variety of disciplines, including interdisciplinary approaches involving two or more departments. Courses will examine ways in which the science of the natural environment interacts with economic, social, and political forces in a local, national and/or global context. Students will develop the ability to understand and analyze the impact of their lives on the natural environment.