



**the liberal arts curriculum**

### **The Concept of the Liberal Arts**

Grace College has historically presented itself as a "Christian College of the Liberal Arts and Sciences." The liberal arts, sometimes known as liberal learning, have a long and rich tradition that serves students in at least three ways.

First, such an education is "liberal" in that it frees the learner from thoughtlessness that produces unwarranted biases, superstitions, and prejudices, thereby empowering one to explore more broadly and deeply the search for truth. Such an education is an "art" in that it is a purposeful and skillful pursuit. Liberal learning increases literacy by broadening one's knowledge bases and empowering one to negotiate across a wide breadth of disciplines, thus becoming a multi-dimensional person who can function in an ever more complicated world.

Second, liberal learning also deepens the learner as it addresses one's humanity. It causes students to engage and wrestle more deeply and purposefully with the perennial questions of life - those questions that do not go away, questions such as Who is God? How do I justify his existence? What is he doing in the world? How do I relate to him? How does the world work and where do I fit? What is the meaning of life? What has God said about others and me? What has God given me and what am I adding to it? Why do other people think and act as they do? What is true justice and how can I contribute to it?

Finally, a liberal arts education is the best preparation available for achieving satisfying gainful employment. Liberal learning underwrites and empowers one's professional life as it engages students in the necessary skills of gathering data, analyzing, interpreting, synthesizing a variety of contributions for the purpose of solving problems, working in groups, presenting and justifying conclusions, preparing for leadership, etc. In this connection, the faculty has identified five specific competencies that are emphasized throughout the liberal arts curriculum - Reading, Writing, Speaking, Critical Thinking, and Worldview Development. Students are guaranteed many experiences in these proficiencies as they progress through the curriculum.

The liberal arts purpose statement is: To provide a Christ-centered learning community that redeems the mind through active and critical engagement in a breadth of interdisciplinary experiences for the purpose of fostering thinking and serving as acts of worship in a global community.

The faculty at Grace College believes that a liberal arts education expresses well the teachings of Christian theology and fits perfectly the college mission statement. The liberal arts curriculum constitutes 51 hours of the normal 124-hour degree program. Stu-

dents who elect to double major must understand that their total program may require more than eight semesters of course work.

### **The College's Goals in the Liberal Arts**

Broadly conceived, the college seeks to prepare students for a life-long pursuit of excellence as Christian persons, citizens, and professionals. Therefore, the curricular goals of the college are tied to the Institutional Mission Statement. Grace College is an evangelical Christian community of higher education which applies biblical values in strengthening character, sharpening competence, and preparing for service. To this end the faculty seeks to establish a common academic experience for all students and faculty, thereby creating a context for a lively learning community, thus fulfilling the college mission.

**Character:** The sum of dispositions, traits, qualities, attributes, and behaviors that constitute the nature of an individual and community.

1. To deepen students as persons who understand and desire the more noble and healthy values.
2. To create in students the desire to take in more so that they can contribute more to the world in which they live.
3. To empower students to make discriminating judgments between truth and error, merit and demerit, substantial and superficial.
4. To assist students in developing a mature sense of self and place in God's world and purpose.
5. To enable students to appreciate and engage the more controversial questions of life and society and do so in a reasonable and civil way.
6. To assist students to develop an elevated work ethic and to care about workmanship; to commit to a productive life, careful performance, and excellent products.

**Competence:** Pursuing and owning the necessary proficiencies and skills essential to a productive personal, professional, and community life.

1. To increase the student's knowledge bases and sharpen dispositions and skills to put this knowledge to use in productive ways.
2. To improve the student's ability to gather data, think, discern, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create solutions to problems.
3. To assist students in negotiating the world of ideas, to discern theses, wrestle with argumentation, trace implications, and use wise judgment in arriving at conclusions.
4. To encourage students to appreciate others and make appropriate connections to their ideas and expressions.
5. To stimulate students to develop curiosity across a wide range of interests and empower them to

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engage in thoughtful and articulate conversation in a variety of subject matters.

6. To assist students in developing creativity, initiative, and leadership skills.

**Service:** The natural outgrowth of loving and worshipping God; the use of one's personal and professional competencies to serve one's fellow man and global community.

1. To inspire students to build lives and careers that will be turned toward advancing the kingdom of Christ.
2. To create in students an ability to identify needs in individuals, in their local community, and around the world.
3. To encourage a disposition for service that compels students to invest their time, intellect, energy, skills, and other resources in meeting those needs.
4. To create in students a sense of responsibility in working toward the health of society, of pursuing peace and justice in the world.

### The Liberal Arts Curriculum

The liberal arts curriculum consists in fifty-one hours of study. The curriculum is arranged around two major components – the core and the electives.

#### The Core

The core is composed of five courses, each one being three credit hours. These are Freshman Seminar, Christianity and Critical Thinking, Global Perspectives, Effective Writing, and Public Speaking in Society. Every student will take these five courses (transfer students may experience exceptions, depending on how transcripts are analyzed during the admissions process).

#### LAC101 Freshman Seminar

A first year course for all freshmen. For most students the transition to adulthood happens in the college years. Freedom to explore ideas, to raise and answer the most important questions of life, to make choices, to decide values, to deepen relationships, to challenge and confirm beliefs are life-changing experiences. This course is designed to make the four years at Grace a rewarding time. This course will include an introduction to the central ideas in cognitive, moral and faith development. Questions raised will include who is Grace College? What are its history, foundations, mission and philosophy of education? How do Christian theology and ideals guide learning? How can I understand others and myself better? What are worldviews? How is Christianity a worldview and how is it distinctive? What makes liberal arts education uniquely valuable? A weekly component of this course is a small group discussion led by faculty and others,

where students can explore ideas with the guidance of other learned people. Three hours.

#### LAC102 Christianity and Critical Thinking

This course is an introduction to Christianity and the life of the mind. It examines how faith and intellect relate. Course materials will include an examination of modern Christianity and ask if it is sufficiently rigorous to face the postmodern world. The course will also examine how to investigate an idea by raising the right kinds of questions. How has Christianity come to us in history? What are its core ideas? Is theology static or a process? How does Christianity differ from other worldviews? How should a lively and vigorous Christianity be expressed in the lives of individuals and churches? No prerequisite. This course is required in the liberal arts curriculum. Three hours.

#### LAC200 Global Perspectives

This is a team-taught course with the focus of distinguishing between parochialism and a global human value. Avenues for pursuing a global vision including the exploration of key people, transitional historical moments, interventions and places. This course also includes a required minimum ten-day cultural field experience. Students select a cross-cultural field experience. Experiences include ministry opportunities such as short-term missions, language study, International Business Institute, inner-city work, etc. Three hours.

#### LAC201 Global Perspectives Lab Briefing

No hours.

#### LAC202 Global Perspectives – Experience/Debriefing

No hours.

Students that qualify for FLC303 Bi-Cultural Experience meet the field experience requirement of Global Perspectives through that course.

#### The Electives

There are thirty-six hours (thirteen classes) of required electives in the Liberal Arts Core. The electives component is organized around four major clusters of investigative learning – Religion and Philosophy, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities. Unless there are specific stipulations required by a student's major, students should follow the schematic as outlined below. Either the designated class or any of the options after each number are required.

#### Religion & Philosophy (Nine hours)

1. BBL101 Scripture & Interpretation
2. BBL201 Understanding the Old Testament
3. BBL211-216 Elect one genre course

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### Natural Sciences (Nine hours)

4. Any MAT class except MAT010
5. BSC100, BSC101, BSC218, or any SCI, PHY, CHM course
6. HPE210 Healthy Lifestyles
7. HPE100-110 Elect one HPE activity course

### Social Sciences (Nine hours)

8. PSY110, SOC110, SWK201, or SWK334
9. BUS112 or BUS221
10. HIS110, HIS201, HIS202, HIS310, or HIS320

### Humanities (Nine hours)

11. LIT210, LIT213, LIT214, LIT220, LIT221, LIT324, LIT327, or LIT328
12. ART110, ART220, MUS110 or MUS102
13. Any language course (FRE, GER, SPA, GRE, or HEB)\* or FLC250,

\*Students pursuing the Bachelor of Arts degree will continue with the first and second year language requirements as listed in the major.