A Community of Learning. The Core Curriculum in BU’s College of Arts & Sciences is made up of faculty and students who place a high value on liberal education and the active exchange of ideas.

Through small, interdisciplinary courses and related co-curricular activities our students and faculty engage in a shared conversation about the classic texts and fundamental ideas that have shaped our world.

Core welcomes students from all majors and is built around the idea that we all benefit when each student and faculty member brings his or her own perspective and experience to bear on the questions raised. Our aim is that students from all majors, and those who have not yet decided on a concentration, can develop the larger perspective necessary for creative and innovative thought in their particular field.

An essential element of the Core program is that students and faculty share a common body of classic texts, fundamental questions, and critical ideas. This shared experience enables conversation to extend beyond individual classes and to link the entire curriculum as well as the students, staff and alumni of Core. >>

For more information visit www.bu.edu/core/learnmore
The Core Faculty.

The opportunity to teach in the Core attracts some of the most distinguished scholars on the BU faculty. These include department chairs, winners of our highest teaching awards, and experts renowned in their field.

Our instructors come from a wide range of academic disciplines but share a love of teaching and an interdisciplinary approach to learning. And given Core’s grounding in faculty-led seminars, these are teachers that students will get to know personally from day one.

To see a list of our current and former instructional staff, visit our webpage at www.bu.edu/core/people.

The Core Classes.

In the Core classroom, we engage with classic works as we develop critical skills in thinking, discussion and writing. In addition to discussion seminar, Core students meet in weekly lecture sessions to hear expert faculty from BU and other world-class institutions highlight significant aspects of the works and ideas being studied in the course.

Why are Core courses designed to be interdisciplinary? Because students who have explored important ideas from multiple angles, using the methods of multiple disciplines, are uniquely able to approach the complex questions that define the human condition. Such questions considered in Core include: How do religion and science each account for human origins? What is the nature of scientific “truth”? Is the individual fundamentally in conflict or in harmony with society? And, what is the human relationship to nature?

Current course descriptions can be found at www.bu.edu/core/courses.

Core with Honors.

The Work for Honors program allows interested and qualified students to achieve additional command of the material and techniques addressed in Core by conducting in-depth research in an area that interests them.

In addition to course completion and grade point average requirements, the Honors program involves the creation and defense of a substantial paper or project that relates material in a course outside of Core to the Core program, or which bridges subject matter from at least two particular Core courses. Students who complete these requirements will earn the following notation on their transcripts: “Completed the Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum in Arts and Sciences, with Honors.”

The Core Minor.

The Interdisciplinary Core Minor enables students to explore more deeply any of the engaging questions or themes they first encountered in their Core classes. By taking courses related to a central question in a range of different departments and disciplines, students give greater depth to their study of the texts, works of art, music, and key ideas of Western and other cultural traditions treated in Core, all under the close supervision of a faculty mentor.

Core Benefits

- Small classes averaging fifteen students per discussion seminar
- An integrated curriculum, led by award-winning faculty drawn from departments across the University
- A focus on classic texts, ideas and discoveries of enduring importance
- Optional Core specialty housing
- Scholarships for summer study abroad in Athens, Greece
- Student-led cultural initiatives, including an annual literary journal, film series, and our SAO-approved undergraduate society
A Learning Community.

A true learning community, Core welcomes students from all academic majors, and is an ideal home for those who have not yet decided on a specific field of study. Learning in Core is designed to extend beyond the classroom and throughout a student’s years at BU. Co-curricular opportunities for students enrolled in Core include:

- Leadership opportunities to serve as peer tutors, publication editors, student group officers, and resident advisors.
- Recognition through divisional awards (for academic excellence), the Devlin Award (for excellence in writing) and the Polytropos Award (for seniors).
- Cultural engagement, with trips to the MFA, the Boston Ballet, the American Repertory Theater, and other landmark arts institutions.

How to Join the Core.

Joining Core does not take extra room in your schedule since Core serves to fulfill your BU Hub and writing requirements. Students register for Core courses in the same way they would for classes from any other department. Typically, first-year students will take CC 101 and CC 111 in their fall semester. Because we want to ensure that Core is the right fit, incoming students are asked to complete a non-binding application before the start of classes.

Most first-year students apply to Core online before they register for classes at Summer Orientation. Current students are able to join Core for one or more classes at any point during their time at BU, whether to earn elective credit, satisfy Hub requirements, or to partake in the Core seminar experience.

Are you ready to apply to Core?

You’ve learned a bit about what makes the Core Curriculum a distinctive opportunity: our seminar-based teaching; integrated, interdisciplinary courses; immediate close contact with faculty; and a syllabus made up of classic works and essential ideas.

If you think all that sounds like the right kind of community for you, let us know you’d like to request a place in Core for next semester: www.bu.edu/core/apply

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Application submission does not commit a student to Core enrollment.
What classes are offered by the Core Curriculum?

First-Year Classes, Fall Semester
• CC 101: “Ancient Worlds” (Humanities I)
• CC 111: “Origins: The Big Bang, Earth, Life, and Humanity” (Natural Sciences I)

First-Year Classes, Spring Semester
• CC 102: “The Way: From Antiquity to the Medieval World” (Humanities II)
• CC 112: “Religion, Community, and the Birth of the Social Sciences” (Social Sciences I)

Second-Year Classes, Fall Semester
• CC 201: “Renaissance, Rediscovery, and Reformation” (Humanities III)
• CC 211: “Power, Political Forms, and Economics” (Social Sciences II)

Second-Year Classes, Spring Semester
• CC 202: “From the Enlightenment through the Romantic Revolt to the Modern World” (Humanities IV)
• CC 212: “Reality, Science, and the Modern World” (Natural Sciences II)

Two-Credit Core Classes
• CC 220: “Multimedia Encounters with Core Texts” (completion of CC 101 and 102 required)
• CC 250: “Core Capstone” (workshop for Core Minor)

An up-to-date overview of Core courses, along with links to sample syllabi, can be found at www.bu.edu/core/courses.

How are Core classes “interdisciplinary”?
The Core classes taken in order are designed to build upon and refer to one another, across disciplinary boundaries. For example, in a typical first-year experience, students examine the dual account of creation in Genesis in Core Humanities, while class discussion in the Natural Sciences focuses on the Big Bang and the question of how we are to understand, in scientific terms, an event that occurred outside of time and space. Then, in the second year, students read Paradise Lost in Core Humanities against the background of the epic tradition studied in the first year of Core, from Homer through Dante, and so with an understanding of the vision Milton is both reshaping and subverting. At the same time, the study of the works of Machiavelli and Hobbes in the Core Social Sciences opens up discussion of the brutal political, religious and ideological conflicts that Milton participated in before writing his great epic.

Does Core fulfill Hub requirements?
Yes: Core courses can be used to satisfy Hub requirements, including the requirements for writing proficiency. Students may take all of Core to satisfy all their Hub requirements, or can use individual Core courses to satisfy particular Hub requirements. Students who choose to take only part of the Core can satisfy their remaining Hub requirements by taking courses from other departments, including electives and courses required for a major or minor.

How many classes do students take in Core?
Some students take all the Core classes available to them; others use Core to complement their major and other interests, or even take just one or two Core classes. That sort of flexibility is available to any student at BU wishing to make Core part of their undergraduate experience. Note: Students who complete 6–8 Core courses can earn the “Completed the Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum in Arts and Sciences” designation on their transcript. For STEM majors (e.g. Biology), the Core natural science courses are optional to their completion of the program.

How many Core classes will I take each semester?
Core courses build on one another and are designed to be taken in order, meaning students typically take two Core classes per semester over the course of their first two years, satisfying their Hub and writing requirements early on. However, this suggested schedule is not mandatory; Core courses can be taken in any semester during a student’s time at BU. Some students spread Core courses out across four years of study, and students who elect to pursue Core Honors or the Core Minor may spend time in their junior or senior years satisfying those additional requirements.

“THERE IS NO FRIGATE LIKE A BOOK TO TAKE US LANDS AWAY.” - DICKINSON