Core Curriculum College of Arts and Sciences

Course Descriptions for students entering in Fall 2016

Note: As long as they are taken in sequence, classes in the Core Curriculum may be taken at any time during a student's career at Boston University, whether to satisfy program requirements, or for elective credit. Core classes are open to students in every undergraduate program at Boston University.

FIRST-YEAR COURSES

Core Humanities courses count as Gen Ed Humanities requirements; CC102, when taken after CC101, counts as WR100; CC 111 counts as a Natural Science course with lab.

>> Fall Classes

CAS CC 101 Core Humanities I: Ancient Worlds

CC101 begins in the ancient Near East, considering the origins of Western civilization in Mesopotamia and ancient Israel. We continue with the beginning and development of Greek civilization and careful study of Homer, Greek tragedy, and Plato, including their various views of the origin of justice and human society. Students also examine architecture and the visual arts, as well as the relation of beauty, mathematics, and society, with a study of the Parthenon and its role in Athenian Imperialism.

CAS CC 111: Core Natural Science I: Origins

From where do we come? CC 111 explores the scientific view of the origins of the Universe, the earth, life on earth, human life and human society through the various lenses of astronomy, geology, biology, anthropology and archaeology. Topics considered include the differences and similarities of the different scientific disciplines, their different understandings of time, and the nature of scientific knowledge. (Carries Natural Sciences lab Gen Ed credit in CAS.)

>> Spring Classes

CAS CC 102: Core Humanities II: The Way

Second-semester Humanities focuses on ethical themes and questions from the Western and Eastern traditions. The course includes Aristotle, Confucius, Laozi, the Bhagavad-Gita, Virgil, the Gospels, and Dante. Students compare Biblical views of “the way” to the philosophic and literary views of the Classical world, look at the synthesis of the two in Dante, and examine the contrast between Eastern and Western thinkers. A study of Western and Asian art at the Museum of Fine Arts complements the coursework. (When taken after CC 101, CC 102 gives credit for WR 100.)

CAS CC 112: Core Social Science I: Religion, Social Thought, and Community

CC 112 examines modern Social Science and its precursors with a particular focus on the nature of religion and its place in human society. We study some of the earliest attempts to understand the “other” in Herodotus and Tacitus, look at Christian and Arabic views of the relation of the individual and society, and at Durkheim’s argument that religion is fundamentally about society. We also consider the encounter in the 16th century of Spanish missionaries with the natives of South America, and the experience of Jesuits in China.

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SECOND-YEAR COURSES

Core courses satisfy Gen Ed Humanities requirements; CC 201, when taken after CC 101 and CC 102, counts as WR 150; CC211, when taken with CC112, also counts as WR150.

>> Fall Classes

CAS CC 201: Core Humanities III: The Renaissance

From the late Middle Ages through the rise of Renaissance humanism to the beginning of the modern world. We examine the emergence of Europe, the origins of modern scientific thought, an increasing focus on the individual and the rise of the novel. Students look at Petrarch, Machiavelli, Don Quixote, Shakespeare, Descartes, and Milton, and exploring the art of the Sistine Chapel and Velázquez. (Gives credit for WR150.)

CAS CC 211: Core Social Science II: Power, Political Forms and Economics

Studies the beginning of the modern nation state, ideas of human rights and self-determination, and different visions of the relation of the individual and society. Readings include foundational works such as Ibn Khaldun, Hobbes, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Adam Smith, Marx and Weber. (When taken with CC112, gives credit for WR150.)

>> Spring Classes

CAS CC 202: Core Humanities IV: From Enlightenment to Modernity

From the Age of Reason through the Romantic Revolt and the origins of modernity. The class examines questions of social hierarchy and political power, satire, and subjectivity and its relation to reason in Kant, Rousseau, Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, the Romantic poets and Nietzsche, while also studying the music of Beethoven and the art of Goya. We also examine the place of America in the modern world through a study of Thoreau, Dickinson and Whitman, DuBois and T. S. Eliot, ending with the newly fragmented view of reality seen in modernism.

CAS CC 212: Core Natural Science II: Reality—Science and the Modern World

Studies the paradigm-shifting scientific theories which forced the 20th century into a new understanding of our relation to the physical world, beginning with relativity and quantum theory, and exploring emergence, neuroscience and artificial intelligence.

An overview of Core courses can be found at http://www.bu.edu/core/academics, alongside syllabi with lecture and reading schedules from the current semester. Students with additional questions about the nature of the Core courses are invited to stop by our office in CAS 119, or contact us via phone, email, or social media.