Core and the Undeclared Student

Core classes are conducted as seminars, capped at 18 students, and are led by full-time faculty. Students form close relations with faculty and other students in class and through extracurricular activities, while developing the skills needed for upper-level seminars.

Core allows students who are exploring different options to form a close tie with faculty members from their very first semester at BU.

Core is perfect for undeclared students because it allows students to explore many different fields within a single class. Students choose their seminar leaders from faculty in departments such as Religion, Philosophy and English, Sociology and International Relations, or Biology, Astronomy and Computer Science. Core students experience the best BU has to offer while they explore the interconnections between a wide variety of disciplines.

Whatever major a student finally chooses, Core Humanities provides an invaluable context for it. Core integrates the study of literature, philosophy, religion, art and music within a broad overview of civilizations from Mesopotamia to 20th-century Europe and America. We also explore works such as Confucius’ Analects, the Daodejing, and the Bhagavad-Gita as a contrast to the perspectives of the Western tradition. Core Social Sciences furthers this study through a reading of historical thinkers such as Thucydides and the great 14th c. Arab writer, Ibn Khaldun, as well as authors such as Herodotus, Hobbes, Adam Smith, Tocqueville, William James and Marx whose works continue to shape the modern world. Core Natural Science studies not only the natural world and our relation to it, but also, in conjunction with the Humanities, how human beings’ relation to nature is interconnected with human culture. CC 111: Origins complements our study of philosophic and religious views on origins in Core Humanities by examining questions such as the Big Bang and the origin of life, while CC 212 parallels our study of 20th century humanities by looking at the shattering scientific discoveries of that time, relating to quantum theory, relativity and the new sciences of the brain and mind.

Since Core classes count for classes in many majors, students in Core often find they have made progress in their major, even before deciding on what that major is. See the Course Equivalencies factsheet for a list of majors for which Core provides credit. Students who complete Core have “Completed the Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum in Arts and Sciences” recorded on their official Boston University transcript. Students who complete the Core Curriculum with a grade of at least B+ in their Core classes are eligible for Core Honors.

Core and your schedule

- Students generally take CC 101 and CC 102 in their first year; however, as long as the Core Humanities courses are taken in order, Core classes can be taken at any time during your BU career.
- CC 101 & 102 (also gives WR 100 credit), First-year Core Humanities = two Gen Ed Humanities
- CC 111 (lab course) & 212, Core Natural Science = two Gen Ed Natural Sciences
- CC 201 (also gives WR 150 credit) & 202, Second-year Core Hum. = two Gen Ed Humanities
- CC 112 & 211, Core Social Sciences = two Gen Ed Social Sciences & WR 150

For more information contact Prof. Nelson at nelson@bu.edu / 617-353-5404 or Chris McMullen in the Advising Office: cmcmull@bu.edu / 617-353-2400.

Whenever you’re on campus, please feel free to stop by the Core Office for a visit. We’re in CAS 119, 685 Commonwealth Ave, by the Tsai Auditorium, near the GSU.