Core and the Undeclared Student

Core classes are conducted as seminars, capped at 16 students and led by full-time faculty from departments throughout the College of Arts and Sciences. Students form close relations with faculty and other students in class and through extra-curricular 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 Earth and Environment. 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 historian, 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.

Finally, the Core Natural Sciences classes study not only the natural world but also, in conjunction with the Humanities, how human beings’ relation to nature is interconnected with human culture. CC 111, Origins, complements the Core Humanities’ study of philosophic and religious views of origins 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, such as quantum theory, relativity and the new sciences of the brain and mind.

Since Core classes count for courses 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” on their official BU transcript. Students who complete Core with grades of B+ or higher are eligible for Core Honors.

Although students generally take CC 101 and CC 102 in their first year, as long as Core Humanities courses are taken in order, Core classes can be taken at any time during your BU career.

Core, Hub, and your schedule. Students who take all of Core fulfill all Hub and Writing requirements, so there is no need to worry about having enough time to complete the program. For example:

- CC 101 gives Hub credit for Global Citizenship, Aesthetic Exploration, and Creativity / Innovation.
- CC 102 gives WR 120 credit and credit for Oral / Signed Communication.
- CC 111 and 212 give Hub credit for Scientific Inquiry I and II and Quantitative Reasoning I and II, as well as for Teamwork / Collaboration and Critical Thinking.
- CC 112 and 211 give Hub credit for Social Inquiry I and II as well as Global Citizenship, Historical Consciousness, Critical Thinking and a Writing Intensive course.

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.