

# The Academic Program at Kenyon

No college can provide a liberal education ready-made. A liberal education is achieved only in a lifetime of endeavor and reflection; the liberal arts college serves to launch and orient that continuing pursuit.

We at Kenyon seek through liberal education to enhance our understanding of art, humanity, nature, and society. We expect to develop our awareness of our private capacities and creative talents, even as we seek to improve our ability to formulate our ideas rigorously and communicate them effectively to others. And, while we strive to further our intellectual independence so as to be free of dogmatic thinking, we seek to find a basis for moral judgments in a thorough understanding of both our environment and our cultural heritage.

At the heart of an undergraduate program of liberal education is the student's major academic study. This study demands a significant concentration of energies in a comprehensive and disciplined investigation, challenging the student's capacities in a way that limited acquaintance with a broad array of topics cannot do. To claim command over one's thoughts or to presume soundness of judgment, we should understand a field thoroughly. Indeed, without a mastery of one subject the student may not be able to recognize the structural integrity of other disciplines. The coherence of undergraduate study, then, depends upon the focus and organization provided by the major.

Complementary to the values achieved through concentration is the richness that comes from significant encounters with a variety of disciplines. Both early and late in undergraduate years, students must feel obliged to diversify a course of study. At the outset they will find opportunity for new enthusiasms and challenges. Later on they will find that their powers of synthesis and discrimination are best cultivated by contrasting and integrating the various disciplines. Finally, the sense of academic and social community that has been the College's strength and pride depends in large measure on our willingness to be responsibly engaged with one another's studies.

The requirements for Kenyon's bachelor of arts degree specify what we believe to be essential to every student's pursuit of liberal education. While these requirements provide great freedom for every student to design a course of study that suits his or her interests and aspirations, they provide at the same time a common structure to promote the balance and coherence necessary to truly liberal study. Thus, every student is called upon to organize courses in such a way that the study of one subject illuminates and is illuminated by work in another. Every student is drawn to consider seriously the special contribution of the work in each of the four academic divisions in the College. Students may thus come to know how the image of humanity proposed by the sciences, say, differs from that explored in the humanities; they may come to see that the vision of the social scientist adds important dimension to the world revealed by the artist. In fulfilling these requirements, every student will find a road to the freedom enjoyed by the liberally educated: freedom from the tyrannies of narrow specialization and of superficial generalization.

## GUIDE TO THE KENYON CURRICULUM

The following table has been compiled to aid in explaining key academic terms and definitions and to show how they relate to the curriculum.

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The curriculum is organized within four traditional academic **divisions** and a fifth interdisciplinary division.

Fine Arts  
Humanities  
Natural Sciences  
Social Sciences  
Other (Interdisciplinary)

A **discipline** is a traditional area of academic study. Parentheses show that some related disciplines are grouped together into **departments** for administrative purposes. This book is organized alphabetically by department.

**Fine Arts:**  
(Art History and Studio Art); (Dance and Drama); Music

**Humanities:**  
(Classics, including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Sanskrit); English; (Modern Languages and Literatures, including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish); Philosophy; Religious Studies

**Natural Sciences:**  
Biology; Chemistry; Mathematics; Physics; Psychology

**Social Sciences:**  
Anthropology; Economics; History; Political Science; Sociology

**Interdisciplinary** programs are those that draw from two or more of the traditional disciplines. For example, Asian studies draws from the faculties of anthropology, history, modern languages, philosophy, and religious studies.

African and African-American Studies  
American Studies  
Asian Studies  
Biochemistry  
Environmental Studies  
Integrated Program in Humane Studies  
International Studies  
Law and Society  
Molecular Biology  
Neuroscience  
Public Policy  
Scientific Computing  
Women's and Gender Studies

**Major:** All students must complete a minimum of one major course of study in either a traditional discipline or in an interdisciplinary program.

All departments offer one or more major courses of study. There are currently six interdisciplinary majors: American Studies, Biochemistry, International Studies, Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Women's and Gender Studies.

A **synoptic major** is a course of study devised by an individual student in consultation with faculty advisors.

Synoptic majors are typically interdisciplinary in nature. Some recent examples are Marine Conservation; Complex Systems; Experimental Cinematography; Rhetoric; and Strategy, Game Theory, Logic, and Decision Modeling.

Students may elect to undertake a **minor** course of study if they choose.

Minor courses of study are offered by the departments of Anthropology, Art, Biology, Classics, Dance and Drama, Mathematics, Modern Languages and Literatures, Music, Philosophy, Physics, Religious Studies, and Sociology.

A **concentration** is very similar to a minor, except that it is interdisciplinary in nature.

Most interdisciplinary programs offer a concentration, while a few offer a major only.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

**NOTE:** While faculty members and administrators stand ready to counsel students about degree requirements, the final responsibility for meeting the requirements rests with each student.

Students must fulfill the following requirements in order to earn a bachelor of arts degree at Kenyon:

**1. Major:** The student must successfully complete a major course of study, including the Senior Exercise.

**2. Credits:** Sixteen (16) Kenyon units (128 semester-hours or 192 quarter-hours) are required. Of these, a minimum of 8 units must be earned at Kenyon on a letter-grade basis. Above this minimum, the student may include a maximum of 2 Kenyon units earned at summer school, a maximum of .5 unit of physical-education credit, and a maximum of 2 units earned on a student-chosen pass/D/fail basis.

**3. Residency:** Eight semesters of full-time undergraduate enrollment are required. A minimum of four of these semesters, including the senior year, must be completed at Kenyon College, on the Gambier campus.

**4. Grade point average:** In order to graduate, the student must earn an overall minimum grade point average, at Kenyon College, of 2.00 (“C”). A minimum of 2.0 is also required for each major course of study. Like most other colleges and universities, Kenyon is concerned only with the grade average earned in residence, not with the average earned elsewhere.

**5. Credits outside the major:** The student must earn 9 or more units outside the major department; or, if there is more than one discipline in the department, the student must earn 7 or more units outside the major department as well as 9 or more units outside the major discipline.

For example, a student majoring in drama must have 9 units outside the drama discipline but needs only 7 units outside the Department of Dance and Drama.

**6. Distribution:** The student must earn 1 Kenyon unit in at least four departments that together cover all four academic divisions of the College. Thus, by the time he or she graduates, the student will have completed at least 1 unit, within at least one department, in each of the four divisions.

In fulfilling this requirement, students should pay careful attention to the relationships among disciplines, departments, and divisions. For example, .5 unit in MUSC (music) and .5 unit in ARTS (studio art) will not together satisfy a distribution requirement, because these two disciplines, though in the same division, are in separate departments. The charts on pages 6, 12, and 13 summarize the distinctions among disciplines, departments, and divisions.

Students may earn 1 unit in a division by combining a course from an interdisciplinary program with an appro-

priate departmental course—but only if the interdisciplinary course is “cross listed” in a department in this catalog. For example, ENVS 112, Introduction to Environmental Studies, is listed not only in the environmental studies section of the catalog but also in the biology section; thus, ENVS 112 may be paired with any biology course to satisfy the natural-science requirement. Note: Two such courses may be paired only if the interdisciplinary course is cross-listed in the catalog during the year it was undertaken. Thus, following the same example, if for some reason ENVS 112 is not cross-listed in biology during the year a student takes it, then that student may not combine it with a biology course to meet the requirement.

**7. Second language:** Kenyon considers achievement of language proficiency important for many reasons, among them:

- Language study forms part of the traditional foundation to the liberal arts because it leads to the rigorous study of texts in the original across many disciplines.
- Language study increases understanding of one’s native language and of language in general.
- Language study provides insight into other cultures and cultural differences.
- Language study enables students to function in a global context.
- Knowledge of a foreign language increases one’s desirability as a job candidate, particularly for leadership positions.
- Foreign language study requires structured learning and can therefore improve study skills.

Students must demonstrate a level of proficiency in a second language equivalent to one full year of college study. They may meet this requirement in any of the following ways: (a) by achieving a satisfactory score on a placement exam administered during Orientation; (b) by completing an introductory-level modern or classical language course at Kenyon; (c) by completing a language course elsewhere that is equivalent to an introductory-level Kenyon course, earning a satisfactory grade, and transferring the credit; (d) by earning language credit in a course in the Kenyon Academic Partnership program; (e) by earning a score of 3 or better on the College Board Advanced Placement test in a second language or literature; (f) in the case of Latin, by earning a score of 4 or 5 on any Latin Advanced Placement examination; or (g) by earning a score of 540 or higher on an SAT II modern language test. If the student seeks to meet the requirement through study of a language that is not offered at Kenyon, the student is responsible for providing documentation that is satisfactory to the registrar or to the chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. Likewise, if a student seeks to meet the requirement through an off-campus study (study-abroad) program other than one of the Kenyon-approved programs, the student must provide documentation that is satisfactory to the registrar or to the chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.

**8. Quantitative reasoning:** The student must earn a minimum of .5 Kenyon unit of credit in a course, or courses, designated as meeting the quantitative-reasoning requirement. These courses are marked “QR” in the course catalog. Advanced Placement courses will not satisfy this requirement.

In order to transfer credit to fulfill the QR requirement, a student must present to the Kenyon registrar evidence that the proposed transfer course is equivalent to a specific Kenyon QR course (a list of and descriptions of which are available on the registrar’s Web page). For any proposed transfer course that does not correspond directly to a Kenyon equivalent, the student must supply explicit evidence that the course meets the specific criteria established for QR courses at Kenyon (e.g. it teaches students “to use statistical methods to analyze and interpret data,” “to make inferences and decisions based on quantitative data,” “to design experiments, and learn and apply data-collection methods,” etc.) as a continuing theme in the course. In turn, the registrar will consult with the chair of the relevant department(s) to evaluate whether the proposed course is in fact equivalent to a Kenyon QR course or whether it adequately meets QR guidelines. The registrar, acting on behalf of the Curriculum Policy Committee, reserves the right to deny the transfer of QR credit. *In every instance, the burden of proof falls to the student to present evidence that the QR criteria have been met; this evidence should take the form of course descriptions, syllabi, copies of assignments, and examinations. Whenever possible, students are urged to present transfer courses for the registrar’s evaluation before enrolling in them.*

Note: A course will satisfy the quantitative-reasoning requirement only if it is designated a QR course for the semester in which it has been taken. Students should be aware that a particular course may change in character from one year to the next, so that it may count as a QR course during one semester but not during another.

Quantitative-reasoning courses may focus on the organization, analysis, and implementation of numerical and graphical data; or they may involve learning mathematical ideas, understanding their application to the world, and employing them to solve problems. In QR courses, students will learn some or all of the following:

- To use statistical methods to analyze and interpret data.
- To make inferences and decisions based on quantitative data—for example, by developing and testing hypotheses.
- To critically assess quantitative information—for example, by reading and critiquing journal articles with quantitative information and analysis.
- To design experiments, and learn and apply data-collection methods—for example, by developing data in laboratory exercises.

- To use mathematical reasoning and the axiomatic method—for example, by using systems of symbolic logic.
- To develop and use mathematical models—for example, to predict the behavior of physical, economic, or biological systems.
- To learn and apply the basic ideas of probability, chance, and uncertainty.
- To understand and apply concepts in algorithms and computer programming.
- To communicate quantitative information and mathematical ideas—for example, by constructing and interpreting graphical displays.

A given QR course probably will not include all of these abilities, but every QR course will engage students in some of them. In courses identified with the QR tag, the use of quantitative reasoning is a major and continuing theme. Although the subject matter of QR courses will vary by department and discipline, the quantitative knowledge and skills developed will be applicable in a wide variety of settings.