

Skidmore College General Education Curriculum

In spring 2017 the Skidmore faculty approved a new curriculum, which took effect with the Class of 2024. The new curriculum consists of four overarching themes: Integration, Foundations, Inquiries, and work In the Major.

Integrations

First-Year Experience
Bridge Experience
Senior Coda

Inquiries

Artistic Inquiry through Practice
Humanistic Inquiry and Practice
Scientific Inquiry through Practice

Foundations

Applied Quantitative Reasoning
Global Cultural Perspectives
Language Study
Expository Writing

In the Major

Information Literacy
Oral Communication
Technology Literacy
Visual Literacy
Writing in the Major

The following pages outline the four themes, including the learning goals for each requirement. Note that certain requirements must be completed at specific times during a Skidmore student's academic career:

Requirement

Completion by

First-Year Experience (Scribner Seminar)
Expository Writing
**EN 103 if not placed in EN 105/110, or EW*
Bridge Experience (Content and Practice)
Applied Quantitative Reasoning
**MA 100 if not placed in FQR or AQR*
**FQR if not placed in AQR*
Senior Coda

End of the first semester
End of the second year
End of the first year
End of the third year
End of the third year
End of the first year
End of the second year
Senior year

REQUIREMENT	COMPLETION BY SEMESTER							
	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	6 TH	7 TH	8 TH
SSP								
EN103								
MA100								
EN105/110								
FQR								
AQR								
BE								
CODA								

1. **Integrations:** ways of exploring connections among the various courses and experiences that constitute a liberal arts education. One course is required in each of the following:

- **First-Year Experience**

The Scribner Seminars are the centerpiece of the First-Year Experience, taught by faculty from virtually every discipline, who design seminars to highlight their own intellectual curiosities and passions. Scribner Seminars help students explore ideas, challenge assumptions, and gain first-hand experience of faculty expectations of academic rigor and excellence. We field approximately 45 Seminars on campus every fall, and two in London in our FYE-London program. Most Seminars have a Peer Mentor, a more advanced student who assists the faculty in helping first-year students adapt to college-level learning.

The Scribner Seminars are interdisciplinary courses with the following goals:

- distinguish among, and formulate, types of questions asked by different disciplines
- read critically, and gather and interpret evidence
- distinguish among the evidence and methodologies appropriate to different disciplines
- consider and address complexities and ambiguities
- make connections among ideas
- recognize choices, examine assumptions and ask questions of themselves and of their own work
- formulate conclusions based upon evidence
- communicate ideas both orally and in writing
- relate the results of the course to their educational goals

- **Bridge Experience**

The Bridge Experience encourages students to understand how power and justice have shaped the experiences of people with a variety of identities in the United States and how these people have responded to the reality of inequality in their lives. Students consider power, justice, and identity in the contemporary United States. They do not, however, have to focus solely on the modern America experience. Courses could, for example, explore the creation, expression, and maintenance of American power, justice, and diversity in a global or comparative context or link the experience of peoples from different times and places to the contemporary American story.

Each Bridge Experience course includes two critical elements:

- A Content/Theory/Reflection component that explores how unequal distributions of power affect different individuals, groups, and communities in contemporary America. This component of each BE course should be at least 1 credit.
- A Practice/Application component that encourages students to reflect upon their own positions in their respective communities and on campus and connect their study of power, justice, and identity to other areas of their education and to the world beyond the classroom. Practice/Application projects not only require students to demonstrate a critical understanding of power, justice, and identity, but also learn how to communicate and share their insights with a broader audience. This component of each BE course should be at least 1 credit.

Each BE course is at the 200- or 300-level and is capped at 20 students.

- They may have prerequisites per the discretion of the instructor and department and they may count as courses for the major.
 - Travel Seminars and other off campus classes are potentially eligible for BE designation as long as they are organized and led by a Skidmore instructor and meet the other BE requirements.
 - Ideally, students will take these courses no earlier than the first semester of their sophomore year and before the first semester of their senior year.
- **Senior Experience Coda**
- The Senior Experience Coda encourages students to integrate many aspects of a broad liberal arts education and have the opportunity to imagine themselves—productively, creatively, passionately, and responsibly—as citizens in the world they are facing beyond graduation. The Senior Experience Coda enables students to integrate their previous experiences at Skidmore while at the same time fostering the production of new and creative ideas. The Coda is a moment for a student to simultaneously reflect on his/her/their academic past and look to the future. As part of the Coda, students will have the opportunity to reflect on how their project and liberal arts education connect to society. Working collaboratively with faculty and peers, identifying one’s own particular areas of expertise, and finding moments to reflect on the integrative learning experience are essential elements of the senior experience. The Coda is the conclusion of the sequence of integrative experiences, and thus, seniors are expected to be able to engage intentionally and thoughtfully with the process of reflecting on their time at Skidmore.

Students in their senior year will complete one of many possible Codas. There is no specific course or capstone experience that students are required to take, but they must find or design an opportunity to take ownership of their own educational experience and pursue additional steps to integrate their many experiences at Skidmore. As with all courses and capstone experiences, faculty are free to design Codas as they see fit. The student’s experience with the Coda should be informed by the following themes:

- **Relevance**—Students will connect to the broader world, which may mean the broader world of academic discourse and/or the world outside of Skidmore College.
- **Integration**—Students in the Coda will consciously and reflectively examine their broad and unique liberal arts education.
- **Creativity**—Students in the Coda will produce original work and engage with individual ideas—in analysis, invention, or creation—in all fields.

It is expected that by their senior year, students have a firm idea of their academic interests and some idea of their post-college plans. In a Coda, students may work collaboratively with faculty and peers to identify an appropriate integrative course, research project, performance, and/or practicum. Students may choose to fulfill their Coda within their major, but they are free to find interdisciplinary experiences and codas offered by other departments. There are many ways to define such courses, including, but not limited to:

- Senior thesis projects or capstone courses/capstone experiences that require significant research and writing;
- Existing maturity-level courses that require substantial engagement with original research, in-depth analysis, service learning, and/or civic engagement with a focus on integrative learning;
- Practicum experiences within a major (e.g., an Education Studies major may satisfy this requirement with the teaching semester);

- A one-credit add-on to an existing 3 or 4 credit course that requires the student to focus on integrative learning, work in collaborative setting with peers and faculty, and present a final product that satisfies the three Coda themes; and
- A Coda course that is specifically designed by a faculty member to invite students who do not choose to take on individual research or practicum experiences to engage with the three themes of the Coda.

2. **Foundations:** fundamental skills and knowledge essential to a liberal arts education. One course is required in each of the following:

○ **Applied Quantitative Reasoning**

The Applied Quantitative Reasoning requirement has students successfully complete an AQR designated course by the end of their third year. These courses, which are offered by a variety of departments, emphasize the use of statistical and/or mathematical models in (inter)disciplinary fields of interest and may involve the use of computers to analyze empirical and/or mathematical data.

Upon successfully completing the AQR requirement, a student will be able to do the following:

- Use statistical and/or mathematical models to characterize empirical data;
- Understand, model, and predict the behavior of populations or systems;
- Interpret and communicate results orally and/or in writing; and
- Use quantitative reasoning for informed decision-making.

To enroll in an AQR course requires fulfilling a QR prerequisite(s) based on your quantitative reasoning placement. Students can meet the prerequisite to enroll in an AQR course in one of four ways:

- A sufficient score on an external exam (Math SAT or ACT); if not, then
- A sufficient score on an internal diagnostic exam; if not, then
- Either a Foundational QR course, which emphasizes the application of mathematical calculations and concepts to daily life, and must be completed by the end of the second year; or,
- Math 100, which emphasizes basic quantitative reasoning skills in mathematics and statistics, and must be completed by the end of the first year.

○ **Global Cultural Perspectives**

Students develop intercultural understanding and global perspectives by turning their attention away from western, Eurocentric cultural traditions to study such topics as the global south, first nations/indigenous peoples, colonialism/formerly colonized nations, and mass migration, including comparative approaches to these topics. In these courses students may also examine the social, economic, political, historical, literary, philosophical, religious, and/or aesthetic aspects of different cultures and their global contexts.

Global Cultural Perspectives courses

- prompt students to examine their cultural self-awareness, worldviews, and fundamental values;
- promote understanding of key aspects of cultures, attending to their complexity, variations, and change over time;
- address structures of power—such as colonialism and its legacies, regional hegemonies, and relations between dominant and non-dominant groups—and the responses that they provoke;
- introduce critical vocabulary, concepts, and perspectives central to the topic.

○ **Language Study**

The study of an additional language provides insight into cultural differences; it develops understanding of the workings of language systems, and provides an alternate means of perceiving the world. Accordingly, all students must take one course in an additional language. The requirement can be fulfilled by the successful completion of a course focused on acquisition and/or analysis of a language other than English, through courses in World Languages & Literatures, Classics, and Asian Studies.

○ **Expository Writing**

Students are required to complete successfully one designated expository writing course by the end of the sophomore year. Students placed in EN103 Writing Seminar I must complete this prerequisite course by the end of the first year. Designated writing courses offered by the English Department (EN105, 105H, or 110) and in various disciplines can be taken to fulfill the expository writing requirement.

3. **Inquiries:** coursework that ensures breadth in understanding unique perspectives and modes of exploration. One course is required in each of the following:

○ **Artistic Inquiry through Practice**

Students develop an understanding of creative expression through hands-on engagement in a performance, plastic, visual, digital, or literary art. That practice may include such aspects of the creative process as invention, interpretation, investigation, manipulation, and discovery, which leads to critical and creative problem solving. Through the critique and analysis of artworks, students will develop a context for and an understanding of their own creative engagement as well as the creations of others. Students will directly experience the thought processes and actions involved in the creation of artistic forms and should learn how to analyze, interpret, and criticize such forms. Students will achieve the advancement of technical proficiency and the refinement of critical aesthetic sensibility.

○ **Humanistic Inquiry and Practice**

Students examine contemporary or past cultural values and cultivate critical judgment as they study how people process and record the human experience. Students analyze and reflect upon human culture as expressed in historical tradition, literature and languages, art, film, performances, music, historical documents, cultural artifacts, and ideas and beliefs. Students will understand the unique value of the particulars within human contexts and the importance of subjectivity for human experience. Students will produce analytical work that demonstrates an ability to think critically, creatively, and independently about how people engage with, record and represent the human experience, and work toward understanding how particular perspectives bear on perennial human questions.

- **Scientific Inquiry through Practice**

Students learn about the nature of science through scientific practices as applied to understanding a particular aspect of the world. Students will consider the process of scientific thinking as a set of inquiry-based methodologies and will become versed in the design of scientific studies. Students will also learn a body of knowledge associated with a particular discipline. At least one credit of the course will be devoted to hands-on student engagement in scientific practices during a laboratory or fieldwork component that includes students learning to make measurements and/or observations, evaluating the quality of data, and drawing appropriate conclusions based on available empirical evidence. The laboratory or fieldwork component will substantially and actively engage students in at least one of the following ways:

- Inquiry-based activities where students use inductive and/or deductive approaches to study an aspect of the world where the outcome of the study is not known beforehand;
- Discovery-based activities where students use inductive and/or deductive approaches to learn about known phenomena; and
- Problem-based activities where students develop their own inductive and/or deductive approaches to address a particular scientific question.

4. **In the Major:** a set of requirements determined by faculty in each discipline. Although specific learning outcomes may vary among disciplines, students will be required to show proficiency in five areas:

- **Information Literacy:** the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.
- **Oral Communication:** a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
- **Technology Literacy:** the ability to use effectively appropriate tools to acquire, manage, evaluate, create, and or communicate information, knowledge, or works of art.
- **Visual Literacy:** the ability to determine the nature and extent of the visual materials needed; find and access needed images, objects, and visual media effectively and efficiently; interpret and analyze the meanings of images and visual media; evaluate images, objects, and their sources; use images, objects, and or visual media effectively; design and create meaningful images, objects, and or visual media; and understand many of the ethical, legal, social, and economic issues surrounding the creation and use of images, objects, and visual media.
- **Writing in the Major:** students have opportunities to learn and practice the particular conventions of writing within their discipline, and to improve their writing incrementally. Departments and programs have taken different approaches to the requirement, including Writing-Enhanced or Intensive courses, capstones, portfolios, or writing courses in another department or program.

General Education Curriculum

- [Main website](#)
- [Checklist](#)