

# UNDERGRADUATE INFORMATION

## Undergraduate degree programs

The College of Humanities and Sciences offers baccalaureate degrees in the following areas (selected concentrations are indicated):

- African American Studies – B.A.
- Anthropology – B.S.
- Biology – B.S.
- Chemistry – B.S.
- Economics – B.S.
- English – B.A.
- Foreign Language – B.A.
  - dual languages
  - French
  - German
  - Spanish
- Forensic Science – B.S.
- Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies – B.A.
- Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science – B.S.
- History – B.A.
- International Studies – B.A.
- Mass Communications – B.S.
  - advertising
    - creative
    - strategic
  - journalism
    - broadcast
    - digital
  - media production
  - public relations
- Mathematical Sciences – B.S.
  - applied mathematics
  - biomathematics
  - general mathematics
  - mathematics
  - operations research
  - secondary teacher preparation
  - statistics
- Philosophy – B.A.
  - ethics and public policy
  - philosophy and law
  - philosophy and science
- Physics – B.S.
- Political Science – B.A.
- Psychology – B.S.
- Religious Studies – B.A.
- Science – B.S.
  - biology
  - chemistry
  - physics
  - professional science
- Sociology – B.S.

Information concerning curricula is given in the individual program descriptions.

## Minors and certificate programs

In addition to a major, a student may elect a minor area of study in any program or department offering such a program. The minor can be used to fulfill career needs or serve as a means for the student to study a discipline of secondary interest.

Students interested in pursuing a minor should discuss their intentions with their advisers or the chair of the major department. When the student decides on a minor, a change of major/minor form must be completed in the Office of the University Registrar. When the student files for graduation, the student must complete the minor application along with the graduation application.

Courses for the minor should be chosen from courses approved by departments offering minors in their areas. Generally, students cannot minor in the same area as their major.

A minor designation on the transcript requires a minimum of 18 credit hours and a minimum 2.0 GPA must be achieved in the minor. Prerequisites for courses are stated under course descriptions.

Detailed descriptions of each minor and certificate program appear in this bulletin.

Minors are offered in the following areas:

- African American studies
- American studies
- anthropology
- Asian and Chinese studies
- biology
- British studies
- chemistry
- creative writing
- economics
- English
- European studies
- French
- gender, sexuality and women's studies
- German
- history
- history of science, technology and medicine
- international social justice studies
- Italian studies
- Latin American studies
- LGBT+ and queer studies
- mathematics
- media studies
- Middle Eastern and Islamic studies
- nonprofit management and administration
- philosophy
- philosophy of law
- physics
- political science
- professional writing and editing

- psychology
- public management
- religious studies
- Russian studies
- sociology
- Spanish
- statistics
- world cinema

Undergraduate certificates are awarded in the following areas and levels:

- Spanish/English translation and interpretation (baccalaureate certificate)
- statistics (post-baccalaureate undergraduate certificate)

## Teacher preparation

Students in the College of Humanities and Sciences can apply to the Extended Teacher Preparation Program sponsored jointly with the School of Education. This program awards both a bachelor's degree from the College of Humanities and Sciences and a master's degree from the School of Education. Students who successfully complete this program will be certified to teach in early childhood, middle or secondary education.

Additional information on this five-year program is available at the School of Education's Office of Student Services in Room 3106, Oliver Hall, or by calling (804) 827-2670. A more thorough description of this program is found under the "School of Education" section of this bulletin and in the extended teacher preparation handbook available from the School of Education's Department of Teaching and Learning or the College of Humanities and Sciences dean's office.

Information about VCU students' performances on the state-mandated licensure tests (Praxis I: Reading, Writing and Mathematics and Praxis II: Specialty Area Tests) is available on the School of Education website: [soe.vcu.edu](http://www.soe.vcu.edu) (<http://www.soe.vcu.edu>).

## Educational goals

The ultimate goal of a liberal arts education is to help students develop the abilities to think and continue their learning. These skills will aid students as they take their places in a world dominated by change. These abilities also will aid students in their future endeavors as they encounter problems, whether in their personal or professional lives or in their communities. Graduates of the College of Humanities and Sciences are broadly educated, not simply trained, allowing them to function as understanding participants in events rather than as spectators or even victims of those events.

To achieve this goal, the faculty of the College of Humanities and Sciences has identified the following specific requirements.

- Students should write well, organize their ideas, support them and communicate them clearly and effectively.
- Students should reason logically and be able to quantify experiences.
- Students should have knowledge of the fundamental ideas and methods of the natural sciences.
- Students should be able to analyze ethical conflicts.
- Students should have an understanding of literature and the other arts.

- Students should have knowledge of American heritage and those of other cultures, along with an introduction to a foreign language.
- Students should have a basic knowledge of human behavior and social, political and cultural institutions.

## Academic advising

All freshmen majoring in areas offered within the College of Humanities and Sciences are advised through University Academic Advising. Please refer to the "Undergraduate study" section of this bulletin for further information on the first-year advising program (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-study/academic-advising/first-year-students/>). After attaining sophomore standing, students within the College of Humanities and Sciences receive academic advising from within the department or school of their majors. The advising system for each department and school varies somewhat; however, each student is assigned an adviser according to their program of study. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of the educational and career-planning assistance provided by their assigned advisers. Ultimately, students are responsible for understanding all university and college requirements needed to earn a degree and for seeking out academic advising on a regular basis. The academic advisers provide assistance with interpreting policies, requirements and regulations, maximizing academic success, and enriching the overall undergraduate educational experience.

## Graduation requirements

All baccalaureate degree programs in the College of Humanities and Sciences require students to complete a minimum of 120 credits. No more than four of those credits can be physical education/activity courses. See program descriptions for exact number of major credits (30 credit minimum) and elective courses to complete the total required 120 credits. For students majoring in a four-year bachelor's degree program within the College of Humanities and Sciences (including students in the pre-dental, pre-medical, pre-optometry, pre-veterinary and extended teacher preparation program classifications), there are three areas of requirements that must be completed for graduation:

1. University general education requirements (see departmental major sections for any additional ancillary requirements)<sup>1</sup>
2. Departmental major requirements
3. Electives to complete the total of a minimum of 120 credits

<sup>1</sup> Each degree program within the College of Humanities and Sciences includes the ancillary requirements listed below. (Note: The fine arts and HUMS 202 requirements are waived if a previous degree or general education certificate has been completed, following the same guidelines for waiving general education requirements that are stated in the transfer policies section of this bulletin; and all three of these requirements are waived if a student is completing a primary degree program in an academic unit outside of the College of Humanities and Sciences or is pursuing a second bachelor's degree in the college.)

- Foreign language (0-8 credits): The study of a foreign language enhances students' appreciation for and knowledge of other cultures. Students who have studied a foreign language have cognitive development, creativity and divergent thinking. Students must complete a foreign language through the 102 level or equivalent through credit, placement testing or other demonstrated proficiency.
- Experiential fine arts (1-3 credits): Students involved in the fine arts gain a greater understanding of the cultural and aesthetic possibilities of the world around them. Students satisfy this

requirement by the completion of one course offered by the School of the Arts.

- HUMS 202 (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/search/?P=HUMS%20202>) (1 credit): An online personal finance course focusing on participatory, application-based exercises designed to arm students with the ability to make educated decisions in relation to future financial choices such as payment of student loans, understanding credit card statements, applying for mortgages, credit rating and planning for retirement.