

# GENERAL EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

The inclusion of courses that fulfill Wesleyan's general education expectations is vital to the student's educational experience at Wesleyan. To assist in the experience, the faculty has divided the curriculum into three areas: natural sciences and mathematics (NSM), the social and behavioral sciences (SBS), and the humanities and the arts (HA). The faculty has assigned a general education designation to a course when appropriate, as well as established a distributional expectation for each general education area. In consultation with their advisors, first-year and sophomore students are encouraged to select courses from all three areas to experience the full dimension of intellectual breadth vital to a liberal education.

General education courses in the natural sciences and mathematics introduce students to key methods of thought and language that are indispensable to a liberal education as well as to our scientifically and technologically complex culture. They are intended to provide scientific skills necessary for critically evaluating contemporary problems. These courses apply scientific method, utilize quantitative reasoning, and enhance scientific literacy. They also provide a means of comparison to other modes of inquiry by including historical, epistemological, and ethical perspectives. The natural science and mathematics division has made special efforts to design and present a variety of courses that meet these objectives and are appropriate for future majors in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, as well as those interested in majoring in one of the natural sciences or mathematics.

General education courses in the social and behavioral sciences introduce students to the systematic study of human behavior, both social and individual. They survey the historical processes that have shaped the modern world, examine political institutions and economic practices, scrutinize the principal theories and ideologies that form and interpret these institutions, and present methods for analyzing the workings of the psyche and society.

General education courses in the humanities and the arts introduce students to languages and literature, to the arts and the mass media, and to philosophy and aesthetics—in short, to the works of the creative imagination as well as to systems of thought, belief, and communication. These courses provide both historical perspectives on and critical approaches to a diverse body of literary, artistic, and cultural materials.

The General Education Expectations are divided into Stages 1 and 2. The expectation for Stage 1 is that all students will distribute their course work in such a way that they will have earned at least two course credits in each of the three areas, all from different departments or programs. To meet the expectation of Stage 2, students must also take one additional course credit in each of the three areas prior to graduation, for a total of nine general education course credits. Credits earned prior to matriculating at Wesleyan as a first-year student cannot be used to fulfill Wesleyan's General Education Expectations. However, courses taken prior to matriculating at Wesleyan may be considered for general education equivalency credit for transfer students. Students may also request in advance that individual courses taken on an approved study-abroad program or a sponsored domestic study-away program be considered for equivalency. Courses taken on Wesleyan-administered study-abroad programs or through the Twelve-College Exchange are coded for equivalency.

There may be some instances in which a student must be Stage 1 compliant by the end of their fourth semester (for example, certain majors ([https://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/majors\\_information/general-education.html#:~:text=860%2D685%2D2810-,General%20Education,all%20in%20different%20departments%2C%20by%20the%20end%20of%20the](https://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/majors_information/general-education.html#:~:text=860%2D685%2D2810-,General%20Education,all%20in%20different%20departments%2C%20by%20the%20end%20of%20the)

%204th%20semester,-Stage%20%2C%20A0requires) require this timeframe, e.g. Psychology). Additionally, if they are seeking any form of honors (University Honors ([https://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/honors/university\\_honors.html](https://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/honors/university_honors.html)), Phi Beta Kappa ([When a course has multiple general educational area assignments \(NSM, SBS, HA\), a student must select one general education area assignment by the end of the drop/add period. Student forums and individual and group tutorials never carry a general education designation.](https://catalog.wesleyan.edu/academic-regulations/honors/#:~:text=the%20Honors%20Committee-,Phi%20Beta%20Kappa,-The%20oldest%20national), honors in general scholarship, etc.) they should ensure they follow timelines listed for those accolades. Students seeking three programs (majors/minors/certificates), must complete Stage 1 and Stage 2 by their last semester.</p>
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