

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL STUDIES MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1959, the College of Social Studies (CSS) is a three-year multidisciplinary major featuring courses in economics, government, history, and social theory. The CSS curriculum features highly interactive, reading- and writing-intensive classes encouraging intellectual independence within a vibrant and supportive learning environment.

CSS students seek to gain understanding of social structures and relations through intense study and critical assessment of competing perspectives. They learn to accommodate and respect difference by engaging complex social issues, such as discrimination, forms of inequality, and the sources and misuse of power, with their peers and tutors. All majors undertake a capstone independent research project on a topic of their choosing.

CSS graduates have gone on to a wide array of careers in fields such as law, social activism, public service, consulting, and academia.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Interested students apply for admission to CSS during the spring of their first year. Each applicant is interviewed by a team consisting of a CSS tutor and two current CSS students. All CSS majors must complete the economics prerequisite by taking either ECON101 or ECON110 (for which a full-year of college-level calculus is required) and achieving a grade of at least C- before taking the sophomore tutorial in Economics. Students are advised to have completed this required course before entering the College to promote flexibility in scheduling the tutorials over the academic year. However, some students who have not completed the Economics prerequisite are admitted each year on the understanding that they will complete the requirement in the fall semester of the sophomore year. A student who has taken an introductory Economics course in the first year but has not achieved a grade of C- or higher must take another Economics course, which will normally be a 200-level elective, and achieve a C- or better. A score of 4 or 5 on the AP exams in BOTH Microeconomics and Macroeconomics or a score of 5 or higher on the IB exam in Economics is sufficient to satisfy the Economics requirement for the CSS. Failure to complete the Economics requirement by the end of the fall semester in the sophomore year will result in separation from the college.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Code	Title	Hours
Sophomore Tutorials/Colloquium		
CSS220	Sophomore Economics Tutorial: Markets, Welfare & the State	1.5
CSS230	Sophomore Government Tutorial: State and Society in the Modern Age	1.5
CSS240	Sophomore History Tutorial: The Emergence of Modern Europe	1.5
CSS271	Sophomore Colloquium: Modern Social Theory	1
Junior Tutorials (choose 2)		2

CSS320 Junior Economics Tutorial

CSS330 Junior Government Tutorial

CSS340 Junior History Tutorial

Junior Colloquium

CSS371 Junior Colloquium: Contemporary Political Theory 1

Senior Colloquium

CSS391 Senior Colloquium: Visions of World Order in the Modern Era 1

Senior Research Requirement (Essay or Thesis) 1-2

Total Hours 10.5-11.5

Methods Course Requirement. Effective Fall 2025 with the Class of 2028, CSS students are required to take a social science course that teaches methods and/or research design prior to the start of senior year. The CSS provides a list of acceptable principal methods courses in the social sciences.

Sophomore year. There are no letter grades in the sophomore year. At the heart of the program in the sophomore year is the tutorial (normally Friday afternoon). The tutorial essay is designed to develop the student's conceptual and analytic skills as well as promote precision in writing and argument. The academic year is composed of three trimesters of eight weeks each. Each student takes a tutorial in History, Government, and Economics. Due to their intensive nature, tutorials account for roughly half of the student's academic work during the year as the student earns a total of 4.5 course credits for work in the three tutorials. A semester-length colloquium in Social Theory in the fall and selected courses within and outside the social sciences complete the sophomore program. The CSS sophomore courses are graded CR/U. Comprehensive Examinations, administered by external examiners at the end of the sophomore year, yield the only official CSS grade for work during the sophomore year.

Junior year. In the first semester of the junior year, no CSS courses are required. This allows the student flexibility to take courses outside the College to work on completing a second major (a choice selected by about half of the CSS juniors) or to take a semester of study abroad or elsewhere (about half our majors take this option). The second semester of the junior year consists of a semester-long Social Theory Colloquium focusing on the modes of inquiry in the social sciences and a sequence of two seven-week tutorials, each carrying one course credit for a total of 3 course credits. Each student chooses two from among the three tutorials offered in the three disciplines, namely Government, History, and Economics. Students also take one or at most two elective courses outside of the CSS to complete the spring course work. Students must fulfill the methods course requirement by the end of junior year, by taking a social science course that teaches methods and/or research design to develop further the student's research skills and ability to complete a substantial writing project in the social sciences in the senior year.

Senior year. In addition to a CSS Senior Colloquium in the fall semester, the senior year requires a substantial capstone project. This project is often a two-semester Senior Thesis but the requirement may also be satisfied by a one-semester (fall or spring) Senior Essay. In either case, the capstone project involves a large-scale, sustained, and serious investigation of an intellectual topic in the social sciences.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Completion of the University's General Education Expectations at both stages I and II is required of CSS majors. Because the intensive nature of the CSS sophomore year schedule requires that the bulk of the student's time and course

work be done in the College, CSS majors are given until the end of the junior year to complete Stage I expectations. Stage II expectations must be completed no later than the final semester of the senior year.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

CSS Learning Goals:

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Ability to write a high-quality academic paper with supportive evidence and argumentation
- Experience to debate and discuss, in a respectful manner, in the classroom
- Learning how to use comments from tutors to improve written work
- Comfort in talking about academic subjects and current events in informal settings with peers and tutors

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Regularly scheduled social events (Monday Lunch Talks, Friday post-tutorial Social Hours, semester banquets) provide a sense of community that enhances the educational mission of the College.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

CSS students complete one of the following during their senior year:

- Senior honors thesis (two semesters)
- Senior essay (one semester)