

# General Education

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At Stetson University, all three undergraduate units - The College of Arts and Sciences, The School of Business Administration, and The School of Music - share a core set of expectations for liberal learning. These expectations do not correspond exactly to a set of courses. Instead, they are a set of educational outcomes that we believe are essential for students embarking upon a career or post-graduate study in today's world, and they are achieved gradually as students advance through the University curriculum.

All students are required to complete a General Education program of study. Students who have accepted an invitation to join the University Honors Program (<https://catalog.stetson.edu/undergraduate/honors-program/>) complete the General Education requirement through that Program.

A single course may not be used to meet more than one of the General Education requirements, but a single course may count toward a General Education requirement and the student's major or minor requirements. A single course may count towards both the Writing Enhanced requirement and another General Education requirement. Students should check with their advisor regarding the eligibility of transfer credits to meet General Education requirements after students have enrolled at Stetson. A key component of a liberal education is to learn about the modes of inquiry from a diverse set of disciplines, so no more than 3 courses used to meet General Education requirements may come from a single department and at least 16 of the 32 units required for graduation must come from departments outside the department of the major.

## The Essential Learning Outcomes of General Education

### Writing

Students can write effectively to a variety of audiences and for a variety of purposes.

### Information Literacy

Students can engage with information strategically and for a variety of purposes.

### Speaking

Students can speak in an understandable, organized, and audience-appropriate fashion to explain their ideas, express their feelings, or support a conclusion.

### Critical Thinking

Students can analyze, evaluate, and synthesize data to reach a conclusion or develop a position.

### Quantitative Reasoning

Students are able to explain and apply quantitative techniques to analyze data or solve problems.

## Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World

Students can apply relevant concepts to create, interpret, or explain a variety of cultural or natural phenomena.

## Personal and Social Responsibility

Students can recognize a complex personal, professional, or public issue related to environmental responsibility, ethical or spiritual reflection, health and wellness, human diversity, or social justice; analyze that issue; and argue effectively for a personal position on it.

## Integration of Learning

Students can identify and elaborate on connections among ideas and experiences and synthesize ideas from multiple perspectives.

Some majors and special programs, such as our Honors Program, will have an alternate pathway to meet these essential outcomes. The standard structure by which most students accomplish their learning goals is described below. All students should work closely with their advisors to select the appropriate courses to meet requirements in their programs.

## Achieving Essential Learning Outcomes

To achieve these essential learning outcomes, students will select a number of courses designed to provide an integrated academic experience.

## Foundations

In these courses, students develop skills in analytical, critical, and quantitative thinking; in written and oral communication; and in problem-solving as individuals and as members of groups and communities. These intellectual and practical skills form the foundation of liberal learning.

Students who expect to receive transfer, dual enrollment, AP, or IB credit for writing courses may transfer up to two (2) writing courses. The remaining courses must be completed at Stetson.

Note: First year students may opt to take ENGL 100 Transitions to College Reading and Writing following a Directed Self Placement survey offered during the summer prior to enrollment at Stetson. This 8-week WE course provides an intensive orientation to strategies and practices for success at meeting college expectations. Students are typically referred to ENGL 100 by their FSEM instructor, but any first year student may inquire about ENGL 100 by contacting the Writing Center Director. ENGL 100 will count as one of the four required courses only if the grade earned is a C or above. Students who do not earn the minimum grade may not count this course toward the writing requirement.

### 1. Writing and Writing Enhanced Courses

*The goal of these courses is to provide students with the skills necessary to write successfully in their careers at Stetson and beyond. These courses are designed to help students develop skills in Writing and Information Literacy. Support for students in Writing or WE courses is offered at the University Writing Center.*

All students at Stetson University must satisfy the **Writing Requirement**, which consists of **four (4) Writing Enhanced (WE) courses**, at least two of which must be from General Education.

Courses eligible to meet the **Writing Requirement** include:

- All WE designated courses
- First Year Seminars
- Junior Seminars

## 2. First Year Seminar

*The goal of the First Year Seminars is to improve students' ability to read, think, and write critically and coherently about knowledge and ideas. The intent is to increase their ability and their desire to engage enthusiastically in intellectual conversations. These courses are designed to help students develop skills in Writing, Information Fluency, Speaking, and Critical Thinking.*

First Year Seminars focus on topics of broad interest to students and faculty. They are not designed to serve as introductions to any academic major; instead, they provide for active engagement with, and inquiry into, significant ideas, questions, and issues related to that topic. They are discussion-based and writing-intensive, encouraging students to engage actively, both in and outside of class, with course materials. They involve substantive writing and speaking assignments, with feedback and opportunities for improvement. Students are required to enroll in the First Year Seminar during their first semester in residence. Students may not drop, retake, use the pass/fail option or use the course exclusion option for the First Year Seminar. If a student fails the course, the first year seminar requirement has still been met and the grade will be calculated in the term and cumulative GPA.

## 3. Quantitative Reasoning (Q)

*The goal of quantitative reasoning courses is to develop students' understanding of the conceptual and theoretical tools used in reasoning and problem-solving. These courses are designed to help students meet the Quantitative Reasoning outcome.*

All courses in this area provide hands-on exercises in which students apply quantitative or symbolic tools to problems and, where practical, familiarize students with some of the mistakes typically made in reasoning and problem-solving. Courses deal extensively with the examination of mathematical or other symbolic techniques of reasoning. These courses may place emphasis on the logical methods of mathematical or symbolic proofs, on making use of theorems, on using mathematical or symbolic techniques to theorize about the world or human behavior; and/or on the use of mathematics as a tool to solve problems or analyze data. They may emphasize the use of mathematical tools such as statistics, or focus on teaching students when and how to apply tools with which they are already familiar, such as algebra.

## Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World

These courses enhance students' understanding of the world, encourage them to become more reflective about their own and others' beliefs and develop their capacities for aesthetic responsiveness and various forms of inquiry into human societies, systems, and the natural world. The College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business Administration and the School of Music require a selection of courses from among the key areas of knowledge. Students should check the requirements within their school and degree program to determine what combination of knowledge areas is required for their educational goals.

## 1. Creative Arts (A)

*The goal of these courses is to develop students' aesthetic awareness and their ability to interpret forms of cultural expression intelligently and critically.*

Courses in this area deal extensively with one or both of the following activities: active participation in creative expression, directly engaging students in creative practices and promoting full artistic exploration in an environment which encourages substantive critical dialogue; or critical, multi-level analyses of creative works of art, focusing on improving students' aesthetic responsiveness by teaching them how to interpret cultural works. They underscore how exploring the distinguishing characteristics of a creative discipline, its artistic traditions, or its historical context can be a way of understanding the world.

## 2. Culture and Belief (B)

*The goal of these courses is to enhance students' understanding of the beliefs, ideologies, and traditions that contribute to human culture.*

These courses help students reflect analytically on their own and others' belief systems and cultural traditions. They may examine how individuals and groups of people, past or present, experience and act on various beliefs, ideologies, and cultural values. They may also examine why individuals and groups of people, past and present, perpetuate, reject, or transform these beliefs, ideologies, and cultural values. Finally, they may consider the conflicting interpretations of texts, ideologies, authority structures, symbols, rituals, and artifacts as a way of understanding cultural differences.

## 3. Historical Inquiry (H)

*The goal of these courses is to develop students' understanding of history as a form of systematic inquiry into the human past, with a focus on the processes of change and continuity.*

These courses provide students with a historical perspective by introducing them to a noteworthy segment of the past. Emphasis is placed on the use of primary and secondary sources in evaluating historical evidence and debating multiple interpretations. Courses deal extensively with one of the following activities: the interpretation of broad changes emerging over time in cultures, societies, ideas or institutions; or the impact of central turning points, revolutionary moments, or distinctive periods that were transformative within their wider historical context.

## 4. Individuals, Societies, and Social Systems (S)

*The goal of these courses is to improve students' understanding of some of the concepts and methods essential to the study of people, societies, or institutions within societies.*

These courses examine how life is experienced as individuals or as members of social systems that influence our personalities, behaviors, and perceptions of the world. They may also consider how individuals influence social structures or the relationships and dynamics among various social structures. Common to these courses is an emphasis on methodological approaches used to study individuals, societies, or social systems.

## 5. Modern Languages (L and select courses permitted/required by program)

*The goal of these courses is to enhance students' knowledge of the world by developing their proficiency in their own and another modern language and by emphasizing the role of language in culture.*

These courses introduce students to modern languages and the cultures in which these languages are spoken. Students should check the requirements for their school and program to determine

what language courses will fulfill this requirement for their degree plan.

#### 6. **The Physical and Natural World (P)**

*The goal of these courses is to foster a scientific understanding of natural phenomena.*

These courses are devoted to the study of the major concepts, theories, and scientific methods used in the physical or life sciences. They also have a laboratory or field work component that primarily focuses on the pivotal role that data collection plays in validating an existing theory or in developing a new one.

## Personal and Social Responsibility

These courses help students gain a greater sense of responsibility and develop their capacities for reflection and action as regards what they say, do, and believe in their personal, professional, and public lives. In most cases, students will take 2 courses from the areas described below, one of which will be a Junior Seminar. Students should check requirements in their school or program to determine rules for meeting this requirement in their field.

#### 1. **Environmental Responsibility (R)**

*The goal of these courses is to provide students with a sense of place in the natural environment by helping them think critically about humans' relationship to the earth.*

Courses in this area explore our dependence on nature and the interconnectedness between the natural and human worlds; they teach students about environmental degradation and responses to it, and help them to understand better how individual choices and institutional decision-making affect environmental practices.

#### 2. **Ethical or Spiritual Inquiry (E)**

*The goal of these courses is to foster critical reflection on ideas and practices underlying ethical decisions, individual and societal values, or commitments to religious or spiritual belief.*

Courses deal extensively with one of the following activities: critical analysis of one or more specific ethical issues; an examination of the teachings or practices employed in one or more religious or spiritual traditions; or an examination of philosophical ideas focused on moral inquiry.

#### 3. **Health and Wellness (W)**

*The goal of these courses is to increase students' understanding of the relationship between lifestyle and physical and psychological well-being.*

These courses examine the internal and external factors that influence psychological and physical well-being. They offer students both theoretical and practical knowledge to achieve and maintain healthy living, and they encourage students to think reflectively about their own understandings of health and wellness.

#### 4. **Human Diversity (D)**

*The goal of these courses is to develop students' understanding of human diversity.*

These courses focus on the dynamics of human difference and what it means to be different. They critically examine how and why categories based on physical, social, or mental attributes arise and how our assumptions about such categories affect our interactions with other humans and our perceptions of the world.

#### 5. **Social Justice (J)**

*The goal of these courses is to develop students' critical awareness of and engagement with the structures, processes, and consequences of social justice and injustice.*

These courses raise questions about the meaning of justice and injustice, their effects, and the processes through which they are

maintained, over time and across cultures locally, nationally, or globally. These courses employ diverse modes of analysis to help students confront relevant issues of justice and injustice and understand the impetus for cultural change engendered by those issues.

## Junior Seminars

The Junior Seminar is intended to be the culminating experience of the Stetson General Education curriculum. The course builds upon, reinforces, and enhances foundational skills - in reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, and information literacy - introduced in the First Year Seminar and subsequently developed in other General Education and major-specific courses. At the heart of each JSEM are Stetson's core values: personal growth, intellectual development, and global citizenship, which manifest themselves through deep engagement with one of the five areas of Personal and Social Responsibility: Ethical or Spiritual Inquiry, Health and Wellness, Human Diversity, Social Justice, or Environmental Responsibility. Whatever the course's actual subject, each JSEM helps students develop their capacities for ethical reflection and action in their personal, professional, and public lives. Although offered from a particular department or program, a cross-disciplinary environment is created that promotes the integration of learning through the disciplinary training students from a variety of majors bring to the course. Such diversity allows each class to transcend the paradigms or methods of any one major and to make connections across intellectual borders. The only prerequisite is junior status. Junior Seminars may not be taken pass/fail.

## Writing Program and Writing Center

Stetson University's Writing Program is a significant facet of the Stetson education. As a vital part of the general education curriculum, writing holds first place on the list of Stetson's learning outcomes; as a critical part of the learning process across the curriculum, writing skills are taught and reinforced in many courses. The Writing Program further fosters the full development of essential communication skills - including purpose, disciplinary awareness, and information literacy - by encouraging a writing-rich academic environment throughout the curriculum, strengthening faculty engagement in writing-enriched courses and assignments, and supporting students in their efforts.

Beginning with the First Year Seminar, opportunities for developing strong writing skills continue through many undergraduate courses and culminate in the cross-disciplinary Junior Seminar and the senior demonstration of superior learning. By graduation, Stetson University students have encountered a range of writing experiences meant to challenge and inspire them to learn the writing and communication skills necessary for life-long learning.

To help students become stronger writers, the Stetson University Writing Center, housed in the duPont Ball Library, offers tutoring hours every week during the semester and during much of the summer. Trained peer tutors assist student writers in all phases of their writing projects. During these one-on-one sessions, tutors work with students to think critically about their writing processes and effectively use rhetorical strategies.

## Cultural Events & Campus Engagement

Students will join Stetson's intellectual and creative life outside the classroom by attending a number of designated events such as

performances, lectures by distinguished visitors, plays, art shows, and films.