

Liberal Studies, BALS

The Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies is an online program designed for adult learners interested in a values-based interdisciplinary education. The program helps students build a multidimensional understanding of a complex world.

Program Learning Objectives

A graduate of the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program will be able to:

- Critically analyze and engage with historical, contemporary, and enduring questions of the human experience.
- Understand fundamental concepts and methodologies in the humanities, the sciences and mathematics/statistics, and the social sciences; apply these methods to the analysis of complex problems.
- Discover and analyze primary and secondary sources relevant to specific research questions in particular academic disciplines.
- Recognize and respond to social justice issues, locally and globally; enact ethics-based approaches in study and work.
- Write well and present information clearly for specific audiences in appropriate forms and media.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply intercultural knowledge and competence by meaningfully and ethically engaging others.

Admissions

The successful applicant for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program will typically have completed some course work at a postsecondary institution or have professional, military, or life experience prior to applying to the program. Applicants who do not have previous post-secondary college experience may be considered for provisional admission (see *Provisional Non-Degree Enrollment*, SCS Academic Rules & Regulations (<https://scs.georgetown.edu/resources-current-students/student-handbooks/>)); we strongly recommend that these applicants submit a resume with their other application materials.

Acceptance to the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program does not guarantee or imply acceptance into another undergraduate program within the School or University. Students admitted to the program who wish to transfer to one of the four undergraduate schools must apply through the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Transfer Credit

The School of Continuing Studies accepts up to 64 transfer credits, including military training, which can be applied toward elective credits.

The program maintains three articulation agreements with two-year colleges in the area: Montgomery College, Northern Virginia Community College, and Prince George's Community College. Please note that these agreements are exclusively between these institutions and the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program and do not apply to other undergraduate programs or Schools at Georgetown. Details of each agreement are outlined on the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Admissions (<https://scs.georgetown.edu/programs/4/bachelor-of-arts-in-liberal-studies/how-to-apply>) page.

Transfer credit ordinarily is not awarded for study at other institutions after you have started study at Georgetown. However, students sometimes seek to take summer classes at institutions outside the Washington DC area. Consult with the academic program before registering for such classes, so you can be sure that they will apply to your academic program.

Advanced Placement/CLEP Credit

The Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program offers Georgetown credit for students who have completed certain Advanced Placement examinations and College Level-Examination Program examinations with qualifying scores. These credits count against the 64-credit maximum for transfer credits. In awarding credit for Advanced Placement, the program follows the standards outlined in the university's Undergraduate Bulletin Advanced Credit section. Credit for CLEP examinations is offered only for scores equal to a course grade of B or higher. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to arrange for the College Board to send the AP or CLEP scores directly to the program; AP or CLEP scores listed on another college's transcript will not be evaluated.

Military Training

The Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program follows recommendations from the American Council on Education to grant transfer credit, on a case-by-case basis, for certain military training. The student should have the Joint Services Transcript sent directly to the academic program for evaluation. These credits count against the 64-credit maximum for transfer credits.

Requirements

To earn a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BLS), students must complete a total of 120 credits with a minimum G.P.A. of 2.000 within seven years of matriculation.

Code	Title	Credits
4 Core Courses		
	1 course in Humanities	3
	1 course in Sciences	3
	1 course in Philosophy	3
	1 course in Writing	3
9 Concentration Courses		
See below for more details about Concentrations.		
Elective Courses		54-90
Credits required are based upon the number of accepted transfer credits.		

Concentrations

BLS students are required to select at least one of the following concentrations:

Business & Entrepreneurship

Students build a foundational understanding of practical business knowledge, including techniques for identifying business opportunities and effectively applying skills in the areas of accounting, marketing, finance and management.

Cybersecurity, Analytics & Technology

Designed for students who are interested in pursuing careers in intelligence; cybersecurity; criminology; or technology, the Cybersecurity, Analytics, and Technology concentration blends theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The concentration focuses on analytical methods, cybersecurity fundamentals, criminological principles, and the latest advancements in technology.

Media, Communications & Humanities

This concentration offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of design, culture, media theory and history, and human values from a range of academic perspectives. Through a blend of theory and practical application, students explore modern-day communication challenges, while considering the cultural representation of the human experience over time and across a range of geographic areas.

Politics & International Relations

Students form a critical awareness of the complex issues in foreign policy, international relations, law and governance, as well as an ethical framework for making informed decisions. They also analyze global issues, policy concerns, and international relations with an emphasis on local and global social justice.

Interdisciplinary Studies

The Interdisciplinary Studies concentration provides students with the unique opportunity to combine multiple disciplines of interest, choosing from a broad selection of courses offered within the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program. This concentration offers the flexibility to study under multiple concentrations without fully committing to a single path. The individualized study concentration is a good fit for students who would like exposure to a variety of academic disciplines.

Georgetown Core Curriculum

The Georgetown Core Curriculum (Georgetown Core) is a distinctive expression of Georgetown University's identity as a student-centered research university rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition. The Georgetown Core is a two-tiered program. The first tier – the “shared core” – has been created and approved by the Main Campus Core Curriculum Committee and is shared by all undergraduates as a common core experience. The second tier of the requirement – the “school-specific core” – is designed and determined by each of the undergraduate schools, embodying the shared learning goals of the university Core while furthering the specific mission and tradition of each school. Both the shared and school-specific cores change over time, balancing the traditional ethos of a liberal arts education with the changing needs of our students in a changing world. Ultimately, it is the hope that the entirety of a Georgetown education – the cores, majors and minors, and electives – will lead students to embody as life-long habits the goals described in the Georgetown Core Curriculum Learning Goals (<http://coursecatalog.georgetown.edu/academics/undergraduate-regulations/georgetown-core-curriculum-requirements/georgetown-core-curriculum-goals/>).

More information about the Georgetown Core Curriculum can be found on the Provost's Core Curriculum website (<https://provost.georgetown.edu/core-curriculum#University%20Core%20Requirements>).

Georgetown Shared Core Requirements

The core requirements that form the first tier, the common experience across the University, are outlined below. Georgetown courses fulfilling each of these requirements are designated “Core: [specific requirement]” in the Attributes in the Schedule of Classes (<https://schedule.georgetown.edu/>).

Philosophy – 2 Courses

Through the Core, the Philosophy Department is committed to providing courses that promote students' personal growth as human beings in search of meaningful lives, foster their development as responsible citizens, and offer effective introductions to the discipline of philosophy. The learning goals shared by courses in the Philosophy Core are:

- Understand what philosophy is, how it differs from other academic disciplines, and what its primary areas of inquiry are.
- Understand and construct arguments.
- Describe and analyze complex problems.
- Read, write and speak effectively.
- Engage critically and constructively with moral problems and decisions.
- Apply philosophical analysis, argumentation, and critical reflection to the study of other disciplines.

Please refer to each school/college curriculum for specific courses that will fulfill this requirement.

Theology and Religious Studies – 2 Courses

Through the Core, the Theology and Religious Studies Department is committed to fostering in students a critically appreciative awareness of the religious dimension of human existence, and to assisting students in reflecting upon their own experience and understanding in that enlarged context. The first course provides this foundation while the second course allows students to develop their critical awareness by applying it to a particular area of interest in religion or theology.

The learning goals shared by courses in the Theology and Religious Studies Core are:

- To consider reflectively your relationship to the world, your fellow humans, and God.
- To foster a critically appreciative awareness of the religious dimension of human existence.
- To assist you in reflecting upon your own experience and understanding in that enlarged context.
- To develop your critical awareness by applying it to a particular area of interest in religion or theology.

Problem of God¹ (THEO 1000) and one Theology and Religious Studies elective fulfill the Theology and Religious Studies requirement. Introduction to Biblical Literature (THEO 1100) may be substituted for Problem of God or may be used as an intermediate level elective.

¹ Transfer students are exempt from the Problem of God requirement and may select any two intermediate level courses, including Introduction to Biblical Literature, to fulfill the core requirement in Theology & Religious Studies.

Writing – 2 Courses

The writing requirement provides students with opportunities to connect their writing with critical reading and thinking, inquiry, and analysis. The Writing and Culture Seminar, WRIT 1150, approaches writing through three interrelated frameworks: writing as a tool for inquiry, writing as a process, and practice writing in different rhetorical situations. Each section focuses on a cultural theme, with readings and assignments that engage students with compelling questions and problems. Seminar readings provide texts for analysis as well as models and motives for student writing. Students are encouraged to complete this course during their first year at Georgetown. The learning goals shared by different sections in the Writing and Culture Seminar are:

- Experiment with diverse strategies for planning, drafting, and revising writing.
- Adapt writing to respond to, engage, and persuade audiences.
- Employ rhetorical strategies for analyzing, designing, and communicating in writing and other forms of media.
- Engage in writing as a form of thinking, inquiry, and learning.

The second half of the Writing Core is an intensive writing experience located within the student's chosen major, embedded within the requirements as determined by that program. Each major's Integrated Writing requirement is established by the department or program in order to express the unique conventions and practices of the discipline. The learning goals shared by courses in the Integrated Writing Core are:

- To prepare students to use the relevant forms, styles, and conventions of writing within their chosen major(s).
- To employ writing as a method to enhance students' learning of concepts, materials, and methods in their major.

Courses fulfilling this requirement are identified within each major.

Humanities: Art, Literature, Music, and Media (HALM) – 1 Course

(Formerly Humanities: Art, Literature and Culture (HALC))

The Humanities: Art, Literature, Music, and Media (HALM) requirement serves to deepen students' understanding and experience of a range of creative media representing cultural expressions from various historical periods and world regions, from the local to the global.

Through reading, listening, viewing, analyzing, writing, and/or creative practice, students acquire the intellectual and practical tools to interpret human experiences portrayed in the arts, literature, music, and media.

HALM Learning Goals:

- Understand how art, literature, music and/or media have historically shaped and been shaped by cultures.
- Develop generative habits of mind and exercise critical thinking skills for a world in flux: openness, resilience, curiosity, creativity, imagination.
- Activate knowledge through creative, analytical, and/or critical approaches in individual, collaborative, and/or public-facing projects.

HALM courses must be Georgetown University courses and cannot be fulfilled by transfer credits; they must be 3-credit courses. Courses that can fulfill other Core requirements (such as HIST, PHIL, THEO) are ineligible.

In 2026-27, the older "HALC" designation (Humanities: Arts, Literature, and Culture) will be replaced with HALM (Humanities: Arts, Literature, Music and Media). For this academic year, courses with the designation will be tagged with both HALC and HALM. In Fall 2027, the tag HALC will be retired in favor of HALM.

Science For All – 1 Course

The natural sciences, and the technologies that they enable, are woven deeply into the fabric of our lives and are central to many of the important political and social challenges that we face. They are also pinnacles of intellectual accomplishment in humanity's ancient and ongoing quest to understand the world in which we live. Thus we believe that to function as liberally educated, ethically responsible citizens, as stewards of the planet, and as effective leaders, all Georgetown students should understand scientific modes of thought and concepts, both in the abstract and as they are exemplified in at least one major area of scientific inquiry. The Science For All (SFA) Core requirement is grounded in these beliefs. The learning goals shared by courses in the Science for All Core are:

- To understand the basic principles and some current research challenges of one or more areas of science.
- To understand science as a set of methods of inquiry that involve forming and testing hypotheses through the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.
- To consume and interpret scientific information with critical understanding of the balance of certainty and uncertainty that research findings inevitably reflect.

Quantitative Reasoning and Data Literacy – 1 Course

This requirement applies only to students in the class of 2028 and later.

The Quantitative Reasoning and Data Literacy (QRDL) requirement will help students learn to understand how real-world interpretation of data progresses from a set of numbers, frequently incomplete and with measurement errors, to a visual distillation that clearly conveys meaning. While mathematics and statistics provide a necessary foundation for quantitative reasoning and data literacy, the power of pure mathematics lies in its abstraction. In contrast, QRDL emphasizes a distinctive variety of concrete contexts and applications. The learning goals shared by courses in the Quantitative Reasoning and Data Literacy Core are:

- To build a quantitative toolbox that allows students to become comfortable performing and/or evaluating quantitative analyses.
- To translate and make meaning of data and quantitative analyses as they apply to complex problems.
- To effectively communicate statistical methods and results both visually and textually to a diversity of audiences with considerations to contextual, social, or ethical issues.

Engaging Diversity/Pathways to Social Justice

For students in the class of 2025, 2026, or 2027

Engaging Diversity (2 courses)

All Georgetown students are required to take two Engaging Diversity courses as overlays, meaning that the courses may count toward another degree requirement (Core, major, or minor). One of these courses must be labeled with a “Core: Diversity Domestic” attribute and one must be labeled with a “Core: Diversity Global” attribute.

In courses designated as fulfilling a diversity requirement, students will engage with different cultures, beliefs, and ideas. These courses will explore conditions that contribute to unequal access and influence. Finally, these courses should enable students to reflect on their own identities as they also deepen their understanding of the experience of others. The learning goals shared by courses in the Engaging Diversity Core are:

- To prepare students to be responsible, reflective, self-aware and respectful global citizens through recognizing the plurality of human experience and engaging with different cultures, beliefs, and ideas.
- To be better able to appreciate and reflect upon how human diversity and human identities shape our experience and understanding of the world.

For students in the class of 2028 and later

Pathways to Social Justice (3 courses)

Georgetown's Pathways to Social Justice (PSJ) curriculum prepares students to critically analyze historical and contemporary power differentials. By fulfilling the Pathways to Social Justice requirement, students will gain a better understanding of how social, political, geographic, economic, and other cultural factors shape experiences of the world, as well as how these factors contribute to marginalization and inequality. PSJ courses will also explore how communities have resisted marginalization, and will focus on axes of identity that have formed the basis for historical and contemporary marginalization and oppression, including race, gender, class, caste, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

A cornerstone of this requirement is the one-credit University Seminar in Race, Power, and Justice which is designed to ensure that every student at Georgetown develops a baseline vocabulary for discussing racial difference and marginalization. This seminar will provide the foundation for each student's engagement with other PSJ-attributed “overlay” courses offered across Georgetown's Main Campus and should be taken in the first year.

In addition to the required one-credit University Seminar in Race, Power, and Justice, the requirement also requires students to take two overlay courses (meaning that these courses may count toward another degree requirement, whether core, major, or minor). Eligible courses have the “Core: PSJ” attribute.

Each course in the Pathways to Social Justice Core works toward at least three of these shared priorities:

- Inclusive Scholarship
- Intersectional Approaches to Identity
- Historical Legacies of Inequality and Their Contemporary Impacts
- National, Regional, and Global Comparisons
- Imagining Justice