

# CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

An enduring and distinctive aspect of undergraduate education in the United States is that it serves a greater purpose than simply providing basic occupational training. While pursuing their bachelor's degree, students gain essential skills and knowledge that will be important throughout their lives.

Undergraduate education is designed to prepare students to deal with complexity, diversity, and change in their academic, professional and personal lives by:

- Developing crucial skills, such as writing and communication, critical thinking, quantitative analysis, problem solving and creativity.
- Exposing students to broad knowledge of the wider world through a general education curriculum that draws on multiple disciplines, coupled with in-depth study in a specific area of interest (a major).

Towson University students hone crucial skills and gain broad knowledge of the world through the Core Curriculum. Our Core Curriculum, which comprises fourteen categories within four themes, provides students with the flexibility to pursue individual interests and goals while also satisfying the general education requirements mandated by the State of Maryland (COMAR 13B.06.01.03) and achieving the educational effectiveness standards held by our accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Visit the **Office of Academic Advising, Retention, and Completion** section of the TU website for a complete list of Core Curriculum courses. A few courses only fulfill Core Curriculum requirements beginning with a specific term. Students should check their Academic Requirements (AR) reports after registration and/or consult with the Office of Academic Advising, Retention, and Completion with any questions about specific courses. A student may not count more than four courses in the same subject code for both the major and the Core Curriculum requirements (e.g., ENGL or HIST).

## Towson University Core Curriculum Requirements

To fulfill Towson University's Core Curriculum requirements, students must complete one course from each of the following categories (1-14). Students may request the Pass (PS) grading option for Core courses (including those that require a minimum C grade) that are not required for their declared major, minor, teacher certification program, or Honors College coursework.

| Code                   | Title  | Units |
|------------------------|--|-------|
| <b>Fundamentals</b>    |  |       |
| (1)                    | Towson Seminar (Must be completed with a minimum C grade; course not required for transfer students) | 3     |
| (2)                    | English Composition (Must be completed with a minimum C grade)                                       | 3     |
| (3)                    | Mathematics  | 3-4   |
| (4)                    | Creativity and Creative Development <sup>1</sup>   | 3     |
| <b>Ways of Knowing</b> |  |       |
| (5)                    | Arts and Humanities <sup>1</sup>   | 3     |
| (6)                    | Social and Behavioral Sciences   | 3     |

(7) & (8) Biological and Physical Sciences <sup>2</sup> 7-8

### Writing in a Chosen Field

(9) Advanced Writing Seminar (Must be completed with a minimum C grade) 3-4

### Perspectives

(10) Metropolitan Perspectives 3

(11) The United States as a Nation 3

(12) Global Perspectives 3

(13) Diversity and Difference 3

(14) Ethical Issues and Perspectives 3

**Total Units 43-46**

<sup>1</sup> Courses fulfilling the Core 4 and Core 5 requirements must be from different subjects.

<sup>2</sup> Two sequential lectures with corresponding labs -or- two lectures with corresponding labs in different subjects -or- one lecture with a corresponding lab and one non-lab in different subjects are required. Although students should expect to complete Core 7/8 with 7-8 units of coursework, the actual range of units may vary depending on the combination of courses used to fulfill the requirements. Minimum 6 units are required.

## Fundamentals

The Core categories below are designed to introduce students to college-level learning through an emphasis on writing, mathematics and creativity.

### (1) Towson Seminar

Focusing on exploration and discovery, this course introduces students to the academic expectations for college-level work and to the intellectual, communication, and collaborative skills needed for academic success. Seminar formats emphasize active learning, with variable content in different Towson Seminar courses. Introduces multiple perspectives and may draw from more than one discipline.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Prepare and present a compelling substantive interpretation, argument, and/or analysis of a problem or issue in a research paper
- Gather and use academic resources effectively and according to the standards and rules of academic integrity in formulating and presenting a substantive interpretation, argument, and/or analysis of a problem or issue
- Understand and evaluate the nature and possible causes and implications of events, behavior, problems and issues from an informed and intellectually balanced perspective
- Connect concepts and empirical evidence in logically coherent, valid and compelling ways
- Understand and appreciate social and cultural differences among individuals, groups and societies, and to engage and learn from others with different backgrounds and perspectives in constructive ways, when appropriate to the topic
- Participate responsibly and effectively in group efforts to address and solve problems, where appropriate within the course format

## (2) English Composition

This course focuses on exploring ways of writing and thinking in the branches of knowledge and on developing rhetorical strategies for successful college-level expository writing.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Write academic essays that effectively and appropriately respond to specific rhetorical situations
- Improve literacy skills, including the ability to read and analyze a variety of texts
- Organize an essay around a sound central idea supported by relevant material
- Organize supporting material with a discernible and logical plan
- Present ideas in complex and effective sentences relatively free from mechanical errors
- Support and share ideas and opinions with confidence

## (3) Mathematics

Courses in Mathematics require skills at the level of college algebra or above. Each course treats concepts and skills in the mathematical sciences and emphasizes both theoretical foundations and problem-solving applications such as finite mathematics, statistics, discrete mathematics and mathematical survey courses.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Construct and evaluate logical arguments
- Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve mathematical problems
- Recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics
- Organize and consolidate mathematical thinking through written and oral communication

## (4) Creativity and Creative Development

Courses in this category include specific creative activity emphasizing symbolic, affective and imaginative thinking in the creative activity and understanding the creative process through participating in it. These courses reflect current scholarship in the field, provide reference to theoretical frameworks and methods, and explore the critical standards central to the genre or medium.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Apply in practice a range of expression within a specific art while exhibiting rigorous standards of technique
- Demonstrate content knowledge through an analysis and synthesis of representative examples, ideas and skills
- Articulate by means appropriate to the discipline the ways in which theory and practice meet in the creation of the specific art form. These means may include verbal, written and observable products and/or presentations.
- Show how history, aesthetics, form and composition, techniques and/or pedagogy contribute to the process of creative development

## Ways of Knowing

The Core categories below emphasize critical analysis and reasoning.

## (5) Arts and Humanities

The arts examine aesthetics and the development of the aesthetic form. Courses in this area may include, but are not limited to, fine, performing and studio art, appreciation of the arts and history of the arts. All courses, including fine, performing and studio arts, will explore the relationship between theory and practice. The humanities examine the values and cultural heritage that establish the framework for inquiry into the meaning of life. Courses in the humanities may include, but are not limited to, the language, history, literature and philosophy of Western and other cultures.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Discuss the context and structures of cultural traditions [in terms] of literature, art, music, culture or society
- Describe important movements and processes that have affected the cultural heritage of a particular group
- Use methodologies associated with the study of cultural traditions in the arts and humanities to reflect on the experiences of a particular society
- Engage in a critical assessment of how the student's own experience has been affected by particular cultural traditions in the arts and humanities

## (6) Social and Behavioral Sciences

The social and behavioral sciences examine the psychology of individuals and the ways in which individuals, groups or segments of society behave, function and influence one another. They include, but are not limited to, subjects that focus on history and cultural diversity; on the concepts of groups, work and political systems; on the applications of qualitative and quantitative data to social issues; and on the interdependence of individuals, society and the physical environment.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Articulate relevant basic assumptions, concepts, theoretical constructs and factual information of the social and behavior sciences
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant social and behavioral science methodologies
- Apply appropriate problem-solving skills in discipline-specific contexts
- Apply disciplinary knowledge from the social and behavioral sciences to contemporary ethical or social issues

## (7 & 8) Biological and Physical Sciences

The Biological and Physical Sciences systematically investigate living systems and the physical universe and introduce students to methods used to collect, quantify and interpret scientific data and to synthesize and apply scientific concepts. Courses in this category present the historical development and structural nature of the subject, illustrate the predictive nature of these sciences, and employ mathematics and computing techniques as appropriate.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Utilize scientific vocabulary and examples to describe major ideas appropriate to a specific scientific discipline
- Use quantitative reasoning to analyze and/or support scientific information

- Identify, describe, critique, respond to, and construct the various components of the scientific process such as observations, inferences, operational definitions, aspects of scientific design, conclusions, control of variables, etc.
- Explain scientific issues of current importance to society within scientific, technological, historical, societal and ethical contexts.

## Writing in a Chosen Field

The Core category below emphasizes the importance of writing across disciplines.

### (9) Advanced Writing Seminar

Courses in this category will address:

- a. the discourse models and practices important to a specific discipline and
- b. techniques of formatting and reporting, validation and documentation, required to write with authority and authenticity within the discipline.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Recognize and employ models and practices of written communication specific to a particular discipline or profession
- Recognize and employ techniques of formatting and documentation appropriate to a particular discipline or profession
- Integrate material effectively from outside sources into their own prose
- Analyze and evaluate complex discipline-based claims and current research questions
- Demonstrate a developed ability to compose clear, effective prose, including through the practice of revision
- Produce professional prose that follows accepted conventions of grammar, punctuation and style

## Perspectives

The Core categories below expose students to a wide variety of settings (including the metropolis, the United States, and the global setting) and will cultivate in students the ability to examine and articulate differences of conviction and perception through open exchange and civil discourse.

### (10) Metropolitan Perspectives

Courses in Metropolitan Perspectives examine and explore the metropolis (as broadly conceived) in its past and present complexities. The category includes courses that describe characteristics of specific places, like the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan areas, or that describe characteristics or dynamics of metropolises in general, whether in the United States or in other countries, whether contemporary or historic, through the lens of an appropriate discipline.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Explain characteristic features of a metropolis and explore how persistent problems, institutional transformations, and creative expression may emerge from this environment
- Demonstrate their ability to interpret, evaluate, compare and critique the views and experiences of particular social, economic and cultural groups in the metropolis

- Articulate how an individual or a group may have access to influencing public decisions in the metropolis, how they may pursue collective ends, or how they may contribute to community well-being
- Apply critical analysis to a specific topic or question in order to delineate constituent elements of the situation, to define challenges that are faced, and to examine the potential for constructive resolution or development
- Recognize the different methods and standards of inquiry that lie behind the evidence they use to develop an argument and be able to relate that understanding to differences of opinion among informed commentators or across different fields of study

### (11) The United States as a Nation

Courses addressing the United States as a Nation explore the institutions, history, culture or traditions of the United States with an emphasis on addressing through a particular subject matter the broader experience of the nation as a whole.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Speak to what characterizes the United States as a nation, whether through consideration of American culture and society primarily as a distinctive tradition or through comparison and contrast with other societies and cultures
- Define one or more major issues involving American experience past or present and to discuss more than one perspective on those issues
- Demonstrate a reasonable command of specific knowledge pertinent to the central issues of the course and should demonstrate an ability to use that knowledge in a substantive analysis applying their own judgments and expressing their own understanding

### (12) Global Perspectives

Courses in Global Perspectives examine how the global environment is changing, and is being changed, by major social, cultural, religious, economic, political and technological forces, and how new patterns of relationships are shaping and being shaped by the global environment.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Learn how to examine the influence of major forces of global change such as social, cultural, religious, economic, political and technological processes and patterns in the world
- Acquire an understanding of the global or world context and of the major processes and patterns in the world that are transforming relations among different nations and/or cultural groups
- Develop a better understanding of how their own society relates to the global context and become better prepared to make decisions that reflect this understanding

### (13) Diversity and Difference

Courses in Diversity and Difference explore relationships of distinctiveness and interdependence, conflict and cooperation, between and among people with varying cultures, beliefs, identities and capabilities. Courses will cultivate in students the ability to examine and articulate differences of conviction and perception through open exchange and civil discourse. As part of that process, students will also come to understand more fully the lenses through which they view the world.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Discuss some of the ways in which group distinctiveness is defined in social contexts
- Demonstrate understanding of a perspective other than their own (even if they are members of a group whose experience is emphasized in the course)
- Present and respond to a position with which they differ in a fair and balanced argument
- Define at a general level some of the challenges and opportunities presented by the existence of diversity and difference
- Articulate their own outlook in relation to the topics discussed and to make explicit their associated beliefs and assumptions

### **(14) Ethical Issues and Perspectives**

Courses in Ethical Issues and Perspectives will develop one or more ethical issues of current importance to any of a broad range of academic disciplines. These courses are designed to help students understand different perspectives on ethical problems and different processes and techniques helpful in reaching sound judgments.

Students completing this course successfully will be able to:

- Gather and analyze evidence from a variety of sources pertinent to the issue under study, including materials that might support opposing points of view
- Evaluate the logic of persuasive rhetoric in arguments for all major positions on a topic and formulate cogent counter-arguments to each one
- Articulate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of significant issues or dilemmas under study
- Construct and assess possible solutions to problems or dilemmas within an informed ethical and societal context
- Communicate arguments and conclusions effectively and clearly