THE URSULINE STUDIES PROGRAM

CORE CURRICULUM FOR ALL URSULINE STUDENTS

The heart of an undergraduate education at Ursuline College is the Ursuline Studies Program. It consists of a series of 14 writing-intensive, interdisciplinary courses for a total of 49 credits. Ursuline Studies courses, in conjunction with courses from the School of Arts and Sciences, form the basis of a liberal arts education and serve as the foundation for all undergraduate majors the college offers.

The Ursuline Studies Program takes a holistic and developmental approach to learning by encouraging personal and social growth using integrative activities to explore a variety of content areas. Ursuline Studies courses are collaborative and writing-intensive. Small classes promote individual attention, encourage academic excellence and set the context for lifelong learning.

Assessment of academic progress is an integral part of Ursuline Studies. The program encourages students to relate learning to life; to make connections between their experiences and the experiences of others; and to work together with faculty and peers throughout their college careers.

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS
The three stages of the Ursuline Studies Program parallel the learning styles and perspectives on knowledge first identified by the authors of *Women’s Ways of Knowing*. Grounded in theories about how women learn, the curriculum begins with the self and uses personal experience to create a relevant learning environment that is beneficial to both women and men. The model embraces the concept of “connected knowing,” which encourages faculty and students to actively engage in the learning process, disciplinary content and collaborative discussion.

**Stage One**: Designed to facilitate the move from received knowing, in which knowledge is passively accepted from others, to subjective knowing, in which knowledge is personally appropriated as one’s own.

**Stage Two**: Designed to facilitate the move from subjective knowing, in which one’s position is considered absolute, to procedural knowing, in which one’s own position is seen in relation to those of others.

**Stage Three**: Designed to facilitate the move from procedural knowing, in which one learns to evaluate various perspectives in relation to each other, to constructed knowing, in which one’s own knowledge is meaningfully integrated with that of others and in which value statements and personal commitments are possible.

At each of these stages, the Ursuline Studies Program enhances the personal development that always accompanies intellectual growth.
ACADEMIC OUTCOMES
The Ursuline Studies Program seeks to develop certain abilities that help students to excel in academics and in life. The outcomes of a liberal arts education enable students to:

**Analyze and Synthesize** by examining and distinguishing constituent elements (analysis) and combining parts or elements into a whole (synthesis).

**Communicate Effectively** by exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions or feelings through a common system of language, symbols, signs or gestures appropriate for everyday living.

**Interact Socially** by engaging in behavior that permits effective relationships in both one-to-one and group situations.

**Make Decisions Based on Values** by making discriminations based upon the consideration of what the individual prizes as ethical, socially worthwhile, good, beautiful, and true.

**Respond to Beauty** by integrating the cognitive and affective domains in a personal experience of the arts.

**Solve Problems** by finding a solution to a question or situation that presents uncertainty or difficulty.

**Take Responsibility for Society** by accepting the obligation to respond to unjust or oppressive social situations.

The goal of the Ursuline Studies Program is to promote and develop these abilities so that students can successfully integrate them into academic, professional, social, and personal situations.

LEARNING PERSPECTIVES
A liberal arts education prepares students to look at life and learning from diverse perspectives. The Ursuline Studies Program considers the following perspectives to be of crucial importance:

**Collaborative learning** is collegial, cooperative, connected; it takes into account issues of gender, race and class.

**Global learning** takes place in a wide variety of cultures.

**Historical learning** provides an understanding of ourselves and society in relation to the human condition over time.
Philosophical learning is built around values and meaning.

Religious learning respects the spiritual dimension of life.

Scientific learning involves inquiry, posing hypotheses, and systematically supporting them.

These perspectives are woven into all of the courses that make up the Ursuline Studies Program, so that as students progress they develop a facility for thinking from these perspectives. Their educational foundation is strong, solid and richly diversified as a result.

THE THREE STAGES: ANCHOR AND SATELLITE COURSES
Each stage of the Ursuline Studies Program features a specially designed anchor course that serves as its foundation, and selected courses, called satellites, that are chosen from the humanities. These interdisciplinary courses integrate the main themes, developmental perspectives and academic goals of the core curriculum into each of the three stages of the curriculum.

STAGE ONE
Introductory or Transitions Seminar
These seminars serve as a transition to the Ursuline College experience. Each is a six-credit, writing-intensive course that gives students the challenge and support they need for high achievement in their college careers. Each offers diversified learning activities that strengthen students’ abilities to speak and write effectively, to interact with others in groups, to read and interpret challenging texts, and to progress smoothly through the remainder of their studies. While seminars may vary in topic, all deal with four main themes: education, identity, meaning, and voice.

Introductory Seminar for new first-year students.

US 101-102: A six-credit, two-semester course for new students of traditional age.

Transitions Seminar for transfer and returning students, is offered in two formats.

US 313-314: A six-credit, two-semester course for students who transfer in fewer than 30 credit hours. Students enrolled in the Ursuline College Accelerated Program (UCAP) must take a writing assessment test that will be used to determine appropriate placement.

US 315: A three credit, one semester course for students who transfer in 30-63 semester hours and have a B average in 6 semester hours English composition completed within the last 10 years.

The Introductory or Transitions Seminars are taken prior to or concurrently with Stage One satellite courses from the following areas: Science (Biology, Chemistry, Science),
Math, Society (Sociology) and Self (Psychology). A variety of courses identified as Ursuline Studies satellites in the natural and social sciences may fulfill these requirements.

Students must complete Stage One requirements before beginning Stage Two.

**STAGE TWO: US 350-351**

*Introduction to Culture*

Introduction to Culture, the anchor course for Stage Two, is a six-credit, two-semester, interdisciplinary course. It identifies key cities from a variety of historical periods and global areas, and studies their cultures from the humanities and fine arts perspective. The course is writing-intensive, and students actively pursue individual and group research.

Introduction to Culture is taken prior to or concurrently with Stage Two satellite courses from four related areas: World Culture, Western Culture, American Culture, and Fine Arts (Aesthetic Response). A variety of courses approved as Ursuline Studies satellites in the humanities and fine arts departments may fulfill these area requirements: Art, English, Foreign Language, History, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Religious Studies, and Women’s Studies. Students must select courses from at least three different departments to fulfill these requirements.

Students must complete Stage Two requirements before beginning Stage Three.

**STAGE THREE: US 401**

*Culminating Seminar*

The anchor course for Stage Three is a three-credit, one-semester Culminating Seminar: a writing-intensive, interdisciplinary course that focuses on values and social responsibility. It offers students the opportunity to reflect on their entire college experience and challenges them to imagine ways in which their education can make them more fulfilled, productive, and responsible for their lives, their careers, and their world. Students may not register for the Culminating Seminar until they have completed at least 96 credits. Prior to or concurrently with the Culminating Seminar, students select courses from the areas of Religious Studies and Philosophy. A variety of upper-division courses approved as Ursuline Studies satellites in these departments may fulfill these requirements. Lower-division courses (those taken at 100- or 200-level) do not satisfy Stage Three requirements.

Students must complete all requirements in the Ursuline Studies Program before graduation.