



PLU'S GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

PLU's General Education Program prepares graduates to ask significant questions, engage relevant knowledge, and wrestle with complex issues. The program is rooted in the classical liberal arts and sciences as understood within the Lutheran educational tradition, and is grounded in an understanding of scientific perspectives, mathematics, languages, and the long-standing traditions of critical discourse about nature, humanity and the world. The array of academic disciplines has developed as a set of lenses through which we view the world. Through exposure to current procedures, methods and accumulated knowledge of those disciplines, PLU welcomes students into on-going conversations about nature and the human condition. While immersed in these rigorous conversations, students are challenged to think critically, discern and formulate values, express themselves effectively and creatively, interact with others respectfully, and understand the world from various perspectives. By this means, PLU educates students for courageous lives: lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care – for other people, their communities and the earth.

The following are the specific elements of the PLU General Education Program. [(x)=credit hours]

- A. Embracing the Life of the Mind: First Year Experience Program (4)** This program prepares students for successful participation in PLU's distinctive academic and co-curricular culture by promoting critical thought, impassioned inquiry, and effective expression in learning communities that are both supportive and challenging.

Writing Seminar (4) *These seminars focus on writing, thinking, speaking, and reading. Students encounter writing as a way of thinking, of learning, and of discovering and ordering ideas; working with interdisciplinary themes, students practice the various academic conventions of writing.*

Inquiry Seminar *These four credit seminars introduce students to the methods and topics of study within a particular academic discipline or field. Students practice the academic skills that are at the center of the General Education Program.*

J-Term *These four credit J-Term courses are a unique opportunity for students to engage in the intensive study of one subject and to participate in the broader co-curriculum of the campus.*

Note: These courses may concurrently fulfill another GenEd and/or major/minor requirement.

- B. Engaging Arts and Performance (8)** The study and experience of art, music, theater, communication, and movement engage self-discovery and creativity while cultivating an appreciation for shared traditions of human expression.

Art, Music, Theater (4) *The arts celebrate creative expression through an exploration of individual talents, masterworks, and the role of artistic voice in building community and culture. Students are invited to study and/or produce artistic works.*

Art: provides students with a foundation relating to visual analysis, historical and contemporary cultural inquiry, and exploration of the creative process. We are educating students to have an intricate role in art and society for the 21st Century.

Music: brings together students, faculty, and the public to explore, understand, present, and appreciate the musical arts in all forms, genres and cultures.

Theater: through a combination of scholarship and practice, the PLU program in Theatre creates opportunities for students to develop a critically reflective appreciation of the enduring challenges of the human condition through text and performance, and to understand the centrality of theatrical performance as a mode of knowing across cultures and societies.

Physical Activity (4) *Physical activity provides the opportunity to explore, understand, cultivate, and appreciate the values, skills, and abilities that support a commitment to being physically active throughout the lifespan. Participation in these courses encourages the integration of the whole person in body, mind, and spirit.*

- C. Interpreting Living Traditions for a Humane Future (16)** Drawing on the rich traditions of languages and literatures, religion, and philosophy, the Humanities cultivates an intellectual and imaginative connection between a living past and the global challenges of our future. Humanities courses engage the complex traditions that shape the ways we think about and act in the world.

Literature (4) *Literary study explores how writers from a vast array of cultural traditions have used the creative resources of language—in fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction prose—to explore the entire range of human experience. The practice of reading literary texts exercises the imagination, cultivates a capacity for understanding ambiguity and complexity, and instills a sensitivity to the diversities of human existence. Literary study builds skills of analytical and interpretive argument, helping students become creative and critical writers.*

Philosophy (4) *Philosophy cultivates, through reasoned argument, the individual ability to develop responses to life's deepest questions and most significant decisions. Students engage collectively in a sustained and systematic examination of fundamental concepts about meaning, thought, and action important to human existence.*

Religion (8) *The study of religion at PLU builds on the historic strengths of Lutheran higher education and enhances global perspectives that reflect our commitment to human communities and the world. This discipline engages students in the scholarly study of sacred texts and practices, histories, theologies, and ethics. Students are invited to investigate the historical and cultural relevance and implications of religion for*

individuals, communities, and the earth. Students take one course in Christian Traditions and one course in Global Religious Traditions.

Christian Traditions (4) examines diverse forms of Christianity within their historical, cultural and political context.

Global Religious Traditions (4) highlights PLU's commitment to local-global education through analysis of diverse religions, both here and abroad.

Language Study: PLU encourages the study of a second language either on campus or through a study away program. Knowledge of a language other than one's own is a hallmark of a well-rounded liberal arts education, a pathway to global citizenship, a relevant skill in the global workplace, and a requirement for many graduate programs.

- D. Exploring Nature and Number (12)** These courses invite exploration of the natural world around and within us and provide expression of our human inclination to order what we see and to think in quantitative terms.

Mathematical Reasoning (4). Study in mathematics sharpens the mind for lifelong service by developing a command of logical argument, abstract reasoning, pattern recognition, and quantitative analysis. The ability to work with quantitative information lies at the heart of informed citizenship in the twenty-first century; it opens the doors to many traditional and new careers; and it enables the individual to navigate in the increasingly complicated quantified world.

Natural Sciences, Computer Science, or Mathematics (4) The universe beyond the earth, the earth itself, living organisms, the details of molecules, atoms, sub-atomic particles—all can be awe-inspiring when we have information and know descriptive and mathematical relationships to explain them. To begin to gain an appreciation for this complex world and its relationships, students take one course from the following disciplines:

Biology: develops an understanding and appreciation for the unity and diversity of life and the integrative nature of biological science.

Chemistry: involves the study of matter at the atomic and molecular level. Concepts and tools of chemistry are used to study the composition, structure, reactivity, and energy changes of materials in the world around us.

Computer Science and Computer Engineering: sharpens the ability to critically analyze problems and to precisely state the logic of their solutions, whether those solutions are embedded in machine code or neuron connections in an organic brain.

Geosciences: studies the Earth's features, processes, history, human resource use and its impact on the Earth, and geologic hazards and their impact on human societies.

Math: develops skills of logical argument, abstract reasoning, pattern recognition, and quantitative analysis necessary for wise citizenship in an increasingly quantitative twenty-first century.

Physics: investigates, at the most fundamental

level, the structure of matter and the laws of nature at work in our universe.

Science and Scientific Method (4) Scientists make observations and study the observations of others. They imagine explanations for what they observe (create hypotheses) and design experiments or other means to test those explanations. They sharpen and deepen their explanations based on the experimental results. This laboratory-rich course is an invitation to be a scientist for a while—to learn to apply scientific thinking to solve problems.

- E. Investigating Human Behavior, Culture, and Institutions (8):** The social sciences investigate individual and collective human behavior, and the history, development and variation of human culture and institutions. To assure exposure to a wide variety of social science concepts, theories, and methods, students must select at least two courses chosen from different disciplines.

Anthropology: studies human cultural and biological similarities and differences from prehistory to the present.

Economics: studies human behavior, institutions, and policies with the objective of using limited resources efficiently.

History: studies variation and development over time and space within human societies, cultures, and institutions.

Political Science: studies power relations, within and between societies and other units of human organization.

Psychology: studies mental processes, brain, and behavior, and the relationships among them.

Social Work: studies the relationships among individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations to facilitate change and promote social justice.

Sociology: studies social structure and social interaction, and the social factors contributing to change in each.

- F. Encountering Perspectives on Diversity:** Study of diversity promotes awareness that different cultural perspectives exist within our own society and around the world. This element of the program offers students critical tools for assessing values within a cultural context. Viewing our own values in the larger comparative context provides an opportunity for introspection that allows students to question values and arrive at informed commitments.

Alternative Perspectives: This element of the program creates an awareness and understanding of diversity in the United States, directly addressing issues such as ethnicity, gender, disability, racism, or poverty.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives: This element of the program enhances cross-cultural understandings through examination of other cultures.

Students complete four credits from each of the two lines. The AP-designated course may concurrently fulfill another GenEd or major/minor requirement. The CC-designated course may concurrently fulfill another GenEd or major/minor requirement.

- G. Producing and Presenting Culminating Scholarship: Senior Seminar/Project:** A substantial project, paper, practicum, or internship that culminates and advances the program of an academic major. The end product must be presented to an open audience and critically evaluated by faculty in the student's field. These credits count in the major.

Total Program Specific Credit Hours: 48

General education matters for who you are and who you will become. We invite you to see the way in which this program intersects with your major and electives and prepares you for meaningful careers and courageous lives.