
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.

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 (FW) (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 (F): *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: Inquiry and J Term courses may concurrently fulfill another GenEd and/or major/minor requirement.

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

Art, Music, Theatre (AR) (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.*

Theatre: *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 (PE) (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 (LT) (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 (PH) (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 (RC) (4): *examines diverse forms of Christianity within their historical, cultural, and political context.*

Global Religious Traditions (RG) (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 (MR) (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 (NS) (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 (SM) (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 (SO) (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 (8): 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 (A): *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 (C): *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 A-designated course may concurrently fulfill another GenEd or major/minor requirement. The C-designated course may concurrently fulfill another GenEd or major/minor requirement.

G. Producing and Presenting Culminating Scholarship: Senior Seminar/Project (SR): 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 Semester 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.

Supplemental Information on the General Education Program Elements

All students must satisfactorily complete the General Education Program. No course used to satisfy one General Education Program element may be used to satisfy another except for the Encountering Perspectives on Diversity element. **Note:** Listed below are further specifications related to particular elements of the General Education Program (GenEd).

General Education Program

A. Embracing the Life of the Mind: First Year Experience Program (FW, F) (4):

- Either the Writing Seminar or the Inquiry Seminar must be taken in the student's first semester.
- Both seminars must be completed during the student's first year at PLU.
- This element must be met by all students entering PLU with fewer than 20 semester hours.
- Credits earned by Advanced Placement (AP)-English and International Baccalaureate (IB)-English do not satisfy the Writing Seminar element, though the hours may be used for elective credit. Students with officially transcribed college writing courses, including those in Washington State's Running Start program, are eligible to enroll in the Writing Seminar for credit, or they may choose to use their previous credits to satisfy this element.

B. Engaging Arts and Performance (8):

- **Arts, Music, Theatre (AR)** - four semester hours from Arts, Music or Theatre are required.
- **Physical Education (PE)** - four different physical education activity courses, of which one must be PHED 100. One hour of credit may be earned through approved sports participation (PHED 250).

C. Interpreting Living Traditions for a Humane Future (16):

- **Literature (LT)** - four semester hours from English or Languages & Literatures courses designated as meeting the element.
- **Philosophy (PH)** - logic and critical thinking courses do not fulfill this element.
- **Religion (RC, RG)** - students take one course in Christian Traditions and one course in Global Religious Traditions.
- **Transfer Students and Religion GenEd Element** - transfer students entering as juniors or seniors must take four semester hours from Christian Traditions (RC) unless presenting eight transfer semester hours of religion from another regionally-accredited college or university. Global Religious Traditions (RG) courses will not fulfill the General Education Program element in religion if transferring into PLU with a junior or senior standing.

D. Exploring Nature and Number (12):

- **Mathematical Reasoning (MR)** - element may be satisfied by the completion (with at least a B average) of the equivalent of four years of college preparatory mathematics (through mathematical analysis, pre-calculus, or calculus or equivalent) in high school.

- **Natural Sciences (NS)** - may or may not have a lab section.
- **Scientific Method (SM)** - requires a separate lab.
- At least one course taken to fulfill the NS or SM element must be a physical or biological science.

E. Investigating Human Behavior, Culture, and Institutions (8):

- Two courses must be chosen from different disciplines.

F. Encountering Perspectives on Diversity (8):

- Students must complete four semester hours from Alternative Perspectives and four semester hours from Cross-Cultural Perspectives.
- **Alternative Perspectives (A)** - course may concurrently fulfill another General Education Program element or major/minor requirement.
- **Cross-Cultural (C)** - course may concurrently fulfill another General Education Program element or major/minor requirement.
 - The Cross-Cultural Perspectives element may be fulfilled by a foreign language course numbered 201 or above (not sign language) used to satisfy the entrance requirement, or completion through the first year of college level of a foreign language (not sign language) other than that used to satisfy the foreign language entrance requirement.
 - The Cross-Cultural Perspectives element may be fulfilled by participation in an approved semester-long study away program. Only January term study away courses that carry the C designator fulfill the Cross-Cultural Perspective.
- **Transfer Students** Transfer students entering as juniors or seniors must take one Encountering Perspectives on Diversity course (four semester hours) at PLU that can also simultaneously fulfill another GenEd element or major/minor requirement.

G. Producing and Presenting Culminating Scholarship: Senior Seminar/Project (SR):

- With approval of the student's major department, interdisciplinary capstone course such as the Global Studies Research Seminar may fulfill this element.

International Honors Program

28 semester hours

The International Honors Program (IHON) provides a select group of entering first-year students a challenging and creative alternative to the General Education Program, which reflects PLU's unique mission and emphasis upon the liberal arts. Consequently, IHON accounts for 32 of the 48 semester hours that are required by the General Education Program. Although just seven courses (28 hours), the program fulfills 32 semester hours due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program. Accordingly, students who have satisfactorily completed the Honors Program receive credit for the following: Art, Music, Theatre (4); Literature (4); Philosophy (4); Religion (8); Natural Sciences, Computer Science, or Mathematics (4); and Social Sciences (8).

International Honors students must complete the remaining 16 semester hours of the General Education Program prior to graduation from the university: First-Year Experience Program: Writing Seminar (4); Physical Activity (4); Mathematical Reasoning (4); Science and Scientific Method (4); and Encountering Perspectives on Diversity (Alternative Perspectives and Cross-Cultural Perspectives). Students must complete four hours from each of the Perspectives on Diversity lines and both may concurrently fulfill another GenEd/IHON or major/minor requirement; Senior Seminar/Project (these hours count in the major). For a full description of IHON and for details about applying to the program, go to the International Honors Program section of this catalog.

Limitations: All Baccalaureate Degrees

(All credit hours referred to in listings of requirements are semester hours.)

Total Required Hours and Cumulative GPA

A minimum of 128 semester hours must be completed with a grade point average of 2.00 GPA. A 2.50 is required in the Schools of Business and Education and Movement Studies, plus the Departments of Economics, History, Languages and Literatures (Hispanic Studies) and Sociology and Social Work.

Upper-Division Courses: 40-hour rule

A minimum of 40 semester hours must be completed from courses numbered 300 or above. Courses from two-year institutions are not considered upper-division regardless of subject matter parallels (and regardless of major/minor exceptions). At least 20 of the 40 semester hours of upper-division work must be taken at PLU.

Final Year in Residence: 32-hour rule

The final 32 semester hours of a student's program must be completed in residence at PLU. No transfer credit may be applied during a student's final 32 hours in a degree program. (Special programs such as 3-2 and semester and January term exchange study are excluded from this limitation.)

Academic Major: 8 hour rule

A major must be completed as detailed by each school or department. At least eight semester hours must be taken in residence. Departments, divisions, or schools may set higher residency requirements.

Minimum Grades: Courses in the Major and Minor

All courses counted toward a major or minor must be completed with grades of C- or higher and with a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or higher in those courses. Departments, divisions, or schools may set higher grade requirements.

44-Hour Limit

No more than 44 semester hours earned in one department may be applied to the B.A. or B.S. degrees.

Music Ensembles: 8-hour rule

Non-music majors may not count more than eight semester hours in music ensembles toward graduation requirements.

Correspondence/Extension Courses: Limitations

A maximum of 24 semester hours in accredited correspondence or extension studies may be credited toward degree requirements, contingent on approval by the Registrar's Office. Courses offered through correspondence, on-line, distance learning, or independent study are not accepted to fulfill the General Education Program elements in Language, Literature, Philosophy or Religion.

Community College Courses: 64-hour rule

A maximum of 64 semester hours will be accepted by transfer from a regionally-accredited community college. All community college courses are transferred as lower-division credit.

Physical Education Courses: 8-hour rule

No more than eight of the one-semester hour physical education activity courses may be counted toward graduation.

College of Arts and Sciences Requirement

In addition to meeting the entrance requirement in foreign language (two years of high school language, one year of college language, or demonstrated equivalent proficiency), candidates for degrees from the College of Arts and Sciences (B.A., B.S., B.A.P.E. [excluding B.A.P.E. with certification], and B.S.P.E. degrees) must meet Option I, II, or III below. Candidates for the B.A. in English, for the B.A. in Education with a secondary teaching major in English, for the B.A. in Global Studies, and for election to the Areté Society must meet Option I.

Candidates for a B.A. in History or Music must meet College of Arts and Sciences requirement (Option I, II). Music majors take a non-music arts elective in either visual art, theatre or dance.

Option I

Completion of one foreign language through the second year of college level. This option may also be met by completion of four years of high school study in one foreign language with grades of C or higher, or by satisfactory scores on a proficiency examination administered by the PLU Department of Languages and Literatures.

Option II

Completion of one foreign language other than that used to satisfy the foreign language entrance requirement through the first year of college level. This option may also be met by satisfactory scores on a proficiency examination administered by the PLU Department of Languages and Literatures.

Option III

Completion of four semester hours in history, literature, or language (at the 201 level, or at any level in a language other than that used to satisfy the foreign language entrance requirement) in addition to courses applied to the general education elements, and four semester hours in symbolic logic, mathematics (courses numbered 100 or above), computer science, or statistics in addition to courses applied to the general education elements. Courses used to satisfy either category of Option III of the College of Arts and

Sciences requirement may not also be used to satisfy general education program requirements.

Language Coursework and the Perspectives on Diversity Requirement

A foreign language course numbered 201 or above used to satisfy Option I, or completion of a foreign language through the first year of college level used to satisfy Option II (excluding American Sign Language), may be used simultaneously to satisfy the Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Diversity requirement.

A course in American Sign Language may be used to satisfy the Alternative Perspectives GenEd Program Element.

Understandings Regarding All Requirements

Consult particular departmental sections of the catalog for detailed specification of courses that count for these requirements.

For those elements of the general education program that refer to academic disciplines or units, selected courses outside those units may count for the requirement when approved both by the units and by the committee overseeing the general education program.