

GENERAL
EDUCATION
PROGRAM



KNOW BEFORE YOU WORK
**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY**
 WASHINGTON, DC

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“Become Who You Are.”

NIETZSCHE



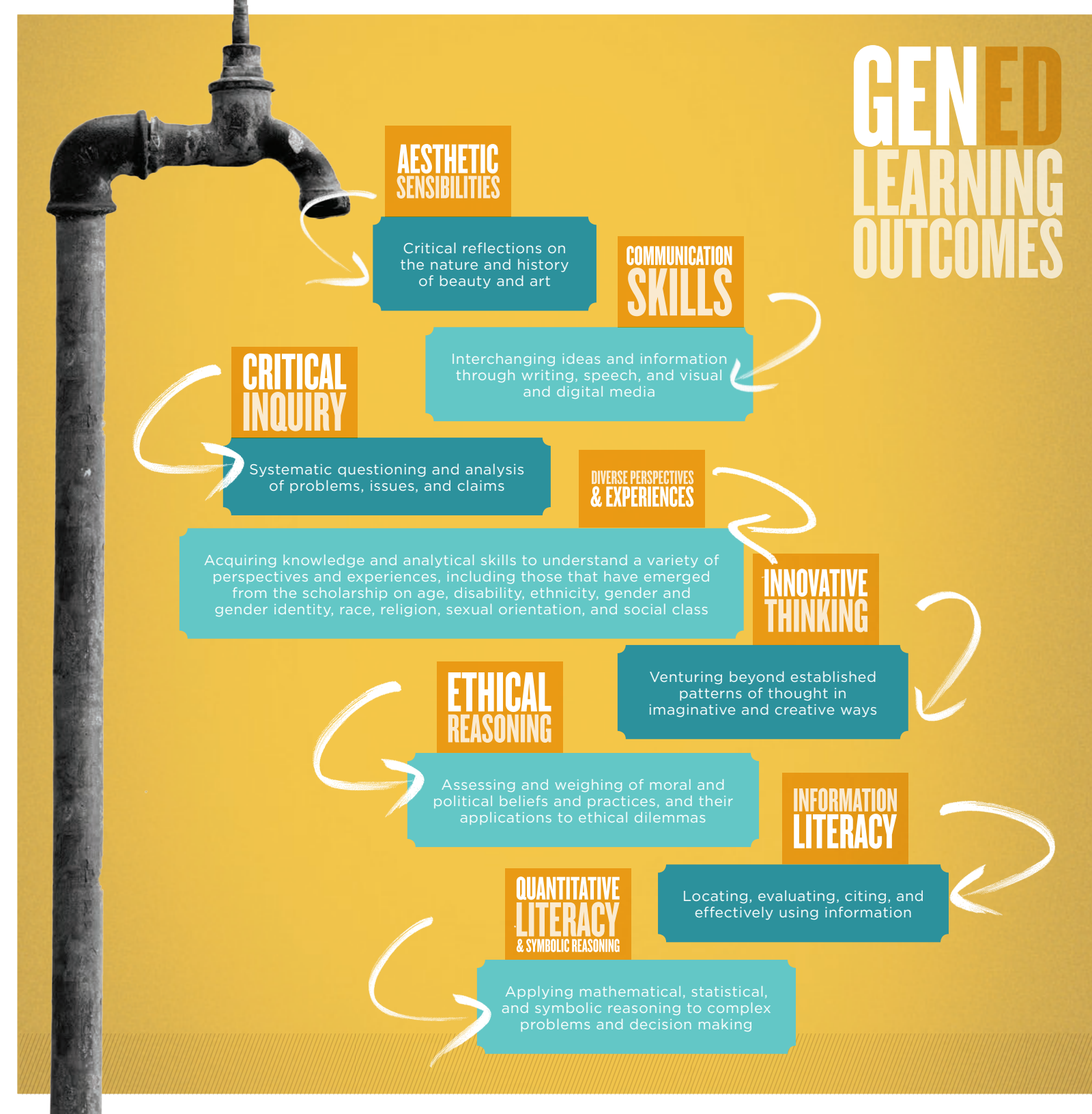
Why General Education?

The General Education Program, or GenEd, is American University's liberal arts requirement. (What some institutions call a core or distribution requirement.) Schools with a core liberal arts program believe that there is a certain body of knowledge that all educated adults should possess. Those with distribution requirements think students should learn about subjects outside their main course of study. We agree with both of those philosophies.

**WELL, SORT OF.
AT AU WE DO THINGS A BIT DIFFERENTLY.**

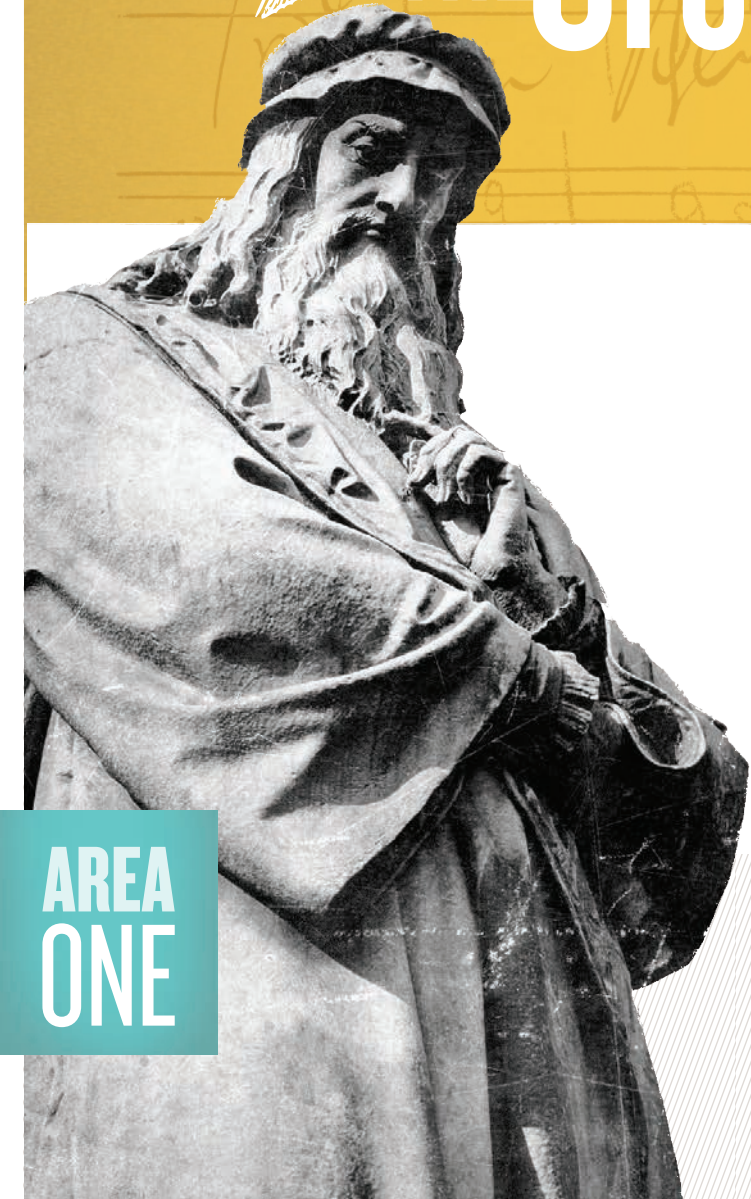
We reject the idea that there is any single body of knowledge that constitutes "what all educated people should know." What we care about are learning outcomes—that is, how your education helps you become who you are. We believe that our graduates should be equipped with certain intellectual skills and resources if they are to understand the complex dynamics of an increasingly connected global environment.

GENED LEARNING OUTCOMES

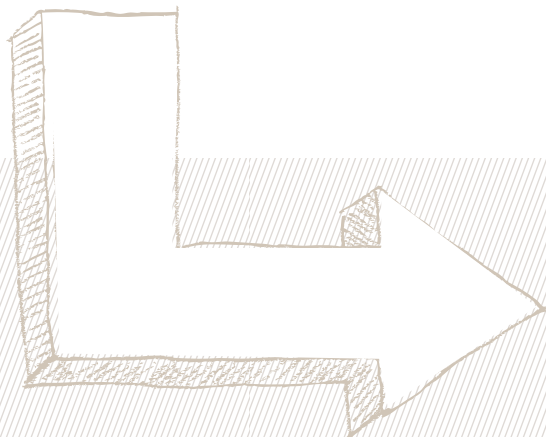


WHY
STUDY
THE

Creative Arts?



The creative arts celebrate the human capacity to imagine, create, and transform ideas into expressive forms, like paintings, poems, and symphonies. A rich record of human cultures and values through time, the arts enable us to appreciate and enjoy the experiences of our senses and to sharpen our aesthetic sense—that human quality through which we comprehend beauty. All courses in this area challenge you to understand creativity and the distinctive intellectual process of the human imagination.



AREA
ONE



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Examine the nature of creativity, especially imaginative and intuitive thinking.

Situate creative works, and judgments about those creative works, in their appropriate social and historical contexts.

Develop your own creative and expressive abilities so that you can better understand the qualities that shape an artist's work.

“LEARNING ABOUT THE LARGER HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO THE GREAT WORKS OF ART THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED.”

—TIERNEY GORMLEY,
ART HISTORY AND
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

*Celebrate
the human
imagination*



WHY
STUDY

Traditions that Shape THE WESTERN WORLD ?

The rich traditions that shape the Western world convey ideas, visions, and cultural practices that are shared, lasting, and tenacious. Some courses in this area examine powerful visions that philosophers, political theorists, historians, religious thinkers, scientists, and social critics have of the Western experience. Others explore competing ideas about human nature, liberty, equality, and the consequences of social change. Through direct engagement with primary texts, you learn to ask questions, debate ideas, and come to understand the ways that the past shapes our present experiences.

*how the Past
Shapes
the present*

"GENED CLASSES SHOW YOU THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW YOU WERE INTERESTED IN... YOU GET TO TAKE THESE AMAZING CLASSES THAT ARE OUTSIDE YOUR MAJOR - AND THEY STILL COUNT TOWARD YOUR GRADUATION."

- MOLLY KERRIGAN,
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explore the diverse historical and philosophical traditions that have shaped the contemporary Western world.

Read and discuss fundamental texts from those traditions, situating the texts in their appropriate intellectual contexts.

Develop your ability to critically and comparatively reflect on religious and philosophical issues in dialogue with others—both past and present.

AREA
TWO

WHY
STUDY

The Global and Cross-Cultural EXPERIENCE?



Global interdependence is a powerful fact. Through exploring societies around the globe and the connections between them, this foundational area immerses you in diverse cultures and issues, challenging a parochial understanding of the world. You will gain a better understanding of the dimensions and range of experience and belief that distinguish cultures and countries—and the commonalities that bind human experience.

hello!
allo, bonjour! العربية hola!
guten tag! 你好

AREA
THREE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explore those habits of thought and feeling that distinguish regions, countries, and cultures from one another.

Discuss, in comparative and cross-cultural perspectives, the concepts, patterns, and trends that characterize contemporary global politics.

Develop your capacity to critically analyze major issues in international and intercultural relations, especially how categories of difference are organized within and across cultures and how they affect political systems.

"EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS ON BOTH PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEVELS. THIS CLASS ENCOURAGED ME TO PURSUE MY DREAMS — AND MADE ME FEEL CONFIDENT THAT I WOULD BE ABLE TO."

— GEORGE HAUSMANN,
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Communicate
Effectively



WHY
STUDY

Social Institutions AND BEHAVIOR?

Studying the foundations of contemporary society reveals the components of complex social systems, the ways that individuals function in varied social settings, and the root causes of social behavior. Courses in this area, drawn from across the social and behavioral sciences, emphasize how we create knowledge and arrive at understanding. Through these courses you will come to comprehend the rules and mechanisms that govern complex societies, which is essential for influencing institutional processes and shaping our world.

AREA
FOUR

"I THOUGHT I KNEW A LOT ABOUT POLITICS, BUT FROM THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS, I REALIZED HOW MUCH MORE THERE IS TO LEARN."

- AARON BARROW,
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
AND FINANCE

Complex
Societies

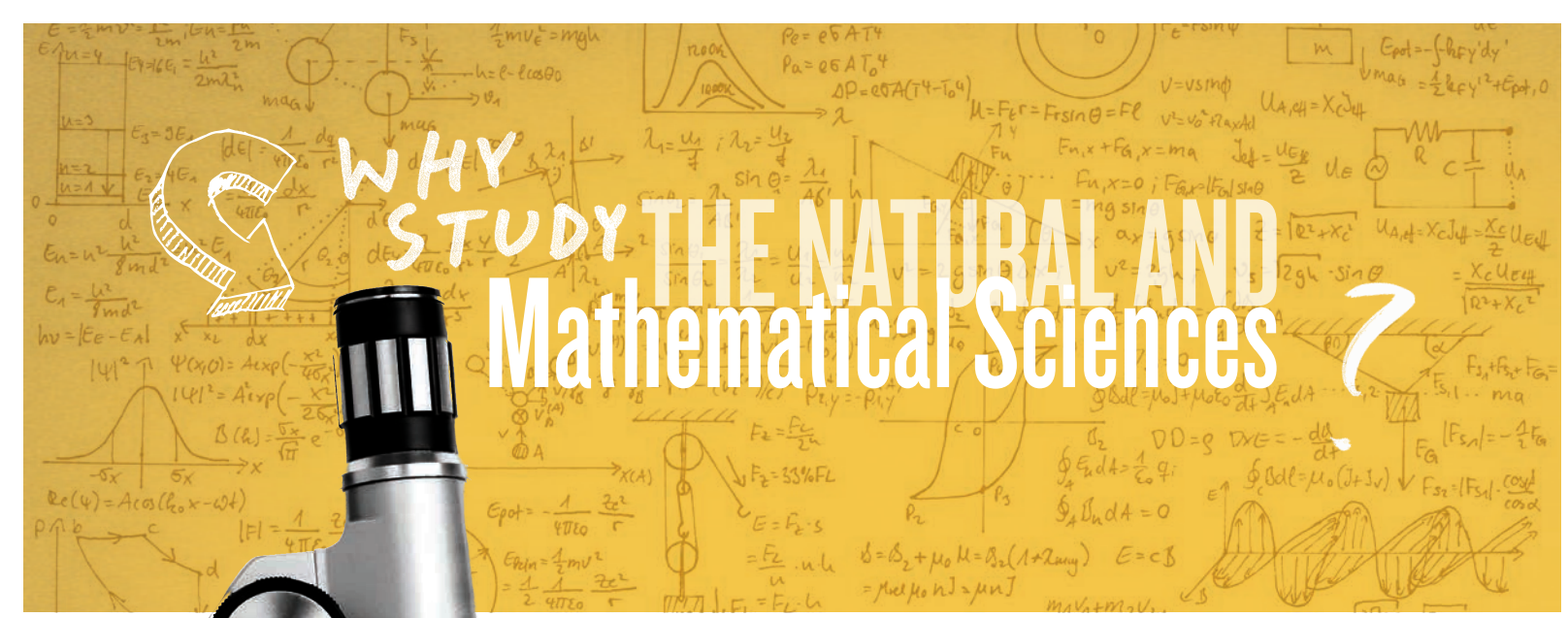
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Study the institutions, systems, and patterns of governance and of economic and social organization that underlie contemporary societies.

Place policy options and their consequences in their appropriate social and political contexts, drawing on classic and contemporary theories of human organization.

Develop your capacity to critically reflect on the organization of societies and the relationship between the individual and the society using distinctive methods of inquiry appropriate to the study of social institutions.

WHY STUDY THE NATURAL AND Mathematical Sciences?



Through observation and analysis of the physical and biological worlds, scientists discern basic principles that explain natural phenomena and unravel many mysteries. Regardless of discipline, scientists rely on theory and experimentation to test and refine understanding of our bodies, our complex environment, and the universe. Through hands-on experimentation and systematic exploration of the logical implications of basic concepts, you will learn to think like a scientist and assess the validity of controversial claims.

AREA FIVE

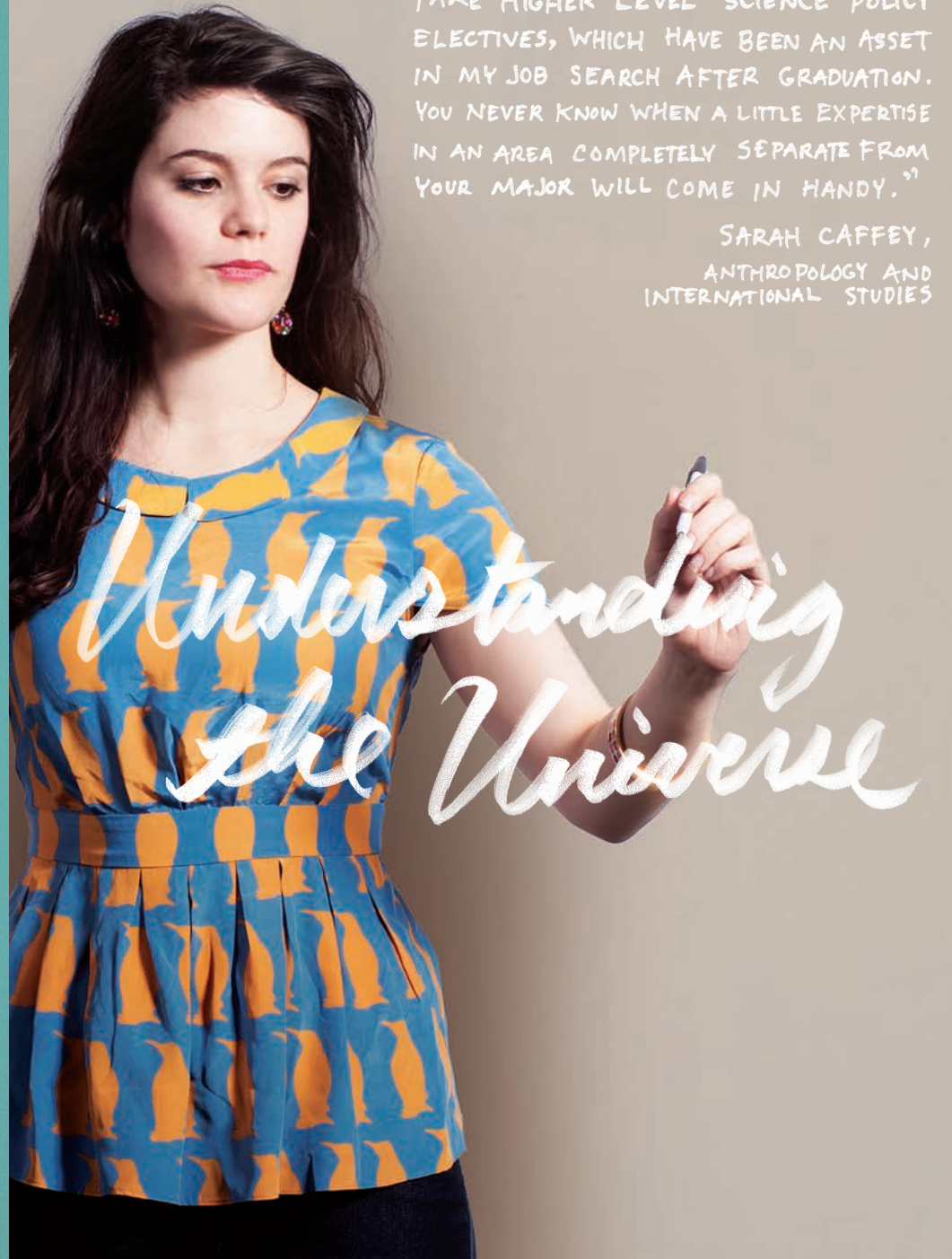


LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Investigate the natural world and the living forms that inhabit it by studying the systems and processes that occur at scales from the atomic to the cosmic levels.

Develop problem-solving skills and utilize the scientific method to describe, explain, and predict natural phenomena through laboratory experiences.

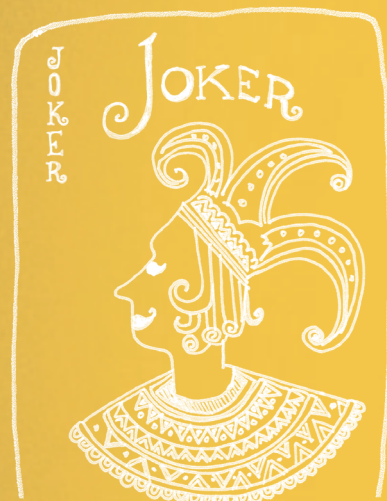
Analyze the role of science in public discourse and in addressing societal problems.



"MY PHYSICS GENEDS INSPIRED ME TO TAKE HIGHER LEVEL SCIENCE POLICY ELECTIVES, WHICH HAVE BEEN AN ASSET IN MY JOB SEARCH AFTER GRADUATION. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN A LITTLE EXPERTISE IN AN AREA COMPLETELY SEPARATE FROM YOUR MAJOR WILL COME IN HANDY."

SARAH CAFFEY,
ANTHROPOLOGY AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Understanding the Universe



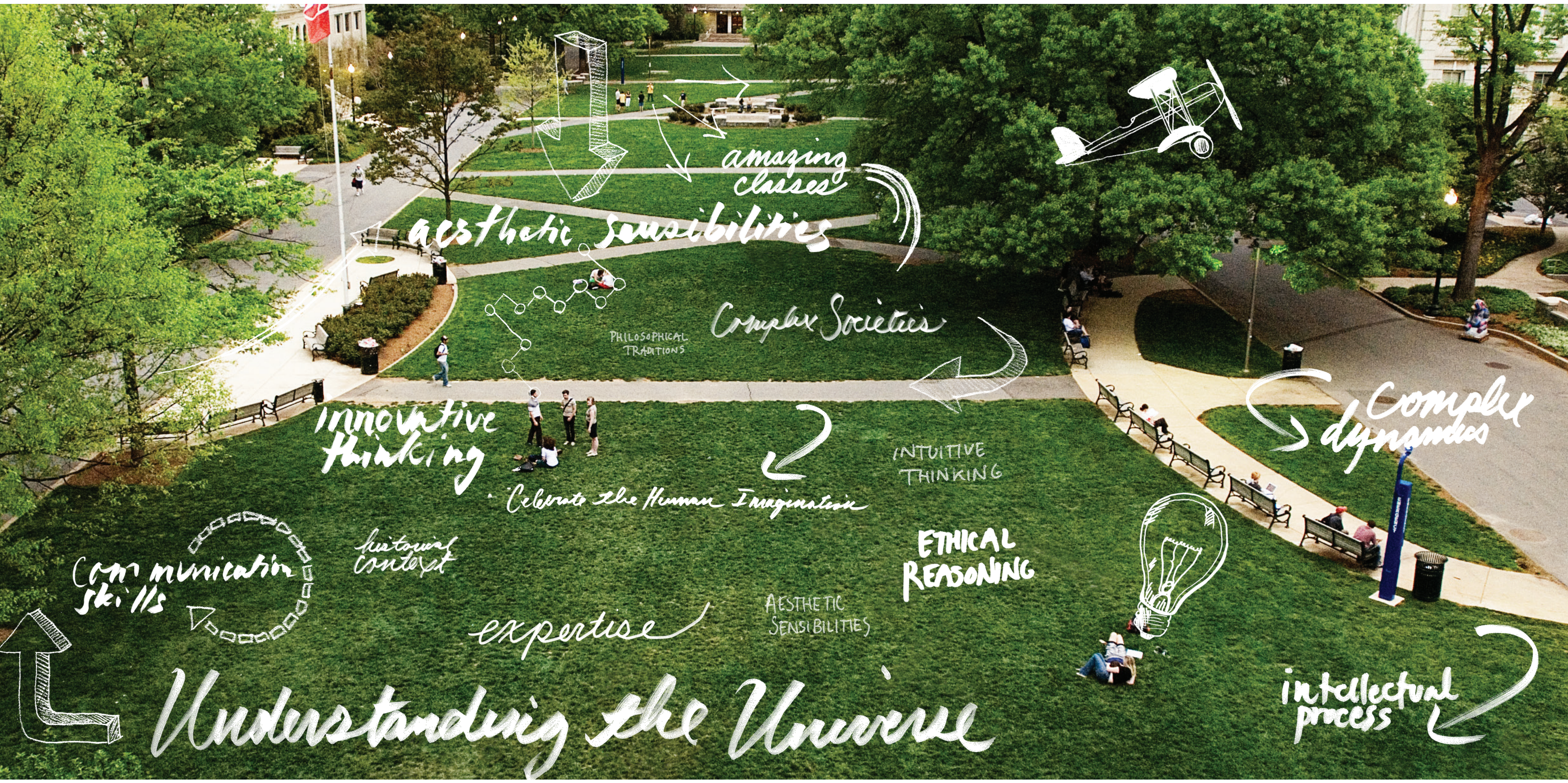
WILDCARDS and SOPHOMORE SEMINARS

WILDCARDS are original and timely courses based on faculty research and current events. Many popular GenEds started as Wildcards and have since become part of the permanent curriculum.

SOPHOMORE SEMINARS are interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses that are listed under two or more foundational areas; students specify the area to which credit should be assigned.

All Wildcards and Sophomore Seminar course numbers are designated by a GNED prefix. For current offerings, visit american.edu/gened.





Understanding the Universe

aesthetic sensibilities

Complex Societies

innovative thinking

Complex dynamics

ETHICAL REASONING

expertize

intellectual process

communication skills

historical context

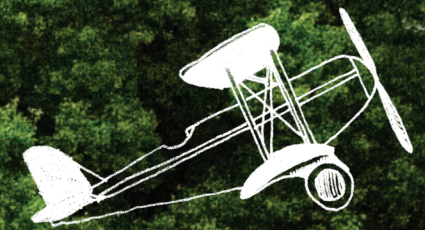
PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

amazing classes

INTUITIVE THINKING

Celebrate the Human Imagination

AESTHETIC SENSIBILITIES



**FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS**

Who must take General Education courses at American University?
All AU undergraduate students.

How many GenEd courses must I take?
Two courses in each of the five foundational areas, including a lab science (total 10 courses and 31 credit hours).

Can I count a course for both General Education and my major?
Of course!

Can I take a GenEd course as pass-fail?
No.

Is there a limit on the number of courses I can take in a single academic discipline?
Yes. No more than two courses with the same prefix (except GNED—you can take as many of those as you want).

What is the minimum grade that merits GenEd credit in a course?
D or better. (That's D, not D-minus.)

How long does it take to finish the General Education Program?
The program is designed to be completed in your first two years. You should try to

finish your GenEd requirements as soon as possible, as they provide a necessary foundation for advanced work in your chosen course of study.

May I take GenEd courses at another school?
Due to the unique nature of GenEd courses, how they're taught, and their connection to the learning objectives and values of the university, you must complete all remaining GenEd courses here after you have enrolled at AU.

May I take GenEd courses during the summer?
Definitely. Many GenEd courses, including online, are offered during the summer.

Do advanced placement examinations count for General Education credit?
Yes. Your academic advisor is your best resource on this. There is also information at american.edu/gened.

If I am a transfer student, do I get General Education credit for courses I have taken before coming to American University?
While transfer students must fulfill the 31 hours of General Education, academic

advisors will match courses taken prior to entering AU with GenEd courses to determine whether they qualify for credit in the program.

Do you grant exceptions to General Education policy?
Only under extraordinary circumstances.

Where can I find the list of GenEd classes?
The current listing of GenEd classes is online at american.edu/gened. Your academic advisor is also a great resource.

How to SELECT YOUR GENED CLASSES

Your individualized General Education experience combines classes from your major(s) and any minors with those from across the curriculum. Think of it as cross-training for your mind. But with 150 courses to choose from, it can be hard to pick only 10. Talk with your academic advisor and ask yourself

ARE THERE ANY GENEDS THAT ARE
BUILT INTO
YOUR INTENDED MAJOR OR MINOR?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW
NOTHING
ABOUT?

WHAT SOUNDS
COOL?

ARE THERE MAJORS OR MINORS
THAT YOU'D LIKE TO
LEARN
MORE
ABOUT BEFORE YOU COMMIT?

Check out the current course listings at american.edu/gened. (We don't print them here because there are new courses every semester.) Use the space below to brainstorm.

POSSIBLE COURSES

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THEM

FA1
FA2
FA3
FA4
FA5

Keep these simple rules in mind:

- * Take two courses in each of the five foundational areas.
- * At least one course in area five must include a lab science component.
- * No more than two courses can have the same course prefix (BIO, LIT, etc.). The only exception is GNED, the interdisciplinary prefix used for Wildcards and Sophomore Seminars.





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For information regarding the accreditation and licensing of
American University, please visit american.edu/academics.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action university. UP13-128



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