

# Liberal Education Core Courses

## Vision Statement for Core Courses:

At Colby-Sawyer, students' professional and personal development are closely interconnected. In the six courses they will take in the "core," they will gain a broad base of knowledge and skills. These courses will challenge them to think in drastically different ways — to see the world as a scientist, as a philosopher, as a historian, as a psychologist. In the process, they will gain valuable professional skills, but they will also broaden their ideas about the world and think seriously about their place within it.

The skills students develop in these classes will be crucial to their professional success. These core courses will teach them to write and communicate more clearly, to think critically and creatively, to navigate quantitative information and to analyze and solve problems. These skills will help lay the groundwork for the specialized thinking they will do within their major. But the skills will also help students prepare for a dynamic and evolving professional world after graduation. A well-rounded disciplinary background will help them to be flexible, marketable and adaptable in their professional career.

Beyond their professional application, these courses will offer students the chance to confront challenges and questions that are crucial to adult life: How do you fit in to your larger community? What does it mean to be creative and expressive? What is your relationship to the natural world? What should you believe and why should you believe it? In these six courses, students will learn to ask these questions, to think deeply about them and to consider what their answers might mean for the rest of their life.

These core classes are about professional and personal development. They are a crucial step toward building the knowledge and skill base that will serve students in their majors and in their professional lives after graduation. They will challenge students to think in new ways, to broaden their horizons and to find their calling.

### Requirements:

- Online A.S. students are required to take a Science Core course, a Social Science core course, and a Liberal Education Core course from one of these areas: Arts, Historical Perspectives, or Literature (4 credits).
- Online B.S. students are required to take a total of six Core courses (24 credits). One 4 credit course from each of the following Core areas: Arts, Historical Perspectives, Humanities, Literature, Science, and Social Sciences.
- Online B.S. students are also required to take one 4 credit Integrative Experience course.

### *Liberal Education Core Areas*

#### Arts:

Credits: 4

Experiential learning in the arts — visual arts, performing arts and design — enables students to develop creative and critical thinking skills that can be applied meaningfully across disciplines and professions. Arts courses are primarily project-based or performance-based, providing students the opportunity to learn actively through guided creative processes of art-making. These courses also provide an understanding of cultural, historical and/or technical contexts for making, thereby informing and framing creative expression.

#### Arts Skill Sets:

Creative expression, creative problem solving, creative and critical thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis

Qualifying courses: ART 100

#### Historical Perspectives:

Credits: 4

History is the record and story of life as experienced by individuals and communities in the past. History courses provide the opportunity to understand the development of political, economic and social institutions and the evolution of contemporary social issues. The study of history provides unique and essential insight into today's complex challenges and helps students develop the judgment necessary for thoughtful civic discourse and civil action.

**Historical Perspectives Skill Sets:**

Critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, cultural awareness, information literacy, written communication

Qualifying courses: HIS 103, 104

**Humanities:**

Credits: 4

In humanities courses, students will develop skills in critical and creative thinking, effective communication and ethical reasoning. Through close reading and analysis of transformative texts from a variety of media, students explore fundamental questions about human nature and social responsibility: How do we communicate with one another? What is truth? What is morality? How do politics, media and religion shape who we are? What is justice? By thinking about these questions, students will improve their skills in written communication, information literacy, textual analysis and argumentation. In a rapidly changing world, courses in the humanities give students the important skills and the civic knowledge they need to realize their own potential and to be educated, effective participants in a democratic society.

**Humanities Skill Sets:**

Civic knowledge and engagement, creative and critical thinking, ethical reasoning, inquiry and analysis, intercultural knowledge, written communication

Qualifying courses: PHI 305; POL 203

**Literature:** Credits: 4

In literature courses, students will hone their skills in critical thinking and analysis. By reading a variety of literary forms, students will study the complex ways language works to create meaning and the various ways language helps us shape and order our own experience in the world. In addition to gaining skills in critical inquiry and information literacy, students in these courses will develop sharper skills in written communication. The study of language and literature also helps students develop soft skills like empathy and creativity and it gives them the opportunity to enrich and deepen their own self-knowledge.

**Literature Skill Sets:**

Creative expression, critical thinking, cultural awareness, information literacy, inquiry and analysis, written communication

Qualifying courses: ENG 229, 266

**Science:** Credits: 4

Science is about exploration, curiosity and the development of a better understanding of the world we live in. Through hands-on practical experiences that investigate the underlying mechanisms of both small and large systems, science explains how everything works, from the smallest molecule to the largest universe. Scientific knowledge helps us understand how our actions impact the world both locally and globally. Through processes that encourage the integration and application of knowledge, science helps us formulate and test hypotheses and to utilize critical thinking, problem solving, observation and analysis.

**Science Skill Sets:**

Creative and critical thinking, ethical reasoning, inquiry and analysis, quantitative literacy/reasoning, teamwork and problem solving, written and oral communication

Qualifying courses: BIO 121, 205, 206; SCI 112

**Social Sciences:** Credits: 4

The social sciences focus on interactions among people, society and institutions, based primarily in the present. Social science courses provide an understanding of society and an introduction to multiple methods of inquiry and analysis using empirical evidence to test ideas. Through the study of the social sciences, students will develop critical thinking skills to explore the relationship between personal and social worlds and apply principles and theories of various disciplines in the creation of an informed perspective of their own responsibility as community members.

**Social Science Skill Sets:**

Civic knowledge and engagement, creative and critical thinking, foundations and skills for lifelong learning, inquiry and analysis, written communication

Qualifying courses: CHI 101; PSY 101; SHS 101