

## **General Education Rationale and Requirements**

Centre College's flexible graduation requirements and individualized mentoring by faculty members will prepare you to choose the courses that build upon your existing strengths and talents, while also taking you to new levels of achievement. The curriculum prepares Centre graduates for lives of meaningful work and sustained curiosity. By the time you graduate, you will have taken a unique set of courses that will empower you to engage with, to learn from, and to contribute to your chosen communities—and the world beyond them.

The General Education Curriculum is designed to complement, not compete with, your chosen major. Only three courses (two first-year seminars and an interdisciplinary capstone) will take place at specific moments during your academic journey. With guidance from your advisor, you will decide how and when to pursue the other course requirements.

In your two first-year seminar courses you will meet other first-year students, embrace your new role in the Centre College community, and build on your existing skills in writing and oral communication. You will take courses in a second language and in math. You will explore the three main academic divisions of the College: the arts and humanities, social studies, and sciences and math. The Centre curriculum will also challenge you to get out into the world, focusing on experiences and concrete applications of your academic pursuits through areas such as Arts Engagement, Global Engagement, Community-Based Learning, Mentored Research, or Internships. You will join others in discussing sustainability and diversity, two pressing areas of social responsibility. Lastly, as a capstone, a finishing touch to your Centre education, you will complete an interdisciplinary seminar during your junior or senior years. This seminar will push you to think critically and creatively about complex challenges and opportunities in the world today.

### **Doctrina Lux Mentis Courses I and II**

Centre College's motto is *doctrina lux mentis*, Latin for "learning is the light of the mind." We use this motto to remind us of our collective mission. As a Centre College student, you will join a community of scholars who value learning as an engagement that not only illuminates the mind but also shines the light of understanding on the world and all those within it. This motto gives its name to three of the core experiences in Centre's General Education Curriculum: Doctrina Lux Mentis (DLM) I, II, and III. The first two DLM courses (I and II) are seminar courses taken in your first year, one in the fall and one in the spring, whereas DLM III serves as the capstone experience.

DLM I and II courses provide a small-group learning environment that will engage you in intensive intellectual experiences to develop your collegiate educational skills—how to read critically, how to think logically, and how to communicate effectively. You will complete these courses with instructors from different academic divisions, which will begin your introduction to the breadth of learning opportunities. DLM I will emphasize writing skills, while DLM II will emphasize oral communication skills. Both written and oral exercises incorporate imagination, creativity, reasoning, problem-solving, integration, and judgment—all skills essential to critical thinking. Visual communication (for example: photos, videos, maps, design, or data visualization) and information literacy are part of both courses.

As in all of your courses at Centre, you will work closely with your professors in your DLM courses to develop your communication skills and to reflect on your own process of learning. Techniques include

conferences with your professor to revise multiple drafts of a paper and evaluate your own process of thinking, writing, and learning.

## **Second Language Courses**

You live in an interdependent, globalized world. The ability to understand and communicate in multiple languages serves as a key to help you understand the basic modes of thought, life, and expression of other cultures. Knowledge of other cultures will contribute in essential ways to your responsible engagement in this world.

If you have second language skills that place you above the introductory level by our placement test, you will take at least one additional college-level language course conducted in that language. If you do not yet have introductory second language skills—or you would prefer to start learning a new language—you must take at least the two-course introductory sequence in that language.

You can enroll in courses in the following languages at Centre (in alphabetical order): Arabic, Chinese, French, German, ancient Greek, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish.

If you are an international student (meaning a permanent resident of a country other than the United States) and your native language is not English, you will automatically fulfill your second language requirement through your coursework in English. You are certainly welcome to study an additional language during your time at Centre.

## **Mathematics**

Mathematics is fundamentally important for both communication and cognition, and your required math course, determined both by the Mathematics faculty and your placement test, will help you become an active, informed, and critically thoughtful participant in a complex world. In your math class, you will improve your analytical thinking and your ability to model, analyze, and solve problems in a wide variety of situations.

## **Exploration Courses**

You will have freedom to explore many different disciplines while you are a student at Centre College. This exposure will set you up for a lifetime of curiosity and exploration of the world around you. Your faculty advisor will encourage you to take a wide range of courses, especially in your first and second years. Many students uncover unexpected interests and even new career directions in these first two years.

In Exploration Courses you will continue to learn *how* to learn as you explore a new academic discipline, building your cognitive skills as well as your knowledge. You will learn how to read carefully, to speak confidently, and to write persuasively; these courses will stimulate your curiosity, empathy, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and leadership abilities. The Exploration requirement has few restrictions, provided that you complete six courses from six different disciplines: two each from each of the three divisions, Arts & Humanities, Social Studies, and Sciences & Mathematics.

**Exploration of the Arts & Humanities** (two courses in two different disciplines): Exploring the Arts & Humanities means that you will engage with works of creative or intellectual expression. The arts and humanities provide methods for exploring the varied expression of human experience and the means of participating in that expression. Through the use of diverse forms of communication, exposure of multiple perspectives, and engagement of the imagination, you will develop the capacity for creativity, risk-taking, problem-solving, personal insight, and empathy.

**Exploration of the Social Studies** (two courses in two different disciplines): Exploring the Social Studies means that you will engage actively and empathetically with significant social issues from various points of view. The study of different cultures and communities—contemporary, historical, or prehistorical—develops your capacity to understand the points of view, sentiments, and intentions of others. Through the exploration and study of multiple peoples and perspectives, you will learn to appreciate the multiplicity of human worldviews, to explore your own identity, to identify and challenge injustice, and to work towards a more equitable society.

**Exploration of the Sciences & Mathematics** (two courses in two different disciplines, including at least one laboratory course): Exploring the Sciences & Mathematics means that you will develop your ability to understand and evaluate the formation and evolution of knowledge in these areas. The study of the computational, physical, or life sciences provides you with a disciplined approach to comprehending our universe. Through the systematic process of collecting and analyzing data, you will strengthen your critical analysis and problem-solving skills so that you are ready to address a wide variety of current and future problems.

### **Connection Courses**

As you make your way through Centre's curriculum, you will explore the ways your academic experiences relate to major questions facing all of us: How can you take what you have learned in the classroom out into the world to make the world better? How does consideration of diversity affect our cultural narratives? How do issues of sustainability affect our everyday decisions? With its emphasis on breadth of knowledge and skills, Centre's curriculum is uniquely suited for preparing students to address complex global issues facing humanity in the 21st Century. You will take four courses explicitly designed to connect theory and practice; at least two of these courses will be experiential while two will engage directly with human diversity and environmental sustainability.

### **Experiential Learning**

The test of a Centre education is not simply how it exposes you to a wide variety of fields and disciplines; rather, its test will be your ability to apply your knowledge and skills to the consideration of real-life problems in the workplace, in your communities, and beyond. Experiential Learning courses will require you to actively engage with people, materials, and ideas with the aim of contributing to a greater endeavor.

Centre College offers many Experiential Learning opportunities that enable you to apply and extend the knowledge and skills you have developed in your curricular exploration. These courses are designed to help you put your theoretical knowledge into practice through academically rigorous, hands-on learning activities. All students will benefit when you bring what you learn

through such experiential activities into your other courses at Centre. All Experiential Learning courses will actively engage you in the process of learning so that you understand how your courses are relevant to innovation, application, and problem-solving. You will complete at least two courses from two of the following five areas: **Arts Engagement, Global Engagement, Community-Based Learning, Mentored Research, and Internships**, described below.

**Arts Engagement** courses allow you to practice skills and apply knowledge about the arts. You will create, perform, respond, and connect by applying principles, refining skills, and mastering techniques through projects in areas like Creative Writing, Music, Studio Art, and Theater. These courses develop your appreciation of artistic processes and the ability to take risks. *Consult the course listings for these opportunities.*

**Global Engagement** courses help you to explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from your own. In these courses you will explore the world as an interrelated system. You may earn credit for this category by participating in relevant study abroad, study away, or on-campus experiences. *Consult the Center for Global Citizenship and the course listings for these opportunities.*

**Community-Based Learning** courses introduce you to field-based learning experiences where students and community partners can support and learn from one another. These courses create unique opportunities for you to participate in, learn about, and serve wider communities beyond the college campus. *Look for Community-Based Learning opportunities marked in the course listings.*

**Mentored Research** let you take a more active role in your academic journey. These experiences lead you to make connections between key concepts and questions with active involvement in systematic investigation and research. Guided by a mentor, you will apply concepts, skills, and procedures common to a field of inquiry towards the goal of making an original contribution to the discipline. You will engage complex questions and use the relevant methods of inquiry to interrogate sources or evidence and draw informed conclusions. *Consult course listings and speak with professors in your chosen field about these opportunities.*

**Internships** allow you to connect skills and knowledge from the classroom to the world of work. Academic-credit internships (usually listed as INT 400 in the course catalogue) provide two levels of supervision: a Centre faculty member and an on-site supervisor. These INT 400 internships combine a substantive academic component with a significant career-related component and are available after you have completed your sophomore year. *Please consult the Center for Career and Professional Development for more information.*

## **Diversity**

A Centre education will help you develop and practice skills necessary for effective and respectful engagement within or among local, national, or global communities. These courses will center the experiences and outlooks of marginalized communities, and engage in critical analysis of the varied mechanisms through which individuals and communities are marginalized. Students will

explore ways in which these groups have creatively envisioned an equitable and just world as well as how they have responded and resisted as actors with agency.

For this requirement, you will complete one Diversity course which has significant goals and content related to living in a diverse and unequal world. Although other courses are likely to include conversations about diversity and equity, the Diversity requirement formalizes this expectation so that each student will take at least one course that focuses explicitly on the structural challenges and opportunities faced by particular individuals and groups. Your course will emphasize deep listening to a diversity of perspectives with humility and respect in order to develop an appreciation for the variety of lived experiences. The course will help students to identify behaviors, policies, and procedures that perpetuate marginalization and injustice, and explore ways in which these systems have been, and might be, transformed. Students will be encouraged to consider their own relationships to societal inequities and systemic oppression.

Diversity is the complex representation of factors such as ability, age, citizenship status, class, ethnicity, faith background, gender expression, gender identity, geographic region, national origin, neurodiversity, race, and sexual orientation that comprise individual and group expressions of identity. (These factors are listed alphabetically and not ranked.) Our curriculum will help you envision and build a world in which all groups and individuals are treated with dignity and respect. You may fulfill the Diversity requirement in any discipline because diversity comprises complex issues, and creating a more equitable world requires creative and inclusive interdisciplinary thinking. *Look for Diversity courses marked in the course listings.*

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is one of the core values of Centre College. Your professors will help ensure that you can help create both local and global environmental solutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond. At Centre, you will be introduced to new ways of thinking about environmental sustainability that highlight the interdependence of social, economic, and ecological relationships in our communities. A course focused on environmental sustainability will examine how individuals, communities, and global societies can meet their needs without compromising the interconnected environmental systems upon which future generations depend.

You will complete one Sustainability course that has significant goals and content related to environmental sustainability. In this course you will analyze your own choices and behavior in the context of environmental opportunities and constraints. Together, we will identify sustainable solutions for all communities, racial groups, countries, future generations, and the natural world. You may fulfill the Sustainability requirement in any discipline because sustainability is a complex problem and solutions will require creative and interdisciplinary thinking. *Look for Sustainability courses marked in the course listings.*

## **Interdisciplinary Capstone: Doctrina Lux Mentis III**

This capstone course will challenge you to work with students and faculty members across the College to think critically about and to propose solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. These interdisciplinary, upper-level courses taken by juniors and seniors require the application of knowledge and skills developed during your broad exploration of the Centre curriculum. You will join a group of student-scholars from across the College in this capstone, closing your Centre career by

returning to Centre's motto, *doctrina lux mentis*—learning is the light of the mind. This capstone experience will help you move on from Centre with confidence, preparing you to move from *Centre*, out.

## General Education Summary

Upon completion of the requirements and the attainment of a Bachelor's degree from Centre College, each graduate of the College will develop their skills in Cognition, Communication, Community, Connection, Creativity, and Critical Thinking:

1. Cognition: Develop strategies to evaluate the process of learning and thinking;
2. Communication: Effectively write, speak, and read using a variety of modes including numbers, images, and a second language;
3. Community: Respectfully engage with a range of diverse social and ecological communities;
4. Connection: Ask questions and solve problems in ways that connect different academic disciplines and perspectives;
5. Creativity: Think and act in innovative and creative ways;
6. Critical Thinking: Use knowledge and skills to analyze your world and to solve complex problems.

Doctrina Lux Mentis 110 & 210	2 courses; 6 credit hours
Second Language	1-2 courses; 3-8 credit hours
Mathematics*	1 course; 3 credit hours
Arts and Humanities	2 courses; 6 credit hours
Social Studies	2 courses; 6 credit hours
Science and Math	2 courses; 7-8 credit hours
Diversity	1 course; 0-4 credit hours
Sustainability	1 course; 0-4 credit hours
Experiential Learning	2 courses; 4-8 credit hours
Interdisciplinary Capstone	1 course; 3 credit hours
<b>TOTAL</b> (for General Education)	<b>15-17 courses; 38-56 credit hours</b>
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION</b> (General Education + Major + electives)	<b>110 credit hours</b>

\*Completion of a college-level course prior to matriculation can fulfill this requirement.