Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences
Core Curriculum
Preparation for Success

The Core Curriculum of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) establishes common goals that, along with a major and minor specialization, prepare Arts and Sciences graduates for successful lives and careers built on a critical understanding of the natural environment, human behavior, and the individual’s role in diverse societies. Conversant with multiple intellectual traditions, modes of analysis, and schools of thought, and armed with well-developed communication and reasoning skills, the school’s graduates are prepared to meet any challenge!

The innovative Core Curriculum cultivates and nurtures curiosity by emphasizing the process of inquiry and the creation of knowledge through debate, research, and scholarship. The Core Curriculum incorporates Arts and Sciences students into the research mission of our great university and equips them with the intellectual resources required for excellence in meeting the rapidly transforming challenges of the 21st century.
Flexibility to Adapt to Changing Workplace Demands

“Worker flexibility is key given the dynamic nature of the U.S. labor market and ongoing technological change. In 2003, for example, a quarter of American workers were in jobs that were not even listed among the Census Bureau’s Occupation codes in 1967, and technological change has only accelerated since then.”


Liberal Arts and Sciences for the 21st Century

The Core Curriculum is based on the learning goals that form the core of a modern liberal arts and sciences education at a leading 21st century public research university and that are sought after by graduate programs and employers across occupations and professions. The goals derive from three main areas of focus: 21st Century Challenges, Areas of Inquiry, and Cognitive Skills and Processes.

The learning goals clearly articulate what students are able to do upon completion of the Core, incorporating the reasons for these requirements right into the requirements themselves. These Core learning goals open the door to new worlds of intellectual adventure, to advanced study in majors, and to success in a wide variety of postgraduate programs and careers.

Achievement of these learning goals equips our students not just to get a first job, but to excel in that job, advance in that career, and change careers as the demands of the 21st century continue to evolve. These goals prepare students to face the public and private challenges of local and global citizenship in the 21st century and develop habits of questioning the known and exploring the unknown. At the same time, these goals push students to examine not just “what” they want to be, but more importantly, “who” they want to be by discovering their values, talents, and passions.
Three Areas of Focus: The School of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum

The goals for each focus area in the Core Curriculum complement and reinforce each other and permeate all of the school’s courses and fields of study. The Core Curriculum provides a solid catalyst for excellence in completing major, minor, and elective credits where the student will develop advanced skills in many of these Core goals. Progress in completing the Core is measured not by the number of courses taken, but by the range and number of goals achieved in courses specially designed to meet Core goals.

Defined in terms of learning goals, the innovative Core Curriculum is different from the traditional model of general education distribution requirements that students at other schools fulfill by taking introductory courses in a range of majors. Each goal represents a particular type of critical thinking and problem solving employed in the arts and sciences.
How Do We Know the Core Works?

Our Commitment to a Culture of Evidence.

In the School of Arts and Sciences, we don’t just require students to take courses and assume they achieve these goals. Only a special, limited group of courses are certified as meeting Core Curriculum goals. These courses put specific Core Curriculum goals front and center in their course design and regularly assess student achievement of these Core goals using state-of-the-art authentic assessment measures.

Our faculty members are constantly improving their Core courses to better meet these goals. Only courses that have committed to this process are certified as Core courses. This is why some particular courses are certified while other courses that may seem to have similar or analogous foci are not. This is your assurance that SAS students develop the capabilities the Core promises.

Which Courses Should I Take?

Only courses certified for the Core can be used to fulfill the Core. Many courses are certified for multiple goals, and students may use them to satisfy multiple goals. For example, students may use any of our Signature Courses (see page 9) to meet 21st Century Challenges goals and some Areas of Inquiry goals, as well as, in some cases, Cognitive Skills and Processes goals.

Students can find an online list of certified courses by visiting the School of Arts and Sciences’ Office of Academic Services page at sasundergrad.rutgers.edu.

As students make Core Curriculum choices from the three areas of focus, they should consider the following:

- A single course may meet multiple goals.
- Completion of the Core does not require a specific number of courses, but generally students will complete the Core in 10 to 14 courses.
- Courses used for the Core often will also count toward a student’s major or minor, but the Core is also intentionally structured to ensure that students get a broader context and set of cognitive skills in which to situate their major.
- Fulfilling the Core early involves students in a variety of areas of study from which they may come to choose a major and a minor.
- Students use an online degree audit program called “Degree Navigator” to track their progress in the Core.
- Our staff of academic advisers is always available for individual guidance.

The Core Curriculum opens the door to advanced study in a wide range of programs—Arts and Sciences students can choose from over 70 majors across the life sciences, the physical and mathematical sciences, the humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, and international studies.

The Core learning goals complement and reinforce each other, and permeate all of the courses and programs available to our students. As students move forward completing their major, minor, and elective credits, they develop advanced skills in many of these learning goals.

Find information about majors and minors open to Arts and Sciences students at sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/majors
About 21st Century Challenges

The Core Curriculum begins with four learning goals that bring the diverse and rich intellectual heritage of the liberal arts and sciences to bear on the 21st Century Challenges our graduates will face as global citizens and leaders: appreciating human difference, employing multiple disciplinary approaches, understanding the role of science and technology, and grappling with questions of social justice. Students meet these goals in courses that join multidisciplinary scholarship with the most pressing issues of the day. Many of the Signature Courses—specially designed courses of grand intellectual sweep focused on questions of lasting importance and taught by leading scholar-teachers—meet these goals and bring students and faculty together in communities of common interest and experience.

Goals: 21st Century Challenges

21st Century Challenges [21C]

Students take two courses (≥6 credits) that meet at least two of these four goals.

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experiences of and perspectives on the world.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Analyze the relationship that science and technology have to a contemporary social issue.
- Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.

See page 9 to learn more about Signature Courses.
About Areas of Inquiry

By emphasizing the ability to critically examine the natural environment, human behavior, and the individual’s role in society, the Core learning goals prepare the school’s students to be creative problem solvers, strong leaders, and reflective individuals in whatever life path they choose. The Core Curriculum’s Areas of Inquiry learning goals engage students with critical analysis in the arts and sciences throughout history and in our faculty’s cutting-edge research. These goals stretch the boundaries of traditional academic disciplines by leading students back to those questions that predate the artificial division of knowledge into distinct majors and minors.

Goals: Areas of Inquiry

Natural Sciences [NS], Social [SCL] and Historical [HST] Analysis, Arts and Humanities [AH]

Natural Sciences [NS]
Students take two courses (≥6 credits) meeting the first goal and the second and/or third.

- Understand and apply basic principles and concepts in the physical or biological sciences.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in scientific analysis.
- Identify and critically assess ethical and societal issues in science.
Social [SCL] and Historical [HST] Analysis

Students will meet at least one of these goals in the process of taking the Historical Analysis and Social Analysis courses, all of which put at least one of these three goals front and center:

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- Identify and critically assess ethical issues in social science and history.

Historical Analysis [HST]

Students take one course (≥3 credits) meeting at least one of these two goals.

- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.

Social Analysis [SCL]

Students take one course (≥3 credits) meeting at least one of these two goals.

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

Arts and Humanities [AH]

Students take two courses (≥6 credits) meeting at least two of these four goals.

- Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.
- Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.
- Understand the nature of human languages and their speakers.
- Engage critically in the process of creative expression.

From African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures to Women’s and Gender Studies, there are courses in over 45 subject areas certified as meeting various Core Curriculum goals.
About Cognitive Skills and Processes

The Core Curriculum equips students with the Cognitive Skills and Processes that are central to lifelong learning and participation in the world of ideas and the corridors of power. Through the Core, our students hone their writing and communication skills and develop their quantitative and formal reasoning skills. And students delve behind facile assumptions to assess the many conduits of information (and misinformation) and their relationship to knowledge in the 21st century information economy.

Goals: Cognitive Skills and Processes

Writing and Communication [WC], Quantitative and Formal Reasoning [QQ, QR], Information Technology and Research [ITR]

Writing and Communication [WC]

Students take three courses (≥9 credits) meeting all goals.

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.
Quantitative and Formal Reasoning [QQ, QR]
Students take two courses (≥6 credits) meeting both goals.
- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information.
- Apply effective and efficient mathematical or other formal processes to reason and to solve problems.

Information Technology and Research [ITR]
Students take one course (≥3 credits) meeting at least one of these three goals.
- Employ current technologies to access information, to conduct research, and to communicate findings.
- Analyze and critically assess information from traditional and emergent technologies.
- Understand the principles that underlie information systems.

How Courses Meet Multiple Goals

The Signature Courses Example
School of Arts and Sciences Signature Courses—foundational courses covering engaging topics of grand intellectual sweep and enduring importance—exemplify how courses can fulfill multiple Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum goals. Signature Courses are designed and taught by our renowned scholars and scientists who are not only recognized for their specialized research but are also eloquent and demanding award-winning teachers. Each course is made up of a combination of capacious lectures by faculty and small discussion sections led by graduate students from our nationally ranked graduate programs. They establish a common basis for intellectual exchange and define us as the School of Arts and Sciences community of students and scholars working together. Learn more at sas.rutgers.edu/signature.

A Sampling of Signature Courses
The courses listed here represent just a sampling of the dozen different Signature Courses the School of Arts and Sciences offers in the fall and spring semesters.

Energy and Climate Change
Core: 21C, NS
Wondering what the “energy” problem is all about? Here is your chance to learn what energy is, where it comes from, how we make it, how we use it, and how we will have to change the way we make it in the coming decades. “Energy and Climate Change” introduces non-science majors to science and the scientific method in the context of one of the most critical challenges facing us today. The course surveys climatology, physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, economics, and public policy as they relate to energy and sustainability considered from a global perspective.

Global East Asia
Core: 21C, HST, SCL
It touches your life every day, yet how much do you really know about East Asia—home to three of today’s most powerful nations and over a fifth of the world’s population? China, Korea, and Japan are major economic, political, and cultural players in an increasingly global 21st century. At the same time, the push for globalization within East Asia is being met with an equally powerful resurgence of nationalism and regionalism. How do social, cultural, and political narratives that posit enduring patterns influence the future of the East Asian peoples? This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in anthropology, area studies, Asian languages, business, economics, geography, history, journalism and media studies, political science, public policy, religion, sociology, and women’s and gender studies.

Normality and Abnormality
Core: 21C, SCL, WCo
Human conceptions of normality and abnormality pervade social life, shaping expectations about physical appearance, eating habits, sexuality, gender, mental illness, and happiness, among other things. Individuals use ideas about what is normal and abnormal to judge and modify their own behavior. And, so does society. But, what is normal? How do we know? And, is normal something worth being? This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in anthropology, area studies, business, criminal justice, history, life sciences or premedicine, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, studies of race and ethnicity, and women’s and gender studies.
Employers endorse broad learning as essential to long-term career success. In national surveys of business and nonprofit leaders, commissioned by the AACU from Hart Research Associates, it has consistently been found that “employers overwhelmingly endorse broad learning and cross-cutting skills as the best preparation for long-term career success.” Findings of the 2015 report include:

- When hiring recent graduates, employers place the greatest priority on a demonstrated proficiency in skills and knowledge that cuts across majors. Of all the outcome areas tested, written and oral communication, teamwork skills, ethical decision making, critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings are the most highly valued by employers.
- Confirming findings from four previous national surveys extending back to 2006, employers overwhelmingly endorse broad learning and cross-cutting skills as the best preparation for long-term career success. When asked in the latest survey, only 15 percent chose field-specific learning alone as the best preparation for long-term success.

Employer Priorities for Most Important College Learning Outcomes

- Problem solving in diverse settings (96%)
- Knowledge and understanding of democratic institutions and values (87%)
- Civic knowledge, skills, and judgment essential for contributing to the community and to our democratic society (86%)
- Oral communication (85%)
- Teamwork skills in diverse groups (83%)
- Written communication (82%)
- Ethical judgment and decision making (81%)
- Critical thinking and analytic reasoning (81%)
- Applied knowledge in real-world settings (80%)
- Broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences (78%)
- Intercultural skills and understanding of societies and cultures outside the US (78%)
- Complex problem solving (70%)
- Information literacy (68%)
- Innovation and creativity (65%)
- Technological skills (60%)
- Quantitative reasoning (56%)

Another survey of a wide range of employers reported that many of the skills and qualities SAS students will develop through the Core Curriculum are very important or extremely important in hiring decisions.

- Communication skills (verbal and written)
- Analytical skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Flexibility/adaptability

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Learn More: careerservices.rutgers.edu
Checklist: SAS Core Curriculum

Students use an online degree audit program called “Degree Navigator” to track their progress in the Core. Our staff of academic advisers is always available for individual guidance. Upon completion of the SAS Core Curriculum, students will have developed competencies in the goals below.

21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES

(≥6 credits) Students will meet two goals. [21C]

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experiences of and perspectives on the world.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Analyze the relationship that science and technology have to a contemporary social issue.
- Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.

Arts and Humanities (≥6 credits) Students must meet two goals. [AH]

- Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.
- Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.
- Understand the nature of human languages and their speakers.
- Engage critically in the process of creative expression.

Cognitive Skills and Processes

Writing and Communication (≥9 credits: 355:101; one WC; and one WCd.) Students will meet all goals. [WC]

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision. [WC]
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry. [WCd]
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Quantitative and Formal Reasoning (≥6 credits or ≥3 plus placement out of ≥3) Students must meet two goals. [QQ, QR]

- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information. [QQ]
- Apply effective and efficient mathematical or other formal processes to reason and to solve problems. [QR]

Information Technology and Research (≥3 credits) Students must meet one goal. [ITR]

- Employ current technologies to access information, to conduct research, and to communicate findings.
- Analyze and critically assess information from traditional and emergent technologies.
- Understand the principles that underlie information systems.

Areas of Inquiry

Natural Sciences (≥6 credits) All courses meet the first goal and at least one other. Students must meet two goals. [NS]

- Understand and apply basic principles and concepts in the physical or biological sciences.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in scientific analysis.
- Identify and critically assess ethical and societal issues in science.

Social [SCL] and Historical [HST] Analysis All SCL and HST courses meet at least one of the first three goals.

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- Identify and critically assess ethical issues in social science and history.

Historical Analysis (≥3 credits) Students must meet one goal. [HST]

- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.

Social Analysis (≥3 credits) Students must meet one goal. [SCL]

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

A single course may be used to meet multiple goals. All courses must be credit-bearing, graded courses certified by the SAS faculty as meeting core goals (e.g., I credit courses cannot be used to meet goals, nor can pass/no credit courses). Generally, students will need to take 10-14 courses to complete the Core, some of which may also fulfill major or minor requirements.
Departments and Degree-Granting Programs

The Core Curriculum learning goals complement and reinforce each other and permeate all the courses and programs available to our students.

As students move forward through all their degree requirements—their major, minor, and elective credits—they develop advanced skills in many of these learning goals.

The Core Curriculum opens the door to over 70 majors and a comprehensive range of options offered by these Arts and Sciences programs and departments:

African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures
Africana Studies
American Studies
Anthropology
Art History
Asian Languages and Cultures
Biological Sciences
Cell Biology and Neuroscience
Chemistry and Chemical Biology
Classics
Comparative Literature
Computer Science
Criminal Justice
Earth and Planetary Sciences
Economics
English
European Studies
Exercise Science and Sport Studies
French
Genetics
Geography
Germanic, Russian, and East European Languages and Literatures
History
Italian
Jewish Studies
Latin American Studies
Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies
Linguistics
Mathematics
Medieval Studies
Middle Eastern Studies
Molecular Biology and Biochemistry
Philosophy
Physics and Astronomy
Political Science
Psychology
Religion
Sociology
Spanish and Portuguese
Statistics and Biostatistics
Women’s and Gender Studies

Find information about majors and minors open to Arts and Sciences students at sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/majors
About the School of Arts and Sciences

The School of Arts and Sciences is the academic heart and soul of Rutgers University–New Brunswick, providing students with a comprehensive liberal arts undergraduate education of extraordinary breadth and depth. Students acquire the tools and knowledge necessary to pursue a wide variety of career and life paths and equipping them with the intellectual and practical skills to successfully meet the rapidly changing demands of the 21st century. The School of Arts and Sciences combines superb teaching with world-class research in an environment of remarkable cultural diversity.

Students fashion an undergraduate course of study that combines our bold Core Curriculum with deeper explorations of particular areas of interest through study in a major, a minor, and other elective courses. The School of Arts and Sciences is home to more than 40 academic departments ranging from the biological and physical sciences to the humanities, mathematics, and the social and behavioral sciences. Our departments, centers, and interdisciplinary programs offer more than 70 majors and more than 80 minors, providing multiple opportunities for students to explore and understand our increasingly diverse world. Students study and actively join with our world-class research faculty in following their curiosity to the creation of new knowledge and understandings of the natural world and human behavior, belief, culture, and society.

The School of Arts and Sciences’ exciting Core Curriculum embodies our belief in and aspirations for our diverse and growing student body and reflects the mission of Rutgers University as a comprehensive public research university for the 21st century.

School of Arts and Sciences
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RU-1415-0242/10M

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