

# THEMES OF THE TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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## First Year Foundations Theme

Facilitates a broad understanding of the richness inherent in humans and their relationships. Orients students to higher education, builds communication skills, enhances creative thought and expression, promotes holistic well-being, and increases understanding of human nature and Western society. The integration of these facets yields whole and healthy persons.

### **Introduction to Wellbeing ( GES 140)**

Explores many of the dimensions that influence wellbeing: including Spiritual, Cognitive, Emotional, Physical, Relational, and Meaning. Examines the dynamic interconnection between the dimensions. Students integrate foundational knowledge, experiences, and strategies to become successful whole and holy individuals not only in college but also throughout adult life.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

Must be taken at Bethel. May not be transferred to Bethel.

### **Christianity and Western Culture ( GES 130)**

Seeks to help students understand the key movements that have influenced the lives of people in Europe and North America up through the Enlightenment. Students read with insight and empathy the writings and lives of those who have influenced the course of world societies. Prepares students to appreciate and evaluate the diverse ways in which Christians have interacted with Western culture by shaping, absorbing, and criticizing the culture of the West.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

Must be taken at Bethel. May not be transferred to Bethel.

### **Inquiry Writing Seminar ( GES 160)**

While exploring a specific topic of interest, students develop and understand the meaning and value of a liberal arts education in the Christian tradition. The seminar promotes the establishment of community among students, faculty, and varying aspects of student life. The seminar provides students with instruction and practice in writing as well as in preparing and delivering oral presentations. Supplemental assignments and activities outside the traditional classroom are required.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

#### **Common Necessary Features**

- Academic research and writing
- Practice of the writing process (i.e., planning, drafting, revision, editing)
- Research paper, including correct documentation, of seven or more pages of text
- Planning and delivery of at least two oral presentations

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

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*NOTE: GES 160 Inquiry Writing Seminar includes both speaking and writing components. GES 160 can be fulfilled by transferring in courses that fulfill the writing component (GES161 Inquiry: Writing) and the speaking component (GES162 Inquiry: Speaking). Students may also transfer a course that meets the writing component (GES161 Inquiry: Writing) and take one of the following Speaking courses: COM 110 Basic Communication, COM 324 Professional and Technical Communication, COM 386 Advanced Public Speaking, or COM 387 Speaking in Ministry Contexts at Bethel.*

### **Introduction to the Creative Arts ( GES 125)**

Introduces the creative arts and highlights their crucial role in human experience. Art forms included each semester are chosen from music, visual arts, theater, dance, literature, or film. Creative works spanning stylistic, social, and historical contexts are examined in light of such issues as relationships, religion, death/despair, and humor (and abstraction). Students experience and critically interact with creative works and reflect on them from a Christian worldview, with the goal of developing literacy in artistic language as a tool for exploration and aesthetic interpretation and evaluation.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Study of one or more art form(s)
- Skills in evaluating art work
- Vocabulary to communicate about art

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

## **Artistic Experience Theme**

### **Artistic Experience - Category of Courses (A)**

Students gain hands-on experience with creating/performing (engaging with materials, instruments, creative writing, etc.) that is planned, supervised, and evaluated by a faculty member. An in-studio experience/performance (individual or group) is critiqued in some form. The Artistic Experience course may be taken before, during, or after GES 125 *Introduction to the Creative Arts* or GES 145, GES 147, and GES 149 *Western Humanity in Christian Perspective I, II, & III*.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Hands on artistic experience (dance, theatre, art, music)
- Planned, supervised, and evaluated by a faculty member
- Critique of art form

**Transfer Course Level:** 100-300 level

**Transfer Course Credits:** 0-4

## **Biblical Foundations Theme**

Biblical and theological competence consists of attaining scriptural knowledge, understanding theology based on scripture, and responding to new situations in an authentically Christian manner. Such competence requires a foundational grasp of the Bible and theology, together with the skills for understanding and interpreting the Bible and Christian faith for new situations.

### **Introduction to the Bible ( BIB 101)**

Traces the journey of God's people from Abraham and Sarah through the New Testament church, highlighting the unifying self-disclosure of God in the various cultures and types of writing of the Old and New Testament. A holistic approach is used to introduce students to both historical and thematic content as well as broad, but basic, exegetical principles.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- God's people from Abraham and Sarah through the New Testament church
- God as seen in and communicated through various cultures and types of writing in the Old and New Testament
- Introduction to the historical context of the Bible
- Introduction to the theological context of the Bible

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

**Residency Requirement:** At least one course in the Biblical Foundations Theme must be taken at Bethel

### **Christian Theology ( THE 201)**

Investigates central themes of the Christian faith from a primarily systematic perspective. These themes are discussed both individually and in terms of the role each plays in worldview formation. Topics include Scripture (inspiration and inerrancy), God (Trinity), the person and work of Jesus Christ (incarnation and atonement), salvation (justification and sanctification), and last things (heaven and hell). Emphasis is placed on the unity and diversity of theological beliefs within Christianity, both past and present, and on the interrelationships between theological understanding, culture, and discipleship.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Study the essentials of Christian Theology
- Theology is taught primarily from a systematic perspective
- Unity and diversity of theological beliefs

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

**Residency Requirement:** At least one course in the Biblical Foundations Theme must be taken at Bethel

## **Math, Science, and Technology Theme**

Introduces students to the basic concepts, processes, ways of thinking, and applications in math and natural science, and promotes an understanding of central issues in the impacts of science and technology on society.

### **Mathematics - Category of Courses (M)**

Introduces foundational mathematical concepts and reviews and reinforces quantitative skills. Demonstrates pure mathematics as the foundation for the models in use. Students apply appropriate mathematical models and techniques to real-life quantitative problems in order to develop problem-solving skills. Topics addressed include (a) proportional thinking, with ratios, percentages, and decimals, (b) graphs and tables that illustrate trends, rates of change, slopes, and continuous and

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discrete data, (c) single variable problems, simple algebraic expressions with one unknown, and (d) elementary data analysis, such as unit and unit conversion, significant figures, and basic probability.

### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Proportional thinking (ratios, percentages, decimals graphs and tables) that illustrate single variable problems and data analysis
- Application of math knowledge and concepts to real world problems from more than one discipline
- Development of problem solving skills

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

### **Laboratory Science - Category of Courses (D)**

Introduces the process and concepts of modern science by focusing on one specific discipline. Provides a broad perspective on scientifically acquired knowledge, inductive methods, and experimental procedures. Provides a basis for considering implications for Christian stewardship of the natural world. Laboratory forms a central experiential component of each course, and the analytical procedures used there build and reinforce the student's mathematical competence.

### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Concepts and process of modern science focused on one discipline
- Relate discipline to modern life
- Apply methods in investigating, quantifying, and reasoning from scientific evidence
- Lab required

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

### **Science, Technology, and Society - Category of Courses (K)**

Addresses the linkage of science and technology with other aspects of contemporary society and the natural environment. Focuses on a technological issue that poses current and emerging choices and rests on a body of scientific understanding. At least one-third of the course addresses the scientific and technological content, and at least one-third integrates it with contemporary issues. Addresses the means and criteria by which society decides how to use and regulate the technology. Gives attention to historical perspectives, the relevant ethical and theological principles, and the mandates for Christian stewardship in response to future challenges. Applies and reinforces at least one of the topics of the mathematics category description.

### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Links science and technology with contemporary society
- Focuses on technological issues
- At least 1/3 of course addresses scientific and technological context
- At least 1/3 of course integrates science with contemporary issues

- Applies and reinforces at least one mathematical concept/skill
- Gives attention to historical perspective

**Transfer Course Level:** 200 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

## Cultural Intelligence Theme

Students explore and engage diverse cultures using a variety of methods and approaches. They build skills to communicate in a foreign language, develop a deeper understanding of modern American society and other cultures, and analyze systems based upon these diverse cultures.

### Second Language - Category of Courses (S)

Equips students to understand and communicate with people of other cultures at the Novice-High level on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency scale. In the case of ancient languages that are taught at Bethel, students are able to use the language to engage the ideas of those cultures. Documented proficiency in other languages not offered at Bethel serves to meet the requirement of this category. Learning experiences are focused on the use of the language for communication purposes within a broader cultural context. Provides opportunities for students to compare, contrast, and analyze their culture with other cultures.

#### TRANSFER INFORMATION:

**Common Necessary Features:** (*minimum content & skills required for transfer courses*)

- Students use language for communication
- Learn aspects of culture(s)
- Understand grammatical structures at basic level (grammar is not the only focus)
- Equivalent of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of first language at the college level (e.g. Elementary, Introductory, Beginning) or a language course at a higher level

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

**Students may fulfill Bethel's language requirement by:**

1. Completing the second semester of the first year of a (beginning or introductory) college-level language class or higher with a passing grade at Bethel University (e.g., SPA 102S *Introductory Spanish II*).
2. Completing the second semester of a first-year (introductory or beginning) college-level language class or higher with a grade of a C or higher at another college/university (any language other than English).
3. Heritage and native speakers of Spanish, Spanish Immersion students, or students with AP or CLEP credit, who are placed and successfully complete SPA 340U will receive credit for SPA 101, SPA 102S, SPA 201S, and SPA 202UZ/SPA 202SU .
4. Heritage and native speakers of languages other than Spanish will be given 8 credits for meeting the outcomes of the S-tag General Education course requirement. The Language Placement Coordinator will assess the students' proficiency and determine their eligibility for this credit.

### Cross-cultural Experience - Category of Courses (Z)

Students experience an off-campus person-to-person (ideally one-on-one) intercultural engagement, of at least 25 hours with a specific cultural group that supports the development of awareness of one's

own culture and the culture with which the student is interacting. (Culture can be defined as the values, beliefs, and behaviors of a group.) Students develop an increased understanding of the complexity and tension cultural difference has on interaction with others. Successful-Z-tag outcomes include students being able to identify and describe: (a) some behaviors, beliefs, and values of their own culture and the culture they are interacting with; (b) features of subgroups (e.g., class, gender, socioeconomic class, religion, etc.) within these cultures; and (c) the effect of their own cultural behavior, beliefs, and values on interactions with those from the other culture. Students learn methods of guided reflection and analysis that facilitate processing experiences of difference. The Z-tag experience places students in an experiential person-to-person learning environment (domestic or abroad) that includes faculty guided pre-experience preparation and post-experience processing. This requirement can be met by taking a course designated with a Z-tag, participating in an approved, non-credit experience, or by spending an approved semester abroad.

The Cross-cultural Experience requirement can be met by passing an approved cross-cultural course indicated by a Z in the course number, completing a semester abroad while a student at Bethel, or completing an approved non-credit experience when undertaken in conjunction with Bethel's pre and post cross-cultural experience courses (GES 101 and GES 102Z). Registration in GES 101 is required the semester before the experience. Approval of the experience takes place in GES 101. However, students may consult with faculty teaching GES 101 prior to registering for the class to discuss an experience they are considering proposing for this option. Registration in GES 102Z is required the semester after the experience. These courses are described in the Academic Information section of this catalog under *General Education*. Courses with a Z in their number can be found in the course listings of many different academic departments.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

##### **Common Necessary Features:** (*minimum content & skills required for transfer courses*)

- Must be part of a credit bearing course. Regular transfer policies apply (e.g. grade of C or better, cannot be S/U)
- Minimum 25 hours person to person (preferably one on one) with someone from another culture
- Develops awareness of one's own culture
- Identification of values, beliefs, behaviors of a culture different from one's own
- Pre-experience preparation
- Guided reflection
- Method for understanding another culture
- Post-experience processing

##### **Additional transfer information:**

- Students may use a semester abroad program completed at another accredited college or university.
- Students who have completed YWAM's Discipleship Training School may use this experience to fulfill the Cross-cultural Experience (Z) requirement.
- Students may not use a previous experience, such as a missions trip, that was not taken for credit at another accredited college or university for the Z-tag requirement.
- Students may transfer in a college course they have taken that includes the elements above, passed with a grade of C or better, and for which they have received college credit.
- Military Veterans may fulfill the Cross-cultural Experience (Z) course requirement using their overseas assignment and successfully completing GES 102Z: *Post-intercultural Engagement Processing*.

### **Contemporary Western Life and Thought - Category of Courses (L)**

The main focus of courses in this category is exploring contemporary American life, culture, and thought within the broad context of Western culture and thought. The courses build on the critical historical events, persons, movements, institutions, and world views of the Enlightenment that have had phenomenal impact on the direction and evolution of Western life and culture. They address the question, "What does it mean to live in a Western culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, given the influences of the past 200 years?" Courses explore some of the key historical and contemporary persons, events, movements, institutions, and worldviews that have shaped Western culture, with significant emphasis on the United States. While they are taught primarily from the perspective of one academic discipline, they use readings, materials, and insights from at least three disciplines. Although Contemporary Western Life and Thought (L courses) might explore America's European heritage, their core emphasis should be the unique nature of the American experience.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Contemporary American Life (last 200 years) (No more than 1/3 of course may be about historical periods prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century)
- Study of influence of last 200 years on life today
- Core emphasis of the course is the unique nature of the American experience

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

### **World Cultures - Category of Courses (U)**

Focuses primarily on one historical or contemporary cultural group whose ways of thinking and living are substantially different than the dominant cultures of Europe and North America. Generally this is an Asian, African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, or Native American culture. The culture's religious/philosophical traditions, economic and political structures, and socio-cultural frameworks are examined, along with the various influences that have acted upon the culture's history and development. Writings by and about the lives of those who have influenced the course of contemporary cultures and societies are included.

#### **TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** *(minimum content & skills required for transfer courses)*

- Study of one cultural group
- Cultural group, such as Asian, African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, or Native American, different from the dominant culture in the US or Europe
- Religious/philosophical, economic/political and sociocultural frameworks
- Writings by and about the lives of people of the culture

**Transfer Course Level:** 100 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

### **Comparative Systems - Category of Courses (G)**

Compares and contrasts how societies in their large and small-scale manifestation develop mechanisms and strategies for dealing with numerous fundamental problems those individuals, groups, and institutions must resolve in order to progressively reproduce themselves. Engages students in the comparative examination of ideas, themes, processes, structures, institutions, or contemporary social, political, economic, religious, national, or international issues. Focuses on at least two distinctly different units of analysis, regions, or historical epochs. Deliberate attention is paid

to the impact on different groups of the subject matter under consideration in a particular social and historical context. Students interact with “voices” (readings, materials, and insights) from the societies, regions, or the historical epoch being studied.

**TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

**Common Necessary Features:** (*minimum content & skills required for transfer courses*)

- Compares and contrasts societies or compares culture and subculture
- Writing demonstrating synthesis of perspectives

**Transfer Course Level:** 200 or higher

**Transfer Course Credits:** 3 or more

## Modular and Integrated Options for First- and Second-Year Courses

Bethel offers two options for completing some of the first- and second-year General Education requirements in the Personal Development, Biblical Foundations, and Global Perspective themes.

### Option 1: Modular

Courses offered in the Modular option are described in the *Academic Programs* section, under General Studies (<https://catalog.bethel.edu/academic-programs/college-of-arts-sciences-and-education/undergraduate-programs/general-studies/>). GES 125 and GES 130 are taught by an interdisciplinary team of faculty, introducing students to Western cultural heritage and the fine arts. Lectures are supplemented by small-group discussions in both classes. Understanding and appreciation of the arts are enhanced through visits to galleries and attendance at concerts and plays. GES 160 *Inquiry Writing Seminar* is designed to introduce students to researching and writing in the college setting.

### Option 2: The Humanities Program (Integrated)

The three-course sequence emphasizes in-depth reading, discussion, and analysis of texts and works of art. Students experience literature, theology, philosophy, music, theater, and art in historical context. They learn the foundations of theology and see how Christians have shaped and responded to Western culture. The three-course sequence must be taken in order. They replace the three courses in the First Year Foundations Category of Bethel's General Education Program: GES 160 *Inquiry Writing Seminar*, GES 125 *Introduction to the Creative Arts*, and GES 130 *Christianity and Western Culture*. Courses in the Humanities Program are described in the *Academic Programs* section of this catalog under *General Studies* (GES 145, GES 147, and GES 149).

**TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

Because of the integrated nature of the Humanities Program, these courses may not be transferred to Bethel without the permission of the Humanities Program Director.

## Senior Capstone

### Contemporary Christian Issues - Category of Courses (P)

Explores selected topics that challenge Christians to make personal and collective choices in light of their Christian values, education and personal experience. Emphasizes deeper levels of self-understanding or a sharpened sense of some of the complex issues present in our contemporary society. The primary goals are to cultivate holistic and biblically based views of oneself and the world and to facilitate ethical decision-making when facing these issues. Students explore alternative Christian worldviews that can define and guide decision-making and/or developing oneself. They examine a theme pertaining to one's personhood and/or relationship to a facet of contemporary



society in order to personalize and integrate varied approaches to that issue as part of the process of formulating a personal ethic.

**TRANSFER INFORMATION:**

Must be taken at Bethel. May not be transferred to Bethel.