PILLARS OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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

Introduction to the Liberal Arts
Introduces students to a liberal arts education at Bethel as a foundation for scholarship, leadership, and service in a changing world. Orient students to campus resources related to academics and encourages the development of personal, academic, and relationship skills needed to be a successful college student.

College Writing
Focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary for successful college-level academic research and writing. Emphasizes writing as a process that includes planning/prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing, and affords multiple experiences of the process. Topics include thesis formulation, development, and support; conventions of writing (grammar, usage, and mechanics); ownership of information and creative work (issues of plagiarism, copyright, and ethical management of information); and information literacy competencies. Students are required to perform in-depth research that involves gathering, reading, and evaluating information and to write a formal research paper that synthesizes information from a variety of properly documented sources.

Nature of Persons # Category of Courses (N)
Explores human nature via a person’s relationship to God, others, and the world, and examines how these different aspects of human nature are interconnected. Topics include issues of personal identity and development that are of concern to students as they enter college. Examines the crucial link between personal maturity and the activities of immediate social groups, aiding the student both in establishing a healthy self-identity and cooperating effectively with others. Students consider ways that wholeness contributes to Christian growth and service.

Introduction to the Creative Arts
Introduces the creative arts and highlights their crucial role in human experience. Art forms included each semester are chosen from music, visual arts, theatre, 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. 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.

Physical Wellness for Life
Addresses a variety of physical aspects of the human person and how they relate to one’s overall well-being and lifelong personal stewardship. Contemporary issues related to physical well-being, such as drugs, alcohol, nutrition, sleep, and exercise, are discussed, as well as the relationship between personal health-related lifestyle choices and responsibility to others. About one-third of each course includes physical activity. Students are encouraged to develop and practice personal strategies for physical well-being through exercise and other means.

Leisure and Lifetime Sport # Category of Courses (Q)
Requires participation in a lifetime/leisure sport intended to expand students’ exposure to movement, enjoyment of physical activity, and stewardship of the body through physical activity. Concentrated time participating in lifetime/leisure sport is required, along with selected readings and exam(s). Topics include understanding of movement and sport rules and strategies.

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 may be taken before, during, or after Introduction to the Creative Arts or Western Humanity in Christian Perspective I-II.

Biblical Foundations Pillar
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
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 Testaments. A holistic approach is used to introduce students to both historical and thematic content as well as broad, but basic, exegetical principles.

Christian Theology
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.

**Interpreting Biblical Themes # Category of Courses (J)**
Investigates a significant biblical theme in a manner that emphasizes the development of exegetical skills, the use of interpretive tools, and the hermeneutical task of moving from the situation(s) and worldview(s) in which the writings are expressed to those in which the reader makes application. The chosen theme must have contemporary relevance, span both the Old and New Testaments, and be found in at least two literary genres in each testament. Students gain “hands-on” experience in research, interpretation, application, and written communication through the writing of a major exegesis paper.

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

**Mathematics # Category of Courses (M)**
Introduces foundational mathematical concepts; 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 discrete data; (c) single variable problems, simple algebraic expressions with one unknown; and (d) elementary data analysis, such as unit and unit conversion, data reliability and meaning, significant figures, and basic probability.

**Lab 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. Laboratory forms a central experiential component of each course, and the analytical procedures used there build and reinforce the student's mathematical competence. Provides a basis for considering implications for Christian stewardship of the natural world.

**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.

**Global Perspectives Pillar**
Students first explore Western traditions and their Christian influences, and build the skills to communicate in a foreign language. They move on to a deeper understanding of modern American and European cultures. This background provides a context for the study of other cultures, and the analysis of selected systems that are based upon these diverse cultures.

**Christianity and Western Culture**
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.

**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 (Classical Greek, Latin, Hebrew), students are able to use the language to engage the ideas of those cultures. Documented proficiency in languages not offered at Bethel also 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.

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., FRE102S Introductory French II).
2. Completing the second semester of a first-year (introductory or beginning) college-level language class or higher with grade of C or higher at another college/university (any language other than English).
3. Earning a score of 3 or better on an Advanced Placement language exam or a score of 50 or better on a language CLEP test.
Note: Students who are native speakers of a language other than English, or who have studied languages other than French, German, or Spanish, should contact the language testing coordinator in the modern world languages department.

**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 worldviews 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 21st 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 may be 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 courses might explore the European heritage, the core emphasis of the courses is the unique nature of the American experience.

**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.

**Cross-cultural Experience # Category of Courses (Z)**
Students experience an off-campus person-to-person intercultural engagement of at least 25 hours with a specific cultural group that supports the development of awareness of the student’s own culture and the culture with which the student is interacting. Students develop an increased understanding of the complexity and tension cultural difference has on interaction with others. The Z-tag experience places students in an experiential learning environment (domestic or abroad) that includes faculty guided pre-experience preparation and post-experience processing.

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 (GES101 and GES1022). Registration in GES101 is required the semester before the experience. Approval of the experience takes place in GES101. Registration in GES1022 is required the semester after the experience. These courses are described in the Academic Programs section of this catalog under General Studies. Courses with a Z in their number can be found in the course listings of many different academic departments.

**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.

**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 pillars.

**Option 1: CWILT (Modular)**
Courses offered in the CWILT option are described in the Academic Programs section, under General Studies (GES110, GES125, GES130), Biblical and Theological Studies (THE201), and in the various departments offering Contemporary Western Life and Thought (L) courses. The first two courses, taught by an interdisciplinary team of faculty, introduce 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. College Writing is designed to introduce students to researching and writing in the college setting. In the second year of courses, Christian Theology undertakes the investigation of central themes of the Christian faith. A course from the Contemporary Western Life and Thought category engages students with the history of the past two centuries of Western life and thought so that they have a more complete understanding of how Western culture is related to other global perspectives.

**Option 2: The Humanities Program (Integrated)**
This integrated, interdisciplinary program examines Western humanity’s attempt to answer the deepest questions in life regarding God, the self, and society. The Humanities courses, Western Humanities in Christian Perspective I-IV, emphasize direct experience with great works of literature, theology, philosophy, art, music, and drama. Lectures provide historical background and a model of expertise by faculty specialists. In addition, significant class time is devoted to small-group seminars, where textual analysis, writing instruction, and discussion can occur. Students examine texts in class and experience works of art in Twin Cities galleries, theatres, and concert halls. Because the courses in this option build on each other chronologically and thematically, the four courses in this program must be taken in sequence. Students who complete the Humanities Program
replace the requirements of the five courses in Option 1. Courses in the Humanities Program are described in the Academic Programs section of this catalog under General Studies (GES145, GES147, GES244, GES246).

**Cross-Pillar Category**

**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 of this capstone course are to cultivate holistic and biblically based views of oneself and the world and to facilitate ethical decision-making when faced with 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. Contemporary Christian Issues (P) courses must be taken at Bethel. This requirement cannot be fulfilled through transfer courses.