

# GENERAL EDUCATION

---

The primary goal of the General Education curriculum is to integrate the Christian faith with all areas of learning and to serve as a foundational area of study for all learners. Our mission further includes the integration of several elements that are often separated in contemporary academia:

- the great fields of learning—humanities, social and natural sciences, the arts, and pre-professional studies—to emphasize the interdependence of knowledge;
- the many aspects of being human as individual persons and members of societies—to seek wholeness in one’s development and maturation;
- Western and non-Western cultural perspectives—to communicate both the differences and similarities in their histories and worldviews and the understanding of diversity amid commonality;
- the study of the dominant ideas of many cultures with the firsthand experience of interacting with those cultures—to cultivate empathy and depth of understanding; and
- the perspectives of history with the shaping of the present and near future—to cultivate a sense of an “extended present” with the grasp of the movement of time and the impact of human choices on the generations that follow.

To enhance such integration the General Education curriculum has been organized in five themes, each of which includes a variety of courses designed to develop specific knowledge, skills, and values. The five themes of First Year Foundations; Artistic Experience; Biblical Foundations; Math, Science, and Technology; and Cultural Intelligence are complemented by an off-campus cross-cultural experience and a capstone course in Contemporary Christian Issues.

The five General Education themes comprise both specific courses that all students take and categories from which students choose courses. General Education courses are arranged in a unified and developmental sequence spread through all four years of study and culminate in a capstone course. First-year students at Bethel choose between two options to start their general education:

- **The Modular Approach** (<https://www.bethel.edu/undergrad/academics/general-education/first-year-options/modular/>) to general education, consists of 3 courses, each covering different areas of study.
  - Creative Arts (GES 125; ICA)
  - Western Culture (GES 130; CWC)
  - Inquiry Writing Seminar (GES 160; IQ)
- **The Humanities Approach** is an integrated sequence of 3 courses that explores how great writers and artists of western civilization have tried to answer life’s deepest questions concerning God, the self, and society.

Students may choose to complete their off-campus cross-cultural experience through a designated course or off-campus program or through an approved non-credit experience at any time during their course of study at Bethel. A limited number of courses can be used to meet both General Education requirements and the requirements for a major or minor. (See list of requirements for each major or minor in the appropriate departmental section of the catalog.)

Course and category names listed below, as well as their descriptions, reflect the requirements of the General Education curriculum. General Education category names are followed by category designator letters (e.g., D, M, P). These same designator letters are used throughout the catalog to identify courses meeting General Education category requirements. The following suffix code is used for General Education categories:

A	Artistic Experience
D	Laboratory Science

## General Education 2

G	Comparative Systems
K	Science, Technology, and Society
L	Contemporary Western Life and Thought
M	Mathematics
P	Contemporary Christian Issues
S	Second Language
U	World Cultures
Z	Cross-cultural Experience

### General Education Policies

1. All General Education courses must be approved through the normal curriculum review and approval process. No petitions to substitute a non-General Education Bethel course for a General Education requirement will be approved.
2. Each course that carries a General Education tag contains components and requirements unique to that tag. These components and requirements are integral and necessary parts of the course. Students must satisfy all course components and requirements, even if they have previously completed another course containing that tag, or are taking another course with that tag in the same semester. For example, a student taking more than one "Z" tagged course must complete all "Z" tag components and requirements in each course.
3. General Education courses, with the exception of Cross-cultural Experience (Z) courses, may not be taken as a Directed Study. General Education courses may be taken as a Course by Arrangement only when they meet all requirements in the policy on Course by Arrangement.
4. Students may not register for more than one Contemporary Christian Issues (P) course per semester. Students who have completed one Contemporary Christian Issues (P) course must obtain the consent of the instructor to take an additional course in this category.