

# The College Curriculum

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Underlying Kenyon's curriculum is a set of policies and enrollment regulations created by the faculty to govern every student's curriculum at the College. These policies apply to all candidates for the degree.

## THE MAJOR PROGRAM

The major program is organized in one of the following ways:

**The major in a department or program.** The major program constitutes focused academic work undertaken in a single department or discipline. It is the responsibility of the department to determine the work necessary for successful completion of the major. An outline of departmental or programmatic requirements may be found in the introductory paragraphs of each department's course descriptions in this catalog. The department or program may prescribe courses in other departments or disciplines as part of the major program. In order for the student to complete the declared major course of study, a minimum grade point average of 2.00 in the major department or program is required.

**The synoptic major.** At Kenyon, there are several ways in which students can satisfy broad and substantial interests that cut across departmental and disciplinary boundaries. Students may undertake a double major. They may combine a major in one department with a minor in another, or with any one of several interdisciplinary concentrations. Many will find their needs met by one of the interdisciplinary programs listed in this catalogue.

A great deal of care and hard work has gone into the formulation of the College's majors, minors, and concentrations, so that almost all students choose to major in one of these established departments or programs.

In exceptional cases, however, a student may have a well-thought-out and strong interest in coherent studies that do not quite fit into existing programs. In such cases, it is possible for the student to propose a synoptic major. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate such a proposal, gather faculty advice, and

write and justify the proposal for a synoptic program. The proposal must be approved no later than the end of the sophomore year.

Developing a synoptic major program will require the student to do considerable synthesis in thinking through how material from the selected courses fits together. Consultation with faculty (advisor or others) should initially consider whether one or more of the established programs could not meet the needs of the student. A meeting with one of the associate provosts at an early stage will most likely be useful. A synoptic major is likely to prove more demanding to carry out than a major chosen in the ordinary way from existing programs. Therefore, a student proposing a synoptic major must have a cumulative GPA at or above the average GPA of Kenyon students.

A synoptic major program must be deep as well as broad. It must be coherent. The program must consist primarily of courses that are offered in the established programs, together with a limited number of independent-study courses when such courses are really needed. Normally, not more than 2 units of an 8-unit synoptic major program should consist of independent-study coursework. Faculty members from at least two of the departments in which the student will work must agree to serve on the advisory committee for the student's synoptic major. Since each department may designate the core course or courses it deems necessary for all synoptic majors choosing work in that department, the student's proposal for the synoptic major must also be approved by the chairs (or members designated by chair) of the departments of the faculty advisors.

The final form of the student's proposal for the synoptic major program is the responsibility of the student and should be submitted to one of the associate provosts, who will engage with the student and the faculty advisors in a discussion and review of the proposal. Final approval of the program will be made by the associate provost in consultation with the chairs of the departments of the student's faculty advisors (or with senior members of the departments designated by the chairs).

**Declaring a major.** Students may declare a major at any time, but not later than September 30 of their junior year. Normally, students declare their majors as sophomores before spring vacation. To declare a major, students obtain and file a form in the registrar's office, after securing the necessary faculty signatures. Students wishing to declare synoptic majors may obtain complete information from the office of the associate provosts. Students who plan to participate in off-campus study must declare a major before submitting their off-campus study application.

### **THE SENIOR EXERCISE**

Students must satisfactorily complete the Senior Exercise in their major program to be awarded the degree. No credit is granted for the exercise. In general, the purpose of the Senior Exercise is to promote coherence within the major program of the student and, particularly, to offer each student the opportunity to articulate that coherence for himself or herself. Although each Senior Exercise is determined by the goals of the individual department and therefore may vary on that basis, a collegiate aim of the Senior Exercise is to encourage the student to achieve the following:

- Develop and demonstrate the ability to think and read critically, and to distinguish the essential from the trivial.
- Explore and refine individual interests through independent research or creative projects.
- Develop and demonstrate writing ability by the completion of a meaningful piece of newly written work.
- Develop and demonstrate speaking ability--through public presentations, roundtable discussions or symposia with peers, or through oral exams, etc.
- Develop and demonstrate the ability to synthesize prior work, and to use and critique methodologies pertinent to the discipline through exams, written papers, or special projects.
- Grapple with new ideas.
- Collaborate with others--faculty members and peers--at various stages of the Senior Exercise.

Departments may give a different emphasis to each of these goals. In cases where the above goals are not fully addressed by a department's Senior Exercise, the department will incorporate them into other required parts of the major curriculum.

Each department must regularly inform all of its majors of the nature and purpose of the Senior Exercise and must discuss the exercise with its senior majors prior to its administration or due date(s). A student who fails the Senior Exercise will be given another opportunity to pass it before Commencement of his or her senior year. Failure on the second opportunity means that the student may not graduate or participate in the Commencement ceremonies that year. The student will be given an opportunity to satisfactorily complete the Senior Exercise after Commencement at a time mutually agreeable to the student and department.

#### **A MINOR COURSE OF STUDY (OPTIONAL)**

Students may choose to complete a minor course of study. Minor courses of study are offered in some disciplines but not in all. The following policies govern such courses of study:

- Students declare a minor course of study in the Office of the Registrar just as they declare majors and interdisciplinary concentrations.
- A minor consists of a minimum of 2.00 units and a maximum of 3.50 units. A minimum of 2.00 units must be from within the discipline itself.
- Courses that count toward the student's major may not also count toward the minor, nor may a student undertake both a major and minor in the same discipline.
- Neither the College nor a department will plan course availability in a given year so as to enable a particular student or students to complete a minor. Students may not be given preferential admission to a course on the basis of their minor.

- Students' transcripts will note majors (at least one required), concentrations (optional), and minors (optional).
- Specific information and requirements regarding minors may be found under the section of the department or discipline in question.

### **AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONCENTRATION (OPTIONAL)**

Students who have declared a major may also elect to declare an interdisciplinary concentration. (Interdisciplinary programs are those that draw from two or more of the traditional disciplines.) As with the major course of study, completion of a concentration becomes part of the student's permanent record. A description of a concentration's requirements can be found in the introductory paragraphs under the appropriate heading in this catalog.

A concentration will require a minimum of 2.50 units and up to a maximum of 4.00 units of prescribed academic credit. Academic coursework undertaken for such a program may consist of work offered by departments and other concentrations, as well as coursework offered by the concentration. Directors of concentrations certify students' successful completion of their programs to the registrar, who will note completion on the students' records.

**Declaring a concentration.** Although coursework may begin prior to declaration, students can declare a concentration only after they have declared a major. To elect a concentration, students obtain and file a form in the Office of the Registrar after securing the necessary faculty approval. Students who wish to elect a concentration must do so before November of their senior year.

### **JOINT MAJOR (OPTIONAL)**

The joint major combines an interdisciplinary program with a major from a participating department. This combination provides a solid grounding in the methodology of a discipline, while providing an interdisciplinary experience. Joint majors are created through a cooperative agreement between departments and interdisciplinary programs, and require the student to complete coursework in both the interdisciplinary concentration and the departmental major as specified in the cooperative agreement. The student will complete a single Senior Exercise in the format of the cooperating department.

### **HONORS**

**The degree with college honors.** Students may receive the Bachelor of Arts degree with collegiate honors (cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude) by attaining a cumulative grade point average in the following ranges:

cum laude 3.50-3.69

magna cum laude 3.70-3.89

summa cum laude 3.90 and above

Students in full-time residence at Kenyon for less than three years will be considered for honors by the Committee on Academic Standards. The student's Kenyon grade average shall be the prime determinant. However, the committee will also examine the student's record at other institutions and may alter the degree of honors indicated by the Kenyon average.

**The degree with departmental or interdisciplinary honors.** Students may apply to read for the degree with honors in a major. Application should be made to the chair of the department or the director of the program. At any time, the department or program may deny the student the opportunity to continue in honors. Students reading for honors are usually required to pass a special examination administered by an outside examiner.

There are three classes of honors in a major: Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors. The class of honors that the student receives will be determined jointly by the outside examiner and the faculty of the student's major. A student who fails to achieve the degree with honors may be awarded the degree without honors, provided he or she successfully completes the equivalent of the Senior Exercise.

**Collegiate standards for honors in the major.** To undertake senior honors work in a major, a student must ordinarily have a minimum 3.33 grade point average overall. In addition, each department or program determines its own minimum requirements, whether a minimum grade point average or some comparable standard. These standards are listed in the sections for the various departments and programs in this catalog.

In cases where a department or program deems a student worthy to undertake honors but the student does not meet minimum standards, the department or program may petition the Academic Standards Committee for acceptance of the student into the honors program. Ordinarily such a petition will be submitted no later than April 15 of the junior year. The committee will consider at least the following criteria:

- Is the student's proposal persuasive and is it supported enthusiastically by the department or program?
- Are there extenuating circumstances around the lower grade point average? Is there upward movement in the grade point average from a poor start? Or are there extenuating circumstances in a particular semester?

**Honors for synoptic majors.** Students who propose a synoptic major may also ask to read for honors. The Academic Standards Committee decides on admission to the Honors Program for synoptic majors. (An explanation of the procedure is available at the registrar's office.) At least 1 unit of credit in independent study must be included in the program, and arrangements are made for an outside examiner. The degrees of honors are identical to those described above.

## **YEAR OF GRADUATION**

A student's year of graduation, or class, is determined by the registrar based on semesters of full-time study completed. The year of graduation will be set back as appropriate for students returning after having withdrawn, unless we receive the transcript with the evidence that they have earned credit as full-time students elsewhere. Students who fall behind the normal pace of 4.00 units per year by more than 2.00 units will have their year of graduation and class set back as appropriate. The class year will reflect the graduation ceremony in which the student will be eligible to participate.

Questions about a student's year of graduation should be addressed to the registrar.

## **EARLY GRADUATION**

The Kenyon degree is based on work accomplished during four years of full-time academic work (See Residency under Requirements for the Degree). Early graduation is rare and infrequent, granted only in extenuating circumstances. Petitions for early graduation are submitted at least one year in advance of the proposed date of graduation. Detailed information about criteria and procedures is available from the Office of the Registrar.

## **A GUIDE TO COURSES OF STUDY**

The following tables are a handy guide to the majors, minors, interdisciplinary majors, and concentrations available in the various academic departments.

Drawing from the options presented in the tables, students, in consultation with their faculty advisors, will develop and implement their chosen courses of study. In brief, the requirements and options are as follows:

- All degree candidates must successfully complete a minimum of one major course of study including the Senior Exercise.
- Students may choose to complete one or more minor.
- Students may choose to complete one or more interdisciplinary concentrations.

Academic Divisions	Academic Departments	Departmental Majors	Departmental Minors
	Art and Art History	Art History; Studio Art	Art History; Ancient; Renaissance and Baroque; Modern; Architectural History; Studio Art
	Dance and Drama, and Film	Drama; Dance; Film	Dance
FINE ARTS	Music	Music	Music
	Classics	Latin and Greek; Latin; Greek; Classical Civilization	Classics (emphasis in language, civilization, or language and civilization)
	English	English	English
	Modern Languages and Literatures	Literature (French, German, or Spanish); Modern Languages; Area Studies (French, German, or Spanish)	Chinese; Italian; Japanese; Russian
	Philosophy	Philosophy	Philosophy
HUMANITIES	Religious Studies	Religious Studies	Religious Studies

NATURAL SCIENCES	Biology	Biology	Biology; Environmental Biology; Molecular Biology and Genetics; Physiology; Plant Biology
	Chemistry	Chemistry	
	Mathematics	Mathematics (focus on classical mathematics or statistics)	Mathematics; Statistics
	Physics	Physics	Physics; Astronomy
	Psychology	Psychology	
SOCIAL SCIENCES	Anthropology	Anthropology	Anthropology
	Economics	Economics	
	History	History	History
	Political Science	Political Science	
	Sociology	Sociology	



## **Interdisciplinary Programs**

### *Interdisciplinary Majors:*

American Studies

Biochemistry

International Studies

Molecular Biology

Neuroscience

Women's and Gender Studies

### *Interdisciplinary Concentrations:*

African Diaspora Studies

American Studies

Asian Studies

Comparative World Literatures

Environmental Studies

Integrated Program in Humane Studies

Islamic Civilization and Cultures

Latino/a Studies

Law and Society

Neuroscience

Public Policy

Scientific Computing

Women's and Gender Studies