

# A Wooster Education

## **Preface: Identifying Curricular Goals**

A liberal arts education is not for four years but for a lifetime. As such, it should provide an intellectual experience that is both inherently valuable and also provides the resources necessary for a lifetime of inquiry, discovery, and responsible citizenship. These resources involve not the study of any particular discipline but the acquiring of certain intellectual abilities, including a critical disposition, an understanding of the nature of academic knowledge and the different ways of knowing that are reflected in the disciplines, the necessary skills to communicate effectively, an openness to inquiry in all its forms, and an appreciation of cultures and perspectives that are different from one's own. These abilities will help students to become independent learners for whom education is a life-long process and whose lives are marked by their commitment to knowledge and their ability to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

The College of Wooster seeks to create such independent learners. A Wooster education can be characterized by how it identifies the goals of a liberal arts curriculum and how these goals relate to the process of creating engaged and independent learners and informed and involved citizens.

- A liberal arts education should be rich in content and intellectually rigorous, to engage the minds and the imaginations of students and faculty alike. It should enable students to respond critically and creatively to the range of human inquiry into the nature of the physical world, society, and the human self, and to share their ideas orally, in writing, and through the forms of artistic expression.
- A liberal arts education should help students to appreciate the nature of the academic disciplines--as intellectual tools that enable us to think in structured and systematic ways, and for the depth of inquiry they allow. By study in a number of disciplines, students should come to understand the different ways of knowing that are embodied in the disciplines, and by coming to know at least one discipline in depth, students should equip themselves to become scholars engaged in the creation of knowledge. By reflecting on the connections among the disciplines, students should appreciate how the understanding of a subject may be enlarged by different disciplinary approaches, how different kinds of knowledge are interrelated, and how work in one field is affected by developments in others.
- A liberal arts education should prepare students for lives of responsibility in a pluralistic society and instill a breadth of understanding, concern, and commitment. It should provide opportunities to examine values, to reflect upon the richness and diversity of human experience, and to develop the necessary skills to contribute to the discussion of contemporary issues and to communicate effectively to individuals and across cultural differences.

The kind of independence which Wooster seeks to inspire is epitomized in the program of Independent Study, in which students are required to demonstrate their capacity for critical inquiry, their ability to create new knowledge in a disciplinary context, and the necessary skills to share their learning with a larger community. While Independent Study represents the culmination of one's learning in a discipline, the goals of the program go beyond disciplinary training. By engaging in the process of Independent Study, students come to regard learning as a process that requires a strong commitment, painstaking research, and the careful development of one's approach to a subject. Through I.S., students come to understand not only their chosen subject but also the nature of learning itself, and they can bring this approach to other situations in their lives and careers. Because they have developed the resources necessary for independent learning, they can become effective citizens able to respond to the needs of their societies.

## **Rationale**

At Wooster, the Independent Study Thesis represents not just the completion of a major but the culmination of a process of student development "from FYS to I.S." that aims to produce such independent learners. A Wooster education attempts to identify, enhance, and coordinate the different dimensions of this developmental process so that the curriculum in general and the academic program of each student can be regarded as a "path to independence." It is this process that provides the conceptual and the structural coherence of the curriculum. We can identify the outlines of that process as it unfolds in three primary ways:

A first dimension of the curriculum attempts to develop students' understanding of *the nature, the range, and the goals of intellectual inquiry*. This process begins with the First-Year Seminar, where the multidisciplinary approach to a given subject suggests the richness of the liberal arts perspective. It is sustained in a broad range of disciplinary courses which introduce students not only to different content areas but also to the various ways of knowing that are embodied in the disciplinary traditions, so that students will come to understand the different goals, methods, and assumptions they reflect. Students will also develop a number of specific intellectual resources through coursework in foreign language, cultural difference, religious perspectives, and quantitative reasoning. The need to develop cross-disciplinary understanding and the ability to make connections among the disciplines finds expression in the integrative work that students are invited to do through the Program in Interdisciplinary Studies and the interdisciplinary curricula of the College's interdepartmental programs.

A second dimension of this process is reflected in the development of students' *ability to communicate effectively, especially in writing*. This is crucial, given the important role of writing in the program in Independent Study. In conjunction with the Program in Writing, students will begin their academic program with a course that emphasizes writing, the First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry, and for some the instruction there will be supplemented by work done in the College Writing Tutorial. Over the following two years, in addition to written work in courses in and out of the major, students will complete a course specifically designated as "writing intensive," which will emphasize the relationship between thinking in a disciplinary context and the forms of written expression appropriate to different disciplines. The ability to express oneself effectively is emphasized in Junior Independent Study and culminates in the Senior I.S. Thesis, where extensive written work is supplemented by opportunities to share the results of one's project in oral examinations, performances and exhibits, and other presentations for the department, the larger College community, and academic audiences off campus. Coursework in foreign language and culture will enable students to communicate effectively across national and cultural differences.

A third dimension of the process involves students' *work in the major field of study*. Whether a student selects a major early in his or her academic program or does so as late as the end of the second year, the declaration of a major should represent a decision that is based upon an understanding of the disciplinary perspective afforded by the major and the kinds of intellectual activity the discipline involves, and a sense of its relation to the rest of the liberal arts. Work in the major continues in required courses both in and out of the major department and culminates in the process of the Junior Independent Study and Senior I.S. Thesis, where extensive course work and careful training in the methods of the discipline allow each student to reach a fullness of scholarly potential in the creation of new knowledge, understanding, and expression.

As a student progresses through each of the three dimensions of this development, there is both a deepening of knowledge and a heightening of expectations, so that the progression "from FYS to I.S." describes not just a sequence but a range of new structures, opportunities, and challenges.

## Degree Requirements: Bachelor of Arts

32 courses are required for graduation, subject to current restrictions on residency, fractional credit, transfer credit, and course load. *Except where noted in the accompanying materials, individual courses may be counted toward multiple requirements.*

### 1. First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry (1 course)

Students will complete the *First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry* in their first semester.

### 2. Writing (1-2 courses)

In coordination with the First-Year Seminar Program and the Program in Writing:

- a. Students will demonstrate basic writing proficiency in their first year, through placement examination or completion of the *College Writing* course.
- b. Students will complete a course designated as *Writing Intensive* (W) in any semester between the completion of the First-Year Seminar and the beginning of Junior Independent Study.

### 3. Global and Cultural Perspectives (1-3 courses)

- a. *Foreign Language*. Students will demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language through the second-level course in a given language sequence, through placement examination or course work.
- b. *Studies in Cultural Difference*. Students will complete a course (C) that examines either a culture outside the United States or the culture of an American minority group (e.g., African American, Asian American, Hispanic or Latino American, Native American). Courses may be taught in English or in a foreign language.

### 4. Religious Perspectives (1 course)

Students will complete a course from any department or program that examines the religious dimension of humankind in relation to issues of cultural, social, historical, or ethical significance (R).

### 5. Quantitative Reasoning (1 course)

Students will demonstrate basic quantitative proficiency through completion of a course that involves a substantial element of quantitative reasoning (Q).

### 6. Learning Across the Disciplines (6 courses)

Students will complete no fewer than two approved courses in each of three academic areas: Arts and Humanities, History and Social Sciences, Mathematical and Natural Sciences.

### 7. Learning in the Major (7-9 courses in one department)

Students will complete a *major* in a Department or Program. The number of courses required in the major, excluding Independent Study, shall be no less than seven and no more than thirteen, of which no more than nine shall be in the same department. A maximum of twelve course credits in any one department excluding Independent Study may be counted toward graduation.

### 8. Independent Study (3 courses)

Students will complete three courses in Independent Study:

- a. one course in *Independent Study*, normally taken in the junior year, that will focus on the development of research skills and methods in the discipline.
- b. a two-course *Independent Study Thesis*, normally taken in the two semesters of the senior year.

## **Requirements for BA Degree 1: First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry**

Students will complete the *First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry* in their first semester.

### **Catalogue Description**

*Required of all first-year students, the First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry focuses on the processes of critical inquiry in a writing-intensive, small seminar. Each seminar invites students to engage a set of issues, questions, or ideas which can be illuminated by the disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives of the liberal arts. Seminars are designed to enhance the intellectual skills essential for liberal learning and for successful participation in the College's academic program.*

### **Student Learning Objectives**

Students are expected to develop the abilities, especially the writing skills, that are essential to critical thinking. These abilities include interpreting complex texts, constructing an argument, supporting the argument with evidence, and defending the argument orally. Critical thinking also requires the ability to appreciate and critique multiple perspectives, including one's own.

### **Rationale**

The Seminar provides a special intellectual opportunity for faculty and first-year students to participate in a small, discussion-oriented, multidisciplinary course. The course introduces students to the independent thinking and academic skills that they will need in subsequent courses, including Junior and Senior Independent Study.

### **Criteria for Courses in First-Year Seminar**

All First-Year Seminars will:

- provide students with clear opportunities to meet the learning objectives;
- introduce questions and problems that are intellectually challenging as well as interesting and comprehensible to first-year students;
- approach issues from a number of perspectives, methods, and points of view;
- create the opportunity for students to pose problems and pursue their own questions in relation to the course themes;
- introduce students to substantive texts of a variety of kinds;
- require a minimum of five graded writing assignments that encourage students to engage in a variety of intellectual tasks, including synthesizing, judging, and comparing different approaches or points of view and drawing on several sources in constructing an argument.

### **Implementation**

- The opportunity and obligation to teach the Seminar should be shared within departments and across the College as widely and equitably as possible.
- Faculty who teach in the program will design courses on a set of issues, themes, or ideas that is of interest to them and meets the established criteria. Faculty will be encouraged to design courses that involve attention to significant social and cultural issues, such as race, class, and gender.
- Faculty teaching the Seminar will serve as academic advisers to the students in their sections.
- Entering students with fewer than seven transfer credits will be required to take the course.
- Students will be sent brief descriptions of Seminar sections in the summer prior to matriculation and will be invited to indicate a minimum of six titles in which they have an interest. The Office of the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement will assign students to the Seminar sections.
- Each section will enroll an average of 15 students, with assignment for team-taught courses in numbers proportional to the number of faculty involved.
- Seminars will meet from 9:30 to 10:50 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- First-Year Seminars may not count in fulfillment of other graduation requirements.
- Faculty teaching in the program will be assisted through an annual workshop to focus on issues of intellectual purpose and course pedagogy, support for summer curricular

development through the Faculty Development Fund, and if possible through a stipend that recognizes the additional responsibilities of new course development.

## Requirements for BA Degree 2: Writing

In coordination with First-Year Seminar and the College of Wooster Program in Writing:

- a. Students will demonstrate basic writing proficiency in their first year, through placement examination or completion of the *College Writing* course.
- b. Students will complete a course designated as *Writing Intensive* (W) in any semester between the completion of the First-Year Seminar and the beginning of Junior Independent Study.

### Student Learning Objectives

Students will learn the communications skills that will allow them to give expression to their ideas and to participate in both intellectual and civic discourse.

Faculty at The College of Wooster understand that to write well involves a life-long learning process, and that all students can improve their writing skills. A college education can enhance a student's journey toward good writing, serving as a stage in that journey rather than its endpoint. The writing requirement is intended to aid students, as they gain insight into themselves and the world, to become increasingly precise, convincing, and graceful in their use of language to explore and communicate ideas.

With the understanding that many forms of writing are possible and that writing can serve many different purposes, the requirements of the program in writing will help students to learn and practice the following characteristics of good student writing:

- *Range*. Students should learn to write well in a variety of forms for a range of different kinds of readers.
- *Audience*. Student writers should learn rhetorical strategies appropriate for the audience and purpose.
- *Argument*. If the rhetorical strategy involves an argument, it should contain a thesis and develop that thesis with coherence, logic, and evidence.
- *Coherence*. Whatever the purpose, the parts of a paper should contribute to a greater, connected whole.
- *Editing*. Writing should be edited to address surface error, including irregularities in grammar, syntax, diction, and punctuation.

### Rationale

The most distinctive feature of the curriculum at The College of Wooster is Independent Study, a capstone experience requiring significant writing from students in both the junior and senior years. Faculty expect students to produce Independent Study projects that are grounded in disciplinary discourses, and our expectations for students are founded on several assumptions: that language is central to thinking and learning in all disciplines, that writing is a complex intellectual process, and that students must learn to write the discourse of their area of academic concentration. Because faculty agree that the College needs a program to integrate and sustain writing instruction throughout a student's career, and because the Independent Study program focuses intensively on writing during a student's last two years, the Wooster writing requirement focuses on a student's first two years at the College.

Several assumptions are implicit in the design of the writing requirement. Most important, perhaps, is that students can learn to write well in a variety of forms for a wide range of readers, regardless of their disciplines, and that they can do so by strengthening their reasoning and arguing skills. The requirement is constructed in response to the belief that writers are most likely to improve when they use writing to understand a topic that interests them. Courses that satisfy the requirement encourage students to use writing as a learning tool and to view their efforts through the complementary processes of writing-to-learn and learning-to-write.

The design of the writing program also acknowledges that a young writer will seek to become a member of a community, which we might call a "major," "department," "program," or "discipline," and that each community employs its own specialized discourse. Because the

knowledge and skills required for membership in a community are controlled by those within it, novices are best served if they apprentice with members of the community. The program starts from the assumption that, given appropriate training and support, faculty from across the curriculum can be highly effective writing teachers because of their mastery of their disciplinary discourses.

Finally, the writing requirement as stated above relies upon a required, writing-intensive First-Year Seminar program as a key component in the development of students' writing skills.

### **Implementation**

The requirements for the Wooster writing program include two fundamental curricular features, in addition to the First-Year Seminar:

*The College Writing course:* Entering students whose writing abilities do not meet established standards for college writing will be enrolled in a one-credit College Writing Tutorial, which will be taught by the English Department and replace the current English Composition (101); this course may not count in fulfillment of other graduation requirements. Students will demonstrate their abilities by placement examination, as assessed by the Director of the Writing Program. Students required to take the course should enroll in the first year, and completion of the course is a prerequisite for enrollment in the sophomore-level "W" course. Other students may register for the course if space permits or upon the recommendation of their academic adviser. *College Writing* may not be taken S/NC.

The *College Writing* course is designed specifically for students who have been determined to need intensive instruction in grammar, syntax, and basic essay format in order to fulfill the College's Writing Proficiency Requirement. Students will compose essays and other texts appropriate for academic writing. Drafting, revising, and peer editing will be emphasized throughout the course, and reading skills will be integrated with writing instruction.

*The Writing-Intensive (W) Course:* Any one-credit course at the College, apart from First-Year Seminar and courses in Independent Study, that meets the established criteria may be classified as Writing-Intensive. Students are required to take the Writing-Intensive course during one of the semesters between their completion of First-Year Seminar and the beginning of Junior Independent Study, but preferably during the sophomore year. These courses emphasize the relationship between thinking in a particular discipline or interdisciplinary context and the forms of written expression appropriate to that discipline or context, and will include both practice and instruction in writing. Students are not required to take a "W" course in the area of their major unless the department or program so requires. Enrollments will be limited to 15-20 students per section. At least 15 sections of writing intensive courses will be offered each semester.

Each department and program shall establish and identify one or more courses as Writing-Intensive each year, with the aim of helping students to advance toward meeting the general criteria for good writing identified above. Most courses in the Program in Interdisciplinary Studies will be Writing-Intensive.

The Writing-Intensive Course is designed to fill the gap in writing instruction between First-Year Seminar and Junior Independent Study, in order to allow students at all levels of skill to continue to improve their writing. Because these will be departmental or interdisciplinary courses designed at approximately the sophomore level, students will receive writing instruction centered on introductory or intermediate material in a given field of study. The instruction will not only build on the general writing skills students have acquired during their first year of study but will also introduce students to the ways in which disciplines construct themselves through the conventions of written discourse. Such knowledge, even if it comes from a discipline other than that in which the student majors, will better prepare the student to write across the curriculum and to navigate the disciplinary challenges faced by all students in the liberal arts.

## Criteria for Writing-Intensive Courses

- Each course will focus on the process of writing as a means of learning and effective communication within a specific content area. The course will help students achieve an understanding of the relationship between writing and membership in a particular discipline's intellectual community.
- Writing will be integrated with other class work.
- The syllabus for a "W" course will contain two explicit statements:
  1. that the course fulfills in part the writing requirement for graduation;
  2. a description of the assignments or procedures by which the course fulfills the criteria for a "W" course.
- Each course will require five to six formal writing assignments of 800-1000 words each (or, for the semester's work, a comparable number of total pages) and may also require students to do informal writing. The length and types of writing assignments will accommodate the discipline(s) within which the course is being taught. Where appropriate, one or more of the required assignments should develop students' skills in incorporating research into their writing.
- At least three of the formal assignments must go through a revision process, with drafts to be reviewed by the instructor, peers, and other readers. Comments on drafts must address rhetorical issues and go beyond pointing out surface errors.
- Significant weight will be given to the student's writing in the calculation of final grades for the course.

### Further implementation of Writing-Intensive courses:

- Departments and programs may adapt existing courses as "W" courses or develop new ones.
- Because seniors will already have fulfilled their requirement, enrollment of seniors in "W" courses will be limited.
- Certain departments and programs may require a specific "W" course for the major.
- Some programs and departments may elect to share "W" courses.
- Some departments and programs in whose curriculum writing has always played a central role may offer a number of "W" courses. When multiple sections of a course are offered, one might be designated as "W" and another not.
- "W" courses may also count toward the major and other requirements as appropriate.
- The program will be phased in over a two-year period, adding a minimum of 15 "W" courses each year, for a total of at least 30 sections.
- Use of Teaching Apprentices and peer tutors will be encouraged, in particular of senior majors who are strong writers and who may help mentor new students into the discipline and its writing conventions.
- At the end of each year, faculty who have taught "W" courses will meet to discuss the criteria for courses and the effectiveness of the program.

### **Requirements for BA Degree 3: Global and Cultural Perspectives**

- a. *Foreign Language*. Students will demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language through the second-level course in a given language sequence, through placement examination or course work.
- b. *Studies in Cultural Difference*. Students will complete a course (C) that examines either a culture outside the United States or the culture of an American minority group (e.g., African American, Asian American, Hispanic or Latino American, Native American). Courses may be taught in English or in a foreign language.

Certain off-campus programs may also fulfill one or more of these requirements.

#### **Student Learning Objectives**

Through the study of different languages and cultures, students will learn about the nature of cultural difference and the culturally plural world in which they live. Through the study of foreign languages, students will achieve a deeper understanding of language as a human phenomenon, be able to produce insights into another culture, and lay the foundation for communicating in a second language. By taking other courses taught in English or in a foreign language that focus on different cultures, those both of American minority groups and of foreign countries, students can better communicate across national and cultural differences.

#### **Rationale**

It is crucial that liberally educated men and women come to a deeper understanding of the realities of the world in which they will take their place. Students are part of a society that is global in character and culturally plural. They need to understand the nature of cultural difference and to learn something about cultures other than their own.

Foreign language study provides a unique access to a different culture. The process of learning a foreign language expands one's perception of the world. Through study in a foreign language, we come to realize that American English, for instance, provides only one linguistic construction of the world. Work in a foreign language invites one to restructure one's cognitive world and to recognize the idiosyncrasies of one's own language-based assumptions.

*Studies in Cultural Difference* will help students to understand and participate in a world that is divided nationally, culturally, racially, and ethnically. This requirement will help students to come to an understanding of different customs, traditions, and values of foreign cultures and minority groups in America and enable them to gain a deeper insight into their own cultural heritage.

This requirement is consistent with the College's values and distinctive traditions, as reflected in its emphasis on international education, on racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, and on the relationship between liberal education and significant questions of values.

#### **Criteria for Courses in Global and Cultural Perspectives**

Courses in a modern or classical foreign language that would allow students to achieve proficiency through the second level (typically the 102 course in a given language) should enable students to:

- acquire the fundamental vocabulary and structures of the language and develop basic oral and written communication skills through conscious and active engagement with the target language system;
- develop an understanding of how the phonological, semantic, syntactic, and morphological structures of a linguistic system are related to the ways in which its users construct and express ideas.

*Studies in Cultural Difference* should provide students with an understanding of different cultures and of cultural difference. Courses may focus on either foreign cultures or American

minority groups, and may be taught either in English or in a foreign language. These courses will:

- examine the development of pivotal systems of values, religious beliefs, philosophical modes of thought, literary and artistic works, or social institutions;
- focus on the ways that cultural values are manifested in diverse contexts and among distinct social groups;
- understand the interconnectedness of a culture with national, regional, and global processes.

N.B. A student may not use the same course in fulfillment of both the Studies in Cultural Difference requirement and the Religious Perspectives requirement.

### **Implementation**

*Foreign Language.* Courses in beginning language instruction are already established.

*Studies in Cultural Difference.* There are currently many courses throughout the College's curriculum that might count toward such a requirement, in the College's interdepartmental programs (Black Studies, Comparative Literature, Cultural Area Studies, International Relations, Urban Studies, Women's Studies) and in many departments (*e.g.*, Art, English, History, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, Theatre, foreign language). Additional courses may also be developed. This requirement will be implemented in a two-stage process. During the initial stage, an *ad hoc* committee will examine proposals from departments and programs and make recommendations to the Educational Policy Committee. Following this, the approval of additional courses would fall to the Educational Policy Committee.

### **International Students and the Foreign Language Requirement**

- International students whose primary language is other than English may satisfy the College's foreign language requirement by achieving a TOEFL score of at least 550 or by meeting the College requirement in Writing by placement examination or course work.
- International students whose primary language is English but who are proficient in a second language must demonstrate that proficiency either by taking the College's language placement exam (in the case of languages taught at Wooster) or providing evidence by examination or other manner to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. The same conditions apply for American students who have studied or lived outside the United States for an extended period.

## **Requirements for BA Degree 4: Religious Perspectives**

Students will complete a course from any department or program that examines the religious dimension of humankind in relation to issues of cultural, social, historical, or ethical significance (R).

### **Student Learning Objectives**

Through the study of religion and religious experience, students will learn about the beliefs, institutions, and practices of different religious traditions; be able to identify and evaluate belief systems, both their own and those of others, in a fuller context; and better understand cultural, ethical, and moral perspectives that differ from their own.

### **Rationale**

As religion is one of the fundamental institutions of social life and a force in human affairs, and as religion has significantly shaped and informed all societies and cultures, both historical and contemporary ones, it is important for students to understand its nature and function. In addition to the inherent value of such study, the study of religion provides a window through which one can examine significant related issues. It provides access to some of the essential values that shape a given culture. It enables one to recognize various systems of belief, both one's own and those of different cultures and traditions, and to reflect on these in critical, evaluative ways. An understanding of the nature of religious traditions thus prepares students to live as global citizens in a world that is culturally and ethically diverse. And as belief systems, both individual and collective, are an important component of human behavior, it is important to understand the moral and ethical implications of belief systems and, as appropriate, to examine the relationship between religious beliefs and action. The study of religion thus can affect one's understanding of one's relationship and responsibilities to the larger society.

Finally, this requirement ensures that all students encounter the religious dimension of humankind and are engaged in an examination of religion that is intellectual and critical in nature. As such, this requirement, deeply associated with the history and traditions of the College, provides a distinctive element to the curriculum and contributes to the College's understanding of its own identity.

### **Criteria for Courses in Religious Perspectives**

Courses that fulfill the requirement in *Religious Perspectives* may come from any department or program. These courses will examine religious beliefs or traditions for the perspective they can offer on a range of significant issues: the study of culture and of the nature of different belief systems; the examination of systems of values (both cultural and personal); ethical and moral inquiry; global understanding and cross-cultural awareness; religious conflict (political, ideological) in the contemporary world; social consciousness and social action.

N.B. A student may not use the same course in fulfillment of both the Studies in Cultural Difference requirement and the Religious Perspectives requirement.

### **Implementation**

Departments and programs will propose to the Educational Policy Committee courses that meet the criteria for *Religious Perspectives*. Courses that meet the criteria will be approved and indicated in the *Catalogue* with "R".

## Requirements for BA Degree 5: Quantitative Reasoning

Students will demonstrate basic quantitative proficiency through completion of a course that involves a substantial element of quantitative reasoning (Q).

### Student Learning Objectives

Through this requirement students will understand how quantitative methods are used to model real-world situations. They will:

- understand the varied ways in which mathematics is used in real-world problem solving;
- understand the different quantitative methods of representing and analyzing data;
- develop an appreciation for both the power of quantitative reasoning and the limitations of various quantitative methods.

### Rationale

A liberally educated person should be able to think clearly and critically about quantitative issues. In our increasingly technological society, quantitative techniques are used extensively to describe and analyze the natural and social worlds. The ability to understand and interpret data in a variety of ways is fundamental to the decision-making processes faced by citizens today.

### Criteria for Courses in Quantitative Reasoning

Students will take at least one course that has been designated as having a sufficient quantitative component. Such courses will be designated with a 'Q'.

To be designated as a 'Q' course, at least one-half of the material and assignments in the course must involve students in issues and problems related to quantitative reasoning. This should include work in some of the following areas:

- number sense: percentages, estimation
- probability
- statistics: mean, median, correlation, regression
- quantitative data analysis: data collection, presentation, and interpretation
- decision-making based on quantitative reasoning
- using graphs to visualize relationships and draw conclusions
- algebra, geometry, and calculus

### Implementation

It is anticipated that many courses currently offered at the College across the curriculum would qualify as 'Q' courses, and students in many majors, in particular in Mathematical and Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences, would necessarily fulfill this requirement in the course of completing the requirements for the major. Students who declare majors in other departments and programs and who have not previously taken a 'Q' course will need to take care to schedule such a course in their final two years of study.

Departments and programs may also choose to develop new courses in fulfillment of the requirement. Resources and other support will be provided to encourage course enhancement and new course development.

This requirement will be implemented in a two-stage process. During the initial stage, an *ad hoc* committee will examine proposals from departments and programs and make recommendations to the Educational Policy Committee. Following this, the approval of additional courses would fall to the Educational Policy Committee.

Additional sections of introductory courses in Mathematical Sciences may also have to be offered (*e.g.*, 101: Elementary Functions, and 200: Mathematics in Contemporary Society). Resources will be provided to allow for this.

Courses counting toward this requirement will be clearly indicated in the *Catalogue*. As appropriate, these courses may count in fulfillment of other College-wide requirements.

## Requirements for BA Degree 6: Learning Across the Disciplines

Students will complete no fewer than two courses in each of three academic areas: Arts and Humanities, History and Social Sciences, Mathematical and Natural Sciences.

### Student Learning Objectives

By studying in a number of different disciplines, students will not only learn in a number of content areas but also come to appreciate the range of human inquiry and understand some of the different ways of knowing that inform the academic disciplines. And through work in the Program in Interdisciplinary Studies or the College's interdepartmental programs, for instance, students will develop cross-disciplinary understanding and the ability to make connections between the disciplines.

### Rationale

A liberal arts education seeks not to produce narrow specialists but thinkers who understand the range of human knowledge. By developing a broadly based intellectual competency, students will develop an openness to inquiry in all its forms and be better equipped to become citizens who can participate broadly in public discourse. No single area of study or specific coursework is required, but advisers will help students make meaningful choices that develop areas of interest and encourage interconnections with course work both within and outside the major; as appropriate, students will be encouraged to select courses from the Program in Interdisciplinary Studies.

### Criteria Defining Courses in Learning Across the Disciplines

Since the goal of the requirement is for students to learn about the nature and the range of disciplinary knowledge, courses that count in fulfillment of the requirement in Learning Across the Disciplines must provide effective and appropriate instruction *in a discipline*. Correspondingly, these courses should help students to come to understand the content, methods, purposes, and discourse that characterize the discipline and should invite explicit discussion of the nature of the disciplines themselves. It is expected that instruction in such courses will be marked by one or more of the following characteristics:

- critical reflection on the ways of knowing embodied in the disciplines;
- attention to the way in which concepts used across the disciplines (*e.g.*, data, theory, assumption, evidence, method, interpretation, application) are given distinctive definition in a specific discipline;
- consideration of what is fundamental to understanding a discipline, and why;
- attention to the relation between "thinking in the discipline" and "doing in the discipline" (*e.g.*, the relationship between a scientific hypothesis and laboratory work, or between historical or textual theory and criticism or interpretation);
- study of the history of the discipline and the process of disciplinary formation, with an eye to critical "paradigm shifts" in its development;
- attention to the way in which the application of new theories from within and outside the discipline have changed disciplinary knowledge and practice;
- examination of the forms of written discourse in the discipline, their conventions, and their relationship to the construction of knowledge in the discipline;
- integrative work and cross-disciplinary reflection on actual and possible connections among disciplines;
- examination of the theoretical constructs of the academic disciplines in relation to issues of application, practice, and value (*e.g.*, through issues of public policy, service learning, and ethical and moral dimensions of study).

### Implementation

In fall semester 2000-2001 departments and programs will review their respective curricula and propose to the Educational Policy Committee those courses that meet the criteria above. The Educational Policy Committee will review proposals, approve courses, and determine into

which of three academic areas—Arts and Humanities, History and Social Sciences, Mathematical and Natural Sciences—a given course should be assigned.

Departments and programs may develop new courses in fulfillment of the requirement; support will be provided to encourage course enhancement and new course development.

Courses counting toward the requirement will be clearly indicated in the *Catalogue*. As appropriate, these courses may count in fulfillment of other College-wide requirements.

## **Requirements for BA Degree 7: Learning in the Major**

Students will complete a *major* in a Department or Program. The number of courses required in the major, excluding Independent Study, shall be no less than seven and no more than thirteen, of which no more than nine shall be in the same department. A maximum of twelve course credits in any one department excluding Independent Study may be counted toward graduation.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

Students will come to understand a particular field of inquiry in depth, and develop a basis of knowledge and methodological ability that will enable them to participate actively and significantly in a disciplinary community.

### **Rationale**

A liberal arts education should help students to appreciate the nature of the academic disciplines--as intellectual tools that enable us to think in structured and systematic ways, and for the depth of inquiry they allow. By coming to know at least one discipline in depth, students should equip themselves to become scholars engaged in the creation of knowledge. The minimum requirement in the major shall ensure that the discipline is studied in sufficient depth; the limit on the number of courses allowed will ensure that a student's academic program includes learning across a range of other materials and fields of study.

### **Criteria for Courses in the Major**

Criteria for courses in the major will be determined by the respective department or program.

### **Implementation**

Programs are already in place.

## Requirements for BA Degree 8: Independent Study

Students will complete three courses in Independent Study:

- a. one course in *Independent Study*, normally taken in the junior year, that will focus on the development of research skills and methods in the discipline.
- b. a two-course *Independent Study Thesis*, normally taken in the two semesters of the senior year.

### Student Learning Objectives

The kind of independence which Wooster seeks to inspire is epitomized in the program of Independent Study, in which students are required to demonstrate their capacity for critical inquiry, their ability to create new knowledge in a disciplinary context, and the necessary skills to share their learning with a larger community. While Independent Study represents the culmination of one's learning in a discipline, the goals of the program go beyond disciplinary training. By engaging in the process of Independent Study, students come to regard learning as a process that requires a strong commitment, painstaking research, and the careful development of one's approach to a subject. Through I.S., students come to understand not only their chosen subject but also the nature of learning itself, and they can bring this approach to other situations in their lives and careers. Because they have developed the resources necessary for lifelong independent learning, they can become effective citizens able to respond to the needs of their societies.

### Rationale and Description

From the "Handbook for Independent Study" (Section III of the *Faculty Handbook*):

The capacity for individual inquiry and expression is a mark of a liberally educated person. The objective of the Independent Study program at Wooster is to provide an opportunity through which this capacity may be nurtured in every student at the College. As President Lowry described the challenge of the program more than forty years ago, "...it invites all students to come to their best in terms of their own talents."

The Independent Study program is not reserved for a few students; it provides all students the opportunity to engage in an activity that is both personally meaningful and appropriate to their individual fields and interests. As a student begins Independent Study, she or he works closely with their advisers through regularly scheduled conferences or seminars. These conferences and seminars are designed to assist, encourage, and challenge the participants and to afford both students and advisers an opportunity to share the excitement of discovery and expression in fields in which they have mutual interests. The program approaches learning as an exploration shared by student and adviser alike, neither having all the answers, but both enjoying immensely the opportunity to search for solutions.

Specific format and procedures vary from department to department. The I.S. Guide for each major provides details on the format and procedures for Independent Study in a particular field. Students should request a current copy of the I.S. Guide at the time of registration for I.S. 401 and 451-452. The first unit of Independent Study often consists of a seminar or tutorial program, designed both to explore the possible range of research and creative projects in the chosen field and to initiate the student into a methodology of research or the techniques necessary for creative work. This introduction to Independent Study, usually elected during the junior year, stresses the development of the student's confidence and ability to carry out a more substantial project in the senior year. During the latter part of the first unit of Independent Study, a preliminary survey or exploration of the subject of the senior project may be undertaken.

In the senior year the student devotes the time equivalent of two courses to a major investigative or creative project which culminates in the writing of a thesis or the production of a substantial creative work. Attention is given to the method, form, and content of intellectual

activity, and there is an emphasis on the communication of the results of the individual's own intellectual achievement.

At Wooster, Independent Study is the culmination of liberal education and provides the basis for independent learning throughout life.

**Implementation**

The program in Independent Study is already in place.

The guidelines that govern the administration of the program are described in the "Handbook for Independent Study" (Section III of the *Faculty Handbook*).

## SUPPORT FOR TEAM-TEACHING INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES

Wooster has a long and proud tradition of courses and programs that are interdepartmental, interdisciplinary, and collaborative in nature. In conjunction with the requirement in Learning across the Disciplines, in Fall 2000, the College established a new *Program in Interdisciplinary Studies (PIDS)*. This program was supported by an external grant from the Mellon Foundation. The PIDS courses typically are team-taught by two faculty members from different departments or programs. The proposals for such courses come from a broad range of departments and programs and provide opportunities for both students and faculty to experiment with new ideas, materials, and pedagogies.

We propose eliminating the current PIDS model and redirecting the support towards team-teaching. We propose to redefine the program so that teaching credit support is provided the first time a team-taught course is offered since that is when the work is most intensive. We believe that this model can be sustained without external resources.

This new proposal for promoting interdisciplinary programs will be organized in accordance with the following policies: Proposals for new interdisciplinary courses will be submitted to the Educational Policy Committee in the semester preceding the one in which the course is to be offered. New course proposals should follow the prescribed guidelines in the Faculty Handbook, Section 7K, and be submitted according to the established deadlines for new course proposals. All faculty members team-teaching a course approved by EPC will receive a total of two teaching credits the first time the course is offered. If there are more than two members in the team, the two teaching credits will be divided equally among the total number of faculty in the team. The chairs of home departments/programs will need to indicate whether the department/program can support the proposal for team-teaching.

Only those proposals meeting the criteria described below for team-taught interdisciplinary courses will be approved by EPC:

- Courses can be proposed either with an IDPT designation or within an interdisciplinary program that has an approved major or a minor.
- If the course already exists, the proposal should address the criteria by which team-teaching of the course will enhance student learning. A rationale for any projected enrollment cap for the course should also be provided.
- It is expected that the two faculty members team-teaching the course will come from two different disciplines.
- We propose a limit of approving no more than six courses per year. Ideally, each approved course should be offered by the same team at least twice in a four-year period.
- The home departments of faculty teaching these courses will not automatically receive adjunct support. On a case by case basis, requests for adjuncts may be granted by the Provost in consultation with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.
- There will initially be no stipend support for developing and teaching team-taught courses. If the current financial situation improves, we recommend providing modest support for developing interdisciplinary courses.