

Archway Curriculum
Nebraska Wesleyan University

Approved by the Faculty (April 2013)

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Archway Curriculum: Mission Statement

The Archway Curriculum integrates learning across disciplinary boundaries, enhances learning through non-classroom experiences, and weaves skill development throughout the academic program. Students will have frequent opportunities to develop fundamental skills in communicating effectively and thinking critically. Through this curriculum, students will be exposed to a broad range of topics and perspectives, enhancing their understanding of the world.

Archway Curriculum: Purpose Statements

First-Year Curriculum

Archway Seminar (4 credits)

The Archway Seminar introduces students to the intellectual practices that must be cultivated and routinely exercised to make the most of a liberal education. By exploring an interdisciplinary topic, students develop their capacity to think analytically, conduct research, communicate orally and in writing, and collaborate in solving problems.

First-Year Writing (4 credits)

First-Year Writing courses prepare students for further academic study and for careers by improving their writing skills. These courses focus on all stages of the writing process and give students the opportunity to compose in different styles and formats for different purposes.

Foundational Literacies (13-21 credits)* Modern

Language Literacy (0 – 8 credits)

The study of a modern language is a vehicle for learning about other cultures. Developing proficiency in another language enables students to communicate more effectively in a multilingual society.

Mathematical Problem Solving (3 credits)

Developing skills in mathematical problem solving provides students with important tools in logical reasoning that can be applied to both quantitative and non-quantitative arguments.

Science Investigations (2 courses) (7 credits)

In order to understand many of the most important challenges that society faces, students must possess a basic understanding of both the natural and social sciences.

Creative and Performing Arts (3 credits)

Creative and Performing Arts courses give students a first-hand experience of the creative act and of our shared artistic heritage. Students engage in the conceptual, formal, critical, and reflective processes that are central not only to artistic practice, but also to the demands of their working, social, and private lives. The participatory structure of the classes enhances students' potential for creative expression in the future.

Integrative Core (18 credits)

The Integrative Core prepares students to confront the multifaceted challenges that face them as members of a diverse and global society. In these courses, students examine a core issue from different disciplinary, cultural, historical, social, scientific, artistic, or ethical perspectives. As a result of this integrative study, students develop the intercultural, interpersonal, and interdisciplinary skills they will need as the next generation of civic and professional leaders.

Essential Connections

Writing-Instructive Courses (3 courses)

Writing-Instructive Courses ensure that students have frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills beyond the first year and across the curriculum.

Discourse- and Speaking-Instructive Courses (3 courses)

Discourse and Speaking-Instructive courses ensure that students have frequent opportunities to develop their speaking skills beyond the first year and across the curriculum.

Diversity-Instructive Courses (2 courses)

Diversity-Instructive courses invite students to expand both their understanding of majority/minority relations in U.S. society and develop greater appreciation of our global society. In an increasingly diverse world where global migration is increasing at a rapid pace, where inequality based on heritage is built into social systems, and where societal problems facing all humanity will require the minds, voices, and actions of individuals from every background, students must have a deeper understanding of the diverse nature of their world. This deeper understanding will allow for movement toward social justice.

Experiential Learning (Two experiences: 1 Intensive, 1 Exploratory)

Experiential Learning integrates co-curricular experiences into academics in order to expand, deepen, and apply students' classroom learning.

Archway Curriculum: General Amendments and Clarifications:

- Any Foundational Literacy course may also count toward fulfillment of a requirement in the Integrative Core.
- FYW courses may also count in Foundational Literacies and/or the Integrative Core.
- Essential Connections may count in Foundational Literacies and/or the Integrative Core.
- Experiential Learning may count in the First-Year curriculum.
- A course may be designated as Discourse- OR Speaking-Instructive; not both.
- A course may be designated as Diversity-instructive-Global OR Diversity-Instructive-US; not both.
- A course may only be approved in one thread in the Integrative Core.
- Except for the Archway Seminar, any course in the Archway Curriculum may count in a major or minor, as appropriate.
- For students entering NWU with a baccalaureate (or higher) degree from an accredited institution, the Archway Curriculum is waived.
- Pass/fail policy: Students may take only *one* class P/F within the Archway Curriculum, and the course must be in the Foundational Literacies. If the class double dips in other areas, the student will end up with that P/F class appearing in those areas as well.

Archway Curriculum: Logistics and Differences for Traditional and Adult Programs

First-Year Curriculum: Archway Seminar (4 credits)

Purpose

The Archway Seminar introduces first-year students to the intellectual practices that must be cultivated and routinely exercised to make the most of a liberal education. By exploring an interdisciplinary topic, students develop their capacity to think analytically, conduct research, communicate orally and in writing, and collaborate in solving problems.

Goals

Students will become competent in the methods of critical inquiry, including how to frame questions, collect and interpret data, evaluate its significance, and draw conclusions.

Students will develop abilities to learn through both receptive and critical reading.

Students will learn the resources that can be found in and through the library, and how to access and use those resources.

Students will develop skills that enable them to collaborate effectively with others in completion of a task.

Students will practice writing through a multi-stage process that includes conscientious revision.

Students will practice their public speaking skills.

Students will learn college-level standards of academic integrity.

Students will begin a positive relationship with the institution, beginning with the advisor/instructor who normally will serve as their pre-major advisor.

Students will take charge of their own educational experiences and avail themselves of existing resources to assist their future decision-making and academic progress.

Students will understand the intent of the Archway Curriculum.

Logistics

Traditional undergraduate program: Students will enroll in an Archway Seminar (IDS-1010) in their first semester at NWU. The IDS-1010 requirement is waived for traditional undergraduate students who enter with 26 or more transfer credit hours earned since high school graduation or GED completion. Instead, traditional undergraduates with more than 26 transfer credits earned after high school graduation take the IDS-1020 Integrative Seminar. The Archway Seminar instructor or Integrative Seminar instructor will serve as the student's advisor until a major is declared.

Adult undergraduate program: The Archway Seminar (IDS-1011) is 3 credits and required for all Adult program students. It is recommended to be taken in student's first semester. The Archway Seminar instructor will not serve as the advisor.

First-Year Curriculum: First-Year Writing (4 credits)

Purpose

First-Year Writing courses prepare students for further academic study and for careers by improving their writing skills. These courses focus on all stages of the writing process and give students the opportunity to compose in different styles and formats for different purposes.

Goals

Students will learn that writing can take many forms and serve many purposes.

Emphasis will be placed upon writing's analytical, persuasive, and public roles.

Students will learn that clear, effective, and memorable writing is the end result of a multi-stage process that includes conscientious revision.

Logistics

Traditional undergraduate program: Students should take First-Year Writing within the first year.

First-Year Writing classes will ordinarily be taught in 2-credit units; some classes may combine disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) content with writing instruction. Such courses will carry 4 credits but only count as one FYW course.

Students who come in needing First-Year Writing must complete 4 credits of First-Year Writing (in most cases involving two courses).

Students who enter with 3 credit hours of writing courses already completed, whether through transfer credits, AP exam, or Wesleyan Honors Academy (WHA), will have completed the first-year writing requirement.

Adult undergraduate program: First-Year Writing classes will ordinarily be taught as 3 credit courses, and the one 3 credit hour course will fulfill the requirement.

Foundational Literacies: Modern Language Literacy (0 – 8 credits)

Purpose

The study of a modern language is a vehicle for learning about other cultures. Developing proficiency in another language enables students to communicate more effectively in a multilingual society.

Goals

Students will acquire, at a minimum, proficiency equivalent to a year of modern language study at the college level, and all students will complete at least one semester of college language study, unless they qualify for one of the waivers listed below.

Students will gain unique perspectives on another culture through the study of a modern language other than English.

Logistics

Traditional undergraduate program: Students with previous language study will be tested and placed in the appropriate language class.

The modern language requirement at Nebraska Wesleyan University can be met in the following ways:

- a) Satisfactory completion of Stage II (second semester of the beginning two- semester language sequence) (4-5 credits), or
- b) Satisfactory completion of a more advanced language course (3 credits*), or
- c) Students with previous language study who have been tested and place higher than Stage II may meet this requirement upon completion of one semester in a new language, if they prefer (4-5 credits).

**2 credits for 3000-level course*

The Modern Language Literacy requirement is waived for students who have completed the fourth-year high school language course in a modern language with grades of “B” or higher in each semester of language study, or an A in both semesters of the fourth year.

Adult undergraduate program: Students may meet the modern language requirement in the following ways:

- a) Satisfactory completion of any Stage I or higher modern language course, or
- b) Satisfactory completion of an approved modern language course designed for Adult program students.

All undergraduate students: The Modern Language Literacy requirement is waived (through Executive Petition with the chair of the Modern Language department) for native speakers of a language other than English who have fulfilled the TOEFL/APIEL/IELTS admission standard.

Foundational Literacies: Mathematical Problem Solving (3 credits)

Purpose

Developing skills in mathematical problem solving provides students with important tools in logical reasoning that can be applied to both quantitative and non-quantitative arguments.

Goals

Students will be able to solve problems using these mathematical techniques:

- Making and testing mathematical conjectures and, in that process, critiquing the reasoning of others.
- Interpreting information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words).
- Modeling relevant information or scenarios using various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words, computer programs).
- Identifying and applying appropriate methods and strategies to solve mathematical problems, drawing conclusions from the solutions, and evaluating these conclusions.
- Using appropriate definitions, theorems and mathematical evidence to communicate, both orally and in writing, steps taken to arrive at a logical solution to a mathematical problem.
- Persevering at solving non-routine mathematical problems.
- Employing appropriate tools, such as calculators, computer software, concrete models, and pencil and paper, strategically, and interpreting the results of the tools correctly.

Logistics

All undergraduate students will take one course whose primary goal is to accomplish the objectives of the Mathematical Problem Solving area, regardless of their math placement results.

Foundational Literacies: Scientific Investigations (7 credits)

Natural Science Laboratory: 1 course and
Social Science: 1 course

Purpose

In order to understand many of the most important challenges that society faces, students must possess a basic understanding of both the natural and social sciences.

Goals

Students will study the fundamental concepts of the natural and social sciences.

Students will learn how the natural and social sciences investigate issues in contemporary society.

Students will understand the implications of science for the individual, society, and the environment.

Students will explore the nature and methods of science, and the value and limitations of the scientific approach.

Students will learn to conduct scientific inquiry ethically.

In a course designated Scientific Investigations: Natural Science Laboratory, students will learn techniques scientists use to ask and answer questions in the laboratory or field. This will involve:

- Articulating good research questions based on observations or review of the existing literature or data;
- Posing testable hypotheses;
- Collecting data in the laboratory or field;
- Interpreting those data; and
- Effectively communicating results.

Logistics

All undergraduate students must take one Natural Science course designated Scientific Investigations: Natural Science Laboratory and one Social Science course designated Scientific Investigations: Social Science.

Foundational Literacies: Creative and Performing Arts (3 Credits)

Purpose

Creative and Performing Arts courses give students a first-hand experience of the creative act and of our shared artistic heritage. Students engage in the conceptual, formal, critical, and reflective processes that are central not only to artistic practice, but also to the demands of their working, social, and private lives. The participatory structure of the classes enhances students' potential for creative expression in the future.

Goals

Students will develop the ability to express themselves by making works of art using appropriate processes, media, tools, and techniques.

Students will be self-reflective about their own artwork, will be receptive to the critiques of others, and will learn how to offer discerning responses to the artwork of others.

Students will increase their capacity for creative innovation and experimentation.

Students will learn how their personal creative work relates to the larger history of art, religion, society, and politics.

Students will attend or participate in university or local art events.

Logistics

Creative and Performing Arts courses will offer students the opportunity for frequent and extensive creative practice, guided by teachers, and supported by classmates.

Creative and Performing Arts courses will situate students' work within the context of past and current artistic practice in order to provide an apprenticeship in the art.

Creative and Performing Arts courses will emphasize revision as an essential component of the artistic process.

Integrative Core (18 credits)

Purpose

The Integrative Core prepares students to confront the multifaceted challenges that face them as members of a diverse and global society. In these courses, students examine a core issue from different disciplinary, cultural, historical, social, scientific, artistic, or ethical perspectives. As a result of this integrative study, students develop the intercultural, interpersonal, and interdisciplinary skills they will need as the next generation of civic and professional leaders.

Goals

Students will study one or two significant themes (in either two nine-hour threads, or one eighteen-hour thread) through a series of integrated courses.

Students will investigate these themes through disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches.

Students will critically analyze human experience within natural, social, or cultural environments.

Logistics

All undergraduate students: The Integrative Core consists of either one eighteen-hour, or two nine-hour thematically integrated thread(s) of courses.

In each thread, students must take at least one course from the 2000 level or above.

Courses in a 9-hour thread must be from a minimum of two disciplines.

Courses in an 18-hour thread must be from a minimum of four disciplines, with no more than 9 credit hours being from any one discipline.

Every course within a thread must critically analyze human experience within natural, social, or cultural environments.

In each academic year, each thread will have a coordinator. The coordinator will involve participating faculty in a regular process of collaboration and consultation. In collaboration with faculty teaching the thread, the coordinator will plan offerings two years in advance. Thread coordinators will also maintain "Thread Summaries", which will include the Thread Mission Statement and/or Key Questions, plus some expectations or goals for students, and current components of each thread.

Threads should regularly include Writing-, Speaking-, Discourse-, and Diversity-Instructive courses, where appropriate.

Courses within threads should incorporate experiential learning, where appropriate.

Internships could serve as part of a thread, with a maximum of nine hours of internship in an 18-credit thread and a maximum of four credits of internship in a 9-credit thread. Thread coordinators and advisors will need to track the limit on internship hours.

Thread proposals must explain how students will integrate the learning they accomplish within the thread.

Vehicles for accomplishing this integration within the courses in the thread might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An interdisciplinary core course, required for completion of a particular thread, that introduces concepts and themes that are integrated into the other courses taken within the thread.
- Assignments that build upon work done in previous courses within the thread.
- Projects that take place across the course of the thread—these might be artistic, literary, theatrical, internships, or research based. Alternately they might include building a website or computer program, engaging in a sequence of service learning or interning, among other options.
- A capstone course.

Vehicles for accomplishing this integration using a project supplemental to the thread might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A digital workspace that documents the student's learning within the thread.
- Service learning plus reflection.
- Internship experience plus reflection.
- A culminating research project or internship experience.
- Student-designed projects related to the content of the thread.

Transfer courses that are approved for NWU credit can be used to substitute for equivalent courses in threads. This “transfer-friendly” approach is meant to remove impediments that students might otherwise encounter in trying to fulfill the Integrative Core. Admittedly, this does mean that a student could theoretically transfer in enough courses to complete a thread, which is certainly not the spirit of the Integrative Core. It should be noted, however, that threads could circumvent this possible “loophole” by requiring that students in the thread complete a core course that is unique to NWU. Neither NWU Department Chairs, nor the Executive Committee, etc., should accept any transfer course as equivalent to this “unique” course the student takes at NWU.

Traditional program students: Depending on how many credits a transfer student brings to NWU, he or she may meet the Integrative Core requirement in these alternate ways:

- Transfer students transferring in fewer than 45 credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion still complete two 9-credit threads (or one 18-credit thread).
- Transfer students transferring in 45 to 89 credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion must complete one 9-credit thread.
- Students transferring in 90 credits or more are exempt from the Integrative Core requirement.

Adult program students:

- Students transferring in 32-63.5 credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion need only one 9-hour thread.
- Students transferring in 64 or more credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion are exempt from the Integrative Core.

Each adult program-specific thread will feature a 4000-level culminating “knot” course in which students tie up the courses comprising their thread. This would be a unique course with no transfer equivalents. The knot courses will be structured around a few central questions related to the thread topic, and these questions would also be addressed in other courses within the thread. The knot courses should be either Discourse-, or Speaking-, or Writing-Instructive.

Essential Connections: Writing-Instructive Courses (3 courses)

Purpose

Writing-Instructive Courses ensure that students have frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills beyond the first year and across the curriculum.

Goals

Students will learn to use writing that is attentive to the needs of particular audiences, purposes, genres, and formats.

Students will do substantial revisions of their writing, and will respond to formative feedback from faculty and peers during the writing process.

Students will develop and demonstrate their knowledge of the course content through graded written work.

Students will typically produce a minimum of twenty total pages of writing (produced individually or in groups), at least fifteen of which must be polished and graded work. This page total should be comprised of work done throughout the semester.

Logistics

NWU students will complete at least three Writing-Instructive courses beyond Archway Seminar and the course(s) used to fulfill a first-year writing requirement.

At least one Writing-Instructive course must be from the 3000 or 4000 level to ensure ongoing student practice and development in writing.

Writing-Instructive courses will be offered across the curriculum -- in Archway Curriculum courses, major courses, and/or electives.

Significant class time in Writing-Instructive courses will be devoted to writing instruction, which may take many forms, depending on the needs of the course. In-class writing instruction may be supplemented by out-of-class meetings with the faculty member or Cooper Center consultants.

Writing should be a significant (though not the only) way in which students accomplish the goals of the course.

Traditional undergraduate program: Students transferring with 58 or more credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion have one Writing-Instructive course waived. An upper-level course is still required.

Adult undergraduate program: Students transferring with 64 or more credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion have one Writing-Instructive course waived. An upper-level course is still required.

Essential Connections: Discourse- and Speaking-Instructive (3 courses):

Speaking-instructive = 2 or 3 courses, Discourse-instructive = 0 or 1 course

Purpose

Discourse- and Speaking-Instructive courses ensure that students have frequent opportunities to develop their speaking skills beyond the first year and across the curriculum.

Goals

Students will learn and practice the principles of collaborative discourse.

Students will learn and practice the principles of effective public speaking.

Students will learn and practice careful listening.

Students will engage in communication that explores multiple perspectives and invites transformation through a free exchange of ideas.

Students will use public speaking and collaborative discourse to engage discipline-specific content.

Students will develop critical thinking skills through evaluating multiple perspectives.

Students will receive and respond to formative feedback from faculty and peers and will be evaluated on their response to that feedback.

In Discourse-Instructive courses, students will engage in 60 to 120 minutes of collaborative discourse and will respond in writing to those experiences.

In Speaking-Instructive courses, students will speak publicly for 15 to 30 minutes, the majority of which must be carefully prepared in advance.

Logistics

Students will take three courses that are designated as Discourse- or Speaking- Instructive.

Courses may be taken from any discipline, but students are encouraged to develop oral communication skills in more than one discipline.

Students will take at least one Discourse- or Speaking-Instructive course at the 3000 level or above.

Significant class time in Discourse- and Speaking-Instructive courses will be devoted to instruction in oral communication, which may take many forms, depending on the needs of the course. In-class instruction may be supplemented by out-of-class meetings with the faculty member or Cooper Center consultants.

Speaking should be a significant (but not the only) way in which students develop and demonstrate their knowledge of course content.

Discourse- and Speaking-Instructive courses will be offered across the curriculum -- in Archway Curriculum courses, major courses, and/or electives.

Traditional undergraduate program: Students transferring in 58 or more credits earned since high school graduation or GED completion have one Speaking-Instructive course waived. An upper-level course is still required.

Adult undergraduate program: Students will take one course that is designated Discourse-Instructive and one course that is designated Speaking-Instructive. At least one course must be at the 2000-level or above.

Essential Connections: Diversity-Instructive Courses (2 courses)

U.S. diversity issues: 1 course
Global diversity issues: 1 course

Purpose

Diversity-Instructive courses invite students to expand both their understanding of inequalities in U.S. society and develop greater appreciation of our global society. In an increasingly diverse world where global migration is increasing at a rapid pace, where inequality based on heritage is built into social systems, and where the societal problems facing all of humanity will require the minds, voices, and actions of individuals from every background, students must have a deeper understanding of the diverse nature of their world. This deeper understanding will allow for movement toward social justice.

Goals

Students will deepen their understanding of the nature of power and privilege, and resulting inequalities;

Students will explore the relationship between historical forces and current social conditions regarding cultural diversity;

Students will expand their awareness of and sensitivity to how similarities and differences in behavior and cultural practices impact social life across the world;

Students will gain tools and resources to challenge ethnocentric thinking.

Logistics

Students will complete two Diversity-Instructive courses. One course must have a focus on U.S. diversity issues and one must focus on global diversity issues.

Diversity-Instructive courses will be offered across the curriculum – in Archway Curriculum courses, major courses, and/or electives.

Essential Connections: Experiential Learning (two activities)

Purpose

Experiential Learning integrates co-curricular experiences into academics in order to expand, deepen, and apply students' classroom learning.

Goals

Students will integrate and apply their knowledge and skills in settings beyond the classroom.

Students will develop their skills in communication, collaboration, and creative problem solving.

Students will develop their interpersonal and intercultural competence.

Students will develop personal and social responsibility.

Students will demonstrate self-awareness, self-discipline, reflection, and openness to growth.

Logistics

To fulfill the Experiential Learning area of the curriculum, students must complete one Exploratory Experiential Learning activity and one Intensive Experiential Learning activity, or two Intensives.

Experiential Learning activities should follow the National Society for Experiential Education's standards for the activity's intention, the participants' preparedness, the authenticity of the activity, the student's reflection, the monitoring and continuous improvement of the activity, the assessment and evaluation of the activity, and the student's acknowledgement of the relevant learning.

An Exploratory Experiential Learning activity requires an investment of at least twenty hours, including an analytic reflection component, and evaluation by an appropriate faculty or staff member.

An Intensive Experiential Learning activity requires at least forty-five hours, including an analytic reflection component, a demonstration of the student's learning in a formal setting, and evaluation by an appropriate faculty or staff member.

Students will typically complete their Exploratory Experiential Learning activity within their first two years, and will typically complete their Intensive Experiential Learning activity with their last two years.

The categories for Experiential Learning include:

- study away (e.g., CHIP, study abroad),
- professional service (e.g., practicum, student teaching, internship),
- research and creative endeavors (not including capstones),
- service learning, whether local, national, or international,
- applied experiences within courses (e.g., Tropical Biology trips),
- peer to peer mentoring or leadership experiences.

Traditional undergraduate program: The Exploratory experiential learning requirement is waived for students who transfer to NWU with 58 or more credit hours earned since high school graduation or GED completion.

Adult undergraduate program: Students must complete one Intensive Experiential Learning activity, which requires at least 30 hours of experiential learning.