

THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

Yale College, the undergraduate branch of Yale University, offers instruction in more than 120 subjects spanning the liberal arts, sciences, and engineering. Its signature residential college system and expansive extracurricular programs sustain a supportive community of students, staff, scholars, and researchers. For more than three centuries, Yale has provided leadership in undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences. While the University eventually grew to incorporate graduate and professional education, all undergraduate education at Yale continues to be provided through the College. Now in its fourth century, the College remains a recognized leader worldwide.

Yale College offers a liberal education that aims to:

- Educate talented students of diverse backgrounds to lead and serve in a complex and changing society.
- Provide a supportive residential community of learning in which social experience and the free exchange of ideas underpin the pursuit of knowledge.
- Cultivate both the broad intellectual, moral, civic, and creative capacities and the more specialized skills that allow students to thrive beyond the college gates.
- Draw on the distinctive strengths and traditions of Yale University as a globally recognized leader across the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, engineering, and the professions.

Yale seeks to educate students who are broad-minded and autonomous, capable of making judgments and taking responsibility for their decisions. A Yale College education should encourage students to become curious, engaged citizens. It should also prepare them well for their professional lives and further educational opportunities and help them develop as active learners who thrive in complex environments.

This philosophy of education corresponds with that expressed in the Yale Report of 1828, which draws a distinction between “expanding [the mind’s] powers, and storing it with knowledge.” Acquiring facts is important, but learning how to think critically and creatively in a variety of ways takes precedence.

The College encourages students to learn broadly and deeply. Each student completes a major in one of the College’s 80 programs or departments. The distributional requirements described in this bulletin ensure that students learn about a variety of subjects and intellectual approaches. In addition, the College requires that all students take courses that develop certain foundational skills— writing, quantitative reasoning, and language competency—that hold the key to opportunities in later study and later life. In each skill, students are required to travel some further distance from where they were in high school so that each competency matures and deepens. A student working toward a bachelor’s degree normally takes four or five courses each term and receives the B.A. or B.S. degree after completing thirty-six term courses or their equivalent in eight terms of enrollment. A candidate for the bachelor’s degree is required, in completing the thirty-six term courses, to fulfill the distributional requirements, as well as the requirements of a major program.

In a time of increasing globalization, both academic study of the international world and firsthand experience of foreign cultures are crucial. Yale College urges all of its students to consider a summer, a term, or a year abroad sometime during their college careers.

Yale College forms part of a great university and encourages students to participate in the conversation of a scholarly community that defines the pursuit of knowledge in such a university. While the College's goal of educating talented young people for future leadership has not changed since its founding, Yale has continually expanded the range of subjects it teaches, the excellence of its curriculum, pedagogy, and research, and the diversity of its student body. It currently offers instruction to over 6,000 students. For almost a century, the residential colleges have created enduring communities that are an essential part of the broader Yale ecosystem. As a distinctive community of learning, Yale College also seeks to instill an ethos of service—a sense of belonging on campus and a call to contribute beyond it. Participation in the College and University communities requires respect and tolerance and a willingness to listen to one another. Most of all, it requires an openness on the part of each member of the Yale community—an openness to learn and a humility about how little each of us actually knows.