

# ACADEMICS

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### Governing Academic Catalog

Westminster offers courses leading to the undergraduate degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Business Administration. The faculties of the four schools determine which of these degrees is to be awarded under each instructional program. Students may meet degree requirements as specified in the Academic Catalog in effect at the time of their entrance into the university, or they may elect to meet requirements given in a later academic catalog. All major, minor, and WCore requirements must be contained within a single issue and may not be selected from several issues.

Students who leave the university for no more than two regular semesters retain the right to be considered under their previous catalog and retain the right for six years following the date of entrance to graduate under requirements current at the time of entrance.

## Graduation and Residence

### Graduation Requirements

To be eligible for an undergraduate degree, students must satisfy the conditions outlined in each program and must satisfy the following conditions:

- **Quantity Standard**– Students must complete a minimum of 124 semester credit hours, 30 of which must be upper-division courses (numbered 300/3000 or above) from a four-year institution. Although some lower division transfer coursework may be accepted as meeting upper division major requirements, these hours will not be counted toward the 30 upper division hours required for graduation. Students with 123.51 or more hours have completed the quantity standard for graduation.
- **Grade Point Average**– Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in all work completed at the university. Students must present a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.3 in their major unless otherwise specified in the major program.
- Fulfill all WCore/Honors College requirements.
- Meet all requirements specific to individual majors and minors.
- Fulfill the residency requirements.

**Note** : Grades of CR or C- or above satisfy WCore requirements for graduation. However, only letter grades of C- or better may be presented to satisfy major or minor requirements including prerequisites (with the exception of Nursing, which requires a grade of C or better; and Education, which requires a grade of C+ or better in all education classes). **The final responsibility for being informed about, and adhering to, graduation requirements rests with the individual student.**

### Residence Requirements

Undergraduate students earning baccalaureate degrees from Westminster must complete a minimum of 36 hours of coursework at the university. In addition, undergraduate students must complete in residence:

- their last 36 hours of course work
- at least 12 hours of upper-division course work in any major
- at least 8 hours of course work in any minor or certificate

A maximum of 88 credit hours of external credit is accepted toward a degree. External credit includes any transfer credit, credit by examination, and credit earned through Prior Learning Assessment.

Students may appeal for an exception to the residency policy to the Registrar in writing. Appeals should clearly explain extenuating circumstances and provide a graduation plan. Any courses approved for transfer within a student's last 36 hours must be preapproved as part of the appeals process.

## Academic Major

The university offers the academic majors listed below:

- Accounting
- Art
- Arts Administration
- Biology
- Business Computer Information Systems
- Chemistry
- Communication
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Economics
- Educational Studies
- Elementary Education
- Environmental Studies
- Finance
- Geology
- History
- International Business
- Justice Studies
- Literature, Media and Writing (formerly English)
- Management
- Marketing
- Mathematics
- Music
- Neuroscience
- Nursing
- Outdoor Education & Leadership
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Sociology
- Sports Management
- Spanish - Latin American Studies
- Theatre

The requirements for each of these academic programs are listed according to the school to which they belong. Students are bound by the major requirements of their governing academic catalog. Changes made to program requirements for individual students by advisors are subject to the approval of program chairs, the school dean, and the Registrar.

### Declaring a Major & Planning Required Courses

All students are required to formally declare their major area of study during their sophomore year and complete an advising appointment with a faculty advisor in each of their academic programs (majors, minors, and certificates). A purpose of this advising appointment is to discuss and begin planning remaining degree requirements, with special attention paid to limited offerings and course sequencing within academic programs. A clear plan to complete a degree should be in place early in a student's junior year.

The process for formally declaring programs is explained on the Registrar's Office webpage. Students who have completed this process and turned in the required form(s) are then considered formally declared in their program(s). Students reaching 45 or more credits who have not formally declared their major and/or met with an advisor will not be eligible to register for upcoming semesters.

### Completing Two Majors

A major is an area of specialization within the degree. Students may complete more than one major at the same time but may not complete more than one degree at the same time. For a student completing two majors, or a major and minor, or any other combination of majors and minors, courses that are required for both majors/minors may be used to simultaneously fulfill requirements for both, but elective courses may be used in only one major or minor, unless a policy allowing double-counting of elective courses is stated in the catalog description of the major/minor. This is informally referred to as "double-dipping."

Specific information about combining two Gore School of Business majors may be obtained from the Gore School of Business or the Office of the Registrar to avoid "double-dipping" errors. Students may choose two majors, one that leads to a B.A., and one that leads to a B.S., but may receive only one

degree. The first-listed major on the graduation application determines the degree awarded.

### Customized Major

#### Educational Goals

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will comprehensively explore issues, ideas, artifacts, events, and other positions, before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.
- **Creativity:** Students will combine or synthesize new ideas, practices, or expertise in original ways that are characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.
- **Collaboration:** Students will demonstrate self-awareness, understanding of effective group dynamics, and project management skills.
- **Communication:** Students will communicate ideas to audiences in oral, visual, and written forms to establish knowledge, to increase understanding, or to advocate for a particular position.
- **Global Responsibility:** Students will (i) employ practices informed by social responsibility across the spectrum of differences and (ii) demonstrate knowledge of and evaluate solutions for, challenges affecting local, regional, and global communities.

#### Overview

Highly motivated and creative students may propose individualized programs of study that combine work across multiple traditional disciplines. A Customized Major must consist of a coherent sequence of classes selected from the offerings of at least two academic departments or programs. This sequence must be unified by a consistent conceptual framework that reflects clear focus, along with both breadth and depth of inquiry. There must be a demonstrable relation to a specific set of career or educational objectives, and the program must culminate in an integrative project or thesis. Possible subjects for Customized Majors include historical periods, keystone ideas, enduring questions, and new problems. For instance, a student might study Modernism in history, literature, art, and music; or she might explore the ideas of freedom and responsibility in philosophy, sociology, and political science; or she might combine insights from environmental studies, communications, and education to investigate the challenge of teaching ecological literacy. With the Customized Major, the possibilities are limited only by the student's imagination and capacity for self-direction.

#### Program Requirements

The Customized Major is not designed for students who are unable or unwilling to satisfy the requirements of existing academic programs. Applicants must have completed the equivalent of one full-time semester of academic work at Westminster University and must have earned a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher in all classes completed here. Only classes passed with a C or higher may be counted toward the major.

The Customized Major must consist of a minimum of fifty (50) semester credit hours, 80% of which must be taken at Westminster University. The curriculum should reflect a reasonable balance and sequence of introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses, and should include at least one course in research methods from one of the primary disciplines.

It is strongly recommended that each student complete a minimum of eight (8) hours of world language classes, though introductory language classes should not be counted toward the major. As many as eight (8) semester credit hours may be satisfied in field-based coursework such as independent study, internships, community work, and supervised work experience.

Each student must complete a capstone project that integrates insights, information, and methods from the relevant disciplines into a focused inquiry or experience. This project must be proposed to the Advisory Committee (see below) at the beginning of the senior year. The results of the project should be presented in a public forum at Westminster or elsewhere. The completed capstone project must be submitted to the Director by the last day of classes in the student's final semester.

#### Applying to the Program

Since the application process can take several months, students interested in pursuing the Customized Major should contact the Director as early as possible in their academic career. The Director will conduct an extensive intake interview with each prospective major, assess the applicant's academic history and interests, provide advice on the process of designing a Customized Major, and refer the student to faculty members who can provide

field-specific advice regarding the selection and sequencing of courses into a rigorous interdisciplinary curriculum.

The applicant will design an individualized plan of study in consultation with an Advisory Committee consisting of two or more faculty members from across the College. The application to the program should include:

- the title of the proposed major as it will appear on the transcript,
- a list of courses providing both breadth and depth in the major,
- a statement of the specific learning goals of the proposed major,
- a description of the career or educational objectives the major will support,
- a statement of how the proposed major compares to existing programs in the same field at other institutions.

The application should be submitted to the Customized Major Director for approval at least three semesters before the applicant's planned graduation date.

**Contact:** Julie Stewart, Program Director

**Office:** Foster 314

**Phone:** 801.832.2418

**Email:** [jstewart@westminsteru.edu](mailto:jstewart@westminsteru.edu)

### Completing Additional Major or Minor After Graduation

Westminster graduates may choose to complete an additional major or minor after their graduation date and are allowed to use their same governing catalog as long as they stay continuously enrolled. Requirements must be completed within one year of their graduation date and students must meet all requirements in residence at Westminster. The student must notify the Registrar's Office of his or her intention to complete an additional major or minor.

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### Academic Minor

The university offers an academic minor in most areas of instruction. Each instructional program lists specific minor requirements. Several majors require an accompanying minor. In lieu of a minor, students may support their majors with a broad variety of courses selected in consultation with their academic advisors. A minimum 2.0 GPA is required for coursework used to fulfill requirements for an academic minor. Minimum GPA requirements are listed for each academic minor. Only grades of C- or better may be presented to satisfy minor requirements.

Courses that are required for both a major and a minor may be used to fulfill requirements for both the major and the minor, but elective courses may be used in either the major or the minor. The hours may be used only once. In addition to the above-listed majors, the university offers minors in many of these areas plus minors only in Business, Data Science, Entrepreneurship, French, and Gender Studies. Information about combining Gore School of Business majors and minors may be obtained from the Gore School of Business or the Office of the Registrar.

### Undergraduate Certificates

Undergraduate Certificates give students a grounding in a particular skill set, allowing them to supplement their major with learning in other disciplines. Each certificate aligns with National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career readiness competencies, which include Communication, Equity and Inclusion, Leadership, and Technology. Each certificate culminates in an Applied Experience, an internship or service-learning course that involves students in applying their learning outside the classroom.

Some certificates include WCore and Honors courses, which can meet requirements both in the certificate and in WCore or Honors. Note that certificates are designed for undergraduates enrolled in a degree program, and only students completing certificates as part of a degree are eligible for financial aid. #See individual certificate requirements for details about double dipping courses with requirements from other majors or minors.

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### Second Bachelor's Degree

Students who have earned a bachelor's degree and are working toward a second bachelor's degree must complete a minimum of 36 credit hours at Westminster University beyond the first degree and must meet all degree requirements. Students may not complete two degrees concurrently. Students who already have earned a bachelor's degree are considered to have

met WCore and upper division hour requirements. Transfer students who have earned a bachelor's degree are automatically awarded 88 credit hours of transfer credit. Nursing prerequisite courses need to be fulfilled by students with prior degrees. Individual evaluations of comparable coursework will be made by the nursing program.

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## WCore Requirements

WCore at Westminster University is designed to foster the intellectual skills and values that are necessary as a foundation for learning and to encourage the thoughtful integration of different disciplines. The WCore offers a wide range of challenging courses that expands the knowledge of our students and allows them to investigate and express their interests. It is our belief that the WCore will revitalize our liberal education program and will create a climate in which more critical questions are asked and answered by our students. A priority of the reform is to have more full time faculty and instructional staff teaching in the WCore. This goal recognizes the importance of students interacting with faculty specifically in the first two years and throughout their tenure at Westminster. The following university-wide goals form the core of liberal education courses and are reinforced across the curriculum in major areas of study:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Global responsibility

## Fulfilling World Language Requirements

World Language requirements are listed as part of the major requirements for each major (see individual academic program listings). Most majors require eight credit hours to be completed in one of the following two ways:

- Eight credit hours of a single world language, obtained at Westminster or by transfer through two regular semester language classes. Note that if transferred from a quarter-hour school, you must have had all three quarters to equate to two semesters of a world language at Westminster University.
- Four credit hours of a world language and either: four credit hours of a Westminster May/ Summer international study experience or four credits of an international study tour transferred from an accredited university or university. Note that students may only receive such world language credit for participating in a May Term Study Experience (or equivalent from another institution) when the language is the native or predominant language of the country of destination, when a world language faculty member co-teaches the course, and when the student has passed at least one semester of world language instruction in the same language at the university level.

Adequate AP or CLEP examination scores may be used to satisfy all or part of the world language requirement. See [World Language Testing Options](#).

Students may take a Westminster University challenge examination in French or Spanish with approval by a faculty member in the Language program.

Students who have acquired native proficiency in language other than English (including ASL) may be exempt from the world language requirement but must meet with a language faculty member to receive a waiver. (Native proficiency is defined by the US Department of State and the International Center for Language Studies as fluency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.)

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## Learning Communities

**Christie Fox**, Director

All new first-year students are required to enroll in a Learning Community. These interdisciplinary learning experiences are part of Westminster's commitment to teaching and are a "best practice" in student engagement and learning. These interdisciplinary experiences are designed to help students:

1. Develop critical, analytical, writing and presentation skills, and
2. Establish strong relationships with other students and with faculty, and
3. Transition to Westminster.

Learning communities at Westminster link two classes together with a common theme. Typically, at least one of the classes also fulfills a WCore requirement. Sometimes, a course is paired with an INTR course which is a course designed for first-year students as a seminar class that focuses on issues of university life. Learning communities are taught primarily by full-time faculty members. One of the benefits of learning communities is that students get to interact with professors who have chosen to teach first-year students as part of their teaching responsibilities at Westminster. These faculty also join the student's advising team.

Learning Communities have been a part of our liberal education program since 2006. These classes vary widely on theme and topic areas. Recently, learning community classes have focused on holistic wellness; business; creating a more just world; and fantasy fiction and music. Current learning community (LC) class offerings are listed in the class schedule and on the [Westminster Learning Communities webpage](#).

### Notes:

- Honors students' "Welcome to Thinking" class serves as their Learning Community.
- Students who do not pass one or both courses contained within a first-year learning community are not required to repeat the learning community experience but will be required to successfully pass any WCore category represented by courses within the learning community.