

The Reimagined General Education Program

We have a new General Education program beginning Fall 2026. The current program will continue to be offered for current students. If you have questions about the new program or are considering switching programs, please talk to your advisor.

The General Education Program at Principia College provides the foundational perspectives and skills that are integral to a liberal arts education. It consists of:

1. First Year Experience
2. Writing Across the Curriculum Program
3. Perspectives Courses (distribution requirements)

Summary of Current General Education Program	Summary of New Reimagined General Education Program
FYE (2-3 courses)	FYE (1 course)
LADRs - Liberal Arts Distribution Requirements (12-17 courses)	Perspectives (13 courses)
Writing Requirements met through <i>papers</i> (completed in 1. FYE and 2. Capstone/culminating writing experience)	Writing requirements met through <i>courses</i> → (1. FYE course, 2. Writing Rich course, and 3. Writing in the Major course)

LADRs → Perspectives

One of the biggest changes to the Principia's General Education Program is the switch from Liberal Arts Distribution Requirements (LADRs) to Perspectives requirements. The descriptions of each perspective are provided in an appendix at the end of this document.

Here are the Perspectives required in the new program (requirements are the same for BA and BS degrees):

Perspectives	# of Courses
1.Creative Expression (CEP)	1
2.The Human Experience (HEP)	1
3.Self & Society (SSP)	1
4.Intercultural Awareness (IAP)	1
5.Scientific Literacy (SLP)	1

6.Scientific Practice (SPP)	1
Two additional courses from two different perspectives from the above list (1-6)	2
7.Analytical and Quantitative Reasoning (QRP)	1
8.Bible (BIP)	1
9.Physical Education (PEP)	1
10.Religious Literacy (RLP)	1
11.Writing Rich course (WR)	1

Writing Program

The Principia College Writing Program requirement is met through three courses:

1. **FYE Course**
2. **Writing Rich Course** (this course is one of the Perspectives)
3. **Writing in the Major Course**

Writing Rich Course

The Writing Rich (WR) course allows students to develop their writing practice within a content course, recognizing that academic writing looks different in various disciplines. This course should be taken during the sophomore or junior year, prior to completion of the Writing in the Major (WIM) course.

Writing in the Major Course

This is a culminating writing/research experience resulting in a final paper within the major. The Writing in the Major (WIM) piece is completed in a 300- or 400-level course completed during the junior or senior year.

The Fine Print:

Perspectives

Courses with Perspectives designations must be 3 SH or more, with the exception of the Physical Education Perspective (PEP). Courses with a Scientific Practice Perspective must be 4 SH. Participation in a varsity sport can be used to fulfill the Physical Education Perspective.

Transfer courses may be applied to the Perspectives; however, the Bible Perspective (BIP) and the Writing Rich (WR) Perspective must be successfully completed at Principia College.

FYE Course

All first-time college students and non-exempt transfer students must enroll in a First Year Experience (FYE) Course. Transfer students are exempt from the FYE Course if they have completed a year of full-time college coursework.

Students who do not earn a grade of C- or higher in the FYE Course are required to enroll in an additional Writing Rich (WR) course the following semester. This course is in addition to the one required Writing Rich (WR) course.

Transfers exempt from FYE may opt in on a space-available basis.

Writing Rich Perspective

The Writing Rich (WR) course is required of all students and may not be transferred in to meet this requirement. Students who do not complete the Writing Rich (WR) course with a passing grade (i.e., D- or better) will be required to complete an additional Writing Rich (WR) course the following semester with a passing grade.

Transfer students who do not transfer in one approved writing/composition course (in college or dual credit) at least four weeks prior to the start of their first semester must enroll in their required Writing Rich (WR) course their initial semester at Principia College.

Writing in the Major

In some fields, the capstone serves as the Writing in the Major (WIM) piece. This course is required of all students and may not be transferred in to meet this requirement.

Appendix A: Descriptions of Each Perspective

Creative Expression: The Creative Expression requirement engages students in exploring their own creativity and recognizing the power of the arts to both reflect and transform individual lives and society. The arts foster new ways of seeing the world, problem solving, as well as collaborative and communication skills. Through producing creative work and learning about the artistic practice of others, students develop curiosity, a willingness to experiment, the ability to share their own and others' stories, and an openness to expressing their authentic selves.

Students completing a Creative Expression course should be able to:

1. Develop foundational skills in and/or knowledge of creative practice.
2. Explore the creative process and/or the role of the artist and art in society.
3. Use disciplinary language to evaluate and critique creative work.

The Human Experience: The Human Experience requirement engages students in the exploration of complex questions surrounding human identity, values, and meaning. By examining diverse cultural, historical, philosophical, or artistic traditions, students will comprehend the impact of these traditions on the human experience. Through the interpretation of texts, artifacts, media, and other scholarly sources, students will gain insight into how individuals and societies express themselves, reflecting on the ways these expressions shape and are shaped by cultural and historical contexts.

Students completing a Human Experience course should be able to:

1. Explore complex questions about human identity, values, and meaning
2. Examine diverse cultural, historical, philosophical, or artistic traditions and their influence on the human experience
3. Interpret texts, artifacts, media and/or other scholarly sources to understand the human experience.

Self & Society: The Self and Society requirement will help students gain an understanding of how individuals and groups in given societies think, act, and interact. Students will develop self-awareness by reflecting on their own beliefs, values, and biases, and how these shape their interactions with other members of society. They will analyze the influence of cultural, social, economic, educational, and/or political factors on identity formation, contributing to an understanding of how these elements impact both individual and collective behavior in diverse contexts, thus better enabling them to develop solutions and bring healing to societal challenges.

Students completing a Self & Society course should be able to:

1. Describe theories and/or paradigms related to human behavior.
2. Demonstrate awareness of one's own beliefs, values, and biases and how these impact human behavior.
3. Analyze how cultural, social, economic, educational, and/or political factors shape societies at the local, national, and/or global levels

Intercultural Awareness: Intercultural awareness is characterized by understanding, appreciating, and respecting culturally and linguistically diverse people. Intercultural awareness is vital to bringing about a more fair, peaceful, and abundant world. To live peaceably and fairly, one has to be able to understand others' perspectives and cultures.

Students completing an Intercultural Awareness course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate cultural self-awareness
2. Demonstrate knowledge of languages or cultural worldviews
3. Demonstrate an ability to communicate across linguistic or cultural differences

Scientific Literacy: The study of natural sciences and mathematics helps to develop scientific literacy, defined by the National Academy of Sciences as "...the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity."* Such study fosters an understanding of and care for the environment, motivates ethical decisions, integrates critical and scientific thinking, and empowers learners to evaluate the validity of scientific information.

Students completing a Scientific Literacy course should be able to demonstrate scientific literacy, as defined by the National Academy of Sciences (1996*), by being able to:

1. Describe, explain, and predict natural or algorithmic phenomena
2. Evaluate the quality of scientific information on the basis of its source and the methods used to generate it.
3. Identify scientific issues underlying global, national and local decisions and express positions that are scientifically and technologically informed.

*National Academy of Sciences (1996). National Science Education Standards (Report). National Academy Press. Wash. D.C. p. 22. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/4962.html>

Scientific Practice: The scientific method of putting ideas to the test of demonstration - ensuring that research is conducted in a fair, unbiased and repeatable manner - grows ever more indispensable and is the foundation of many disciplines. Scientific practice courses provide students the opportunity to test hypotheses designed to expand their understanding of the biological and physical world.

Students completing a Scientific Practice course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate scientific literacy*

AND

2. Demonstrate competence in the scientific method using the following criteria listed below. Students should be able to:

a. observe, collect, and analyze data from natural properties or processes using data collected in the field or laboratory in order to arrive at a conclusion that better explains the properties or processes examined; or

b. use experimental methods to investigate the relationship(s) between two or more variables when at least one of those variables can be intentionally controlled or manipulated.

* National Academy of Sciences (1996). National Science Education Standards (Report). National Academy Press. Wash. D.C. p. 22. <<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/4962.html>>

Analytical and Quantitative Reasoning: The ability to reason quantitatively to make sound decisions in a data-informed society is essential.

Students completing a Quantitative Reasoning course should be able to:

1. Reason confidently, accurately, and effectively with numbers and symbols.
2. Draw valid inferences from data.

Bible: Students taking the Bible requirement are equipped with tools and introductory lenses to interpret and understand the Bible in ancient and contemporary contexts and to discover for themselves why the Bible is one of the most influential books in world history.

Students completing a Bible course should be able to:

1. Articulate the theological and ethical messages of biblical texts
2. Analyze biblical texts in their literary, historical, and contemporary contexts.
3. Use biblical research tools

Physical Education: The physical education program provides students a broad range of physical activities that encourage spiritual growth and character development; these activities help students maintain a balance of intellectual pursuits and physical endeavors.

Students completing a Physical Education course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate dominion over the mental and physical limitations associated with physical activity.
2. Perform proper movement and refined motor skills.
3. Practice the qualities of character associated with physical activity and achievement of a goal.

Religious Literacy: The religious literacy requirement will enrich the student experience by introducing religion as a means of understanding and contributing to the world as well as developing an ethical outlook. It also emphasizes the importance of cultivating an understanding of diverse perspectives when participating in interfaith and ecumenical conversations.

Students completing a Religious Literacy course should be able to:

1. Identify events, people, practices, texts, and/or theological concepts in a religious tradition.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of diverse perspectives when engaging in dialogue about faith.
3. Identify accurate and credible sources pertaining to religious traditions and expressions.

Writing Rich: See descriptions above.