

# Bachelor of Arts, Majors and Minors

## LIBERAL STUDIES

A Major and a Minor are offered

### General Description

#### The Liberal Studies Difference

Liberal Studies offers a significant alternative to traditional degrees in a single discipline. It draws its rich content from the humanities, arts and sciences, and treats it in a way which brings out the connections between different disciplines. Courses are team taught by professors from a wide range of academic backgrounds, who form with students a community intent on maximizing the learning of all. In participatory seminars students develop skills in communication and critical thinking so prized in graduate school and in the professions of tomorrow.

#### What is Liberal Studies?

- A critical and creative exploration of important issues raised by the most influential works of Western culture.
- A vibrant learning community of students and professors, who investigate together alternative conceptions of the universe and our place in it.
- A forum for active learning which does not rely on the work of so-called experts, but challenges students to develop their own understanding.
- An examination of current realities against the fascinating backdrop of the last three thousand years.
- Education of the whole person, through the promotion of crucial skills in communication (oral and written), teamwork, self-reliance, critical analysis and creative expression - skills at a premium in today's workplace.

#### Who Would Want to Take Liberal Studies?

The Liberal Studies Major is not for students who have decided in advance that their educational goal is a career in a single narrow discipline. Even these students, however, have much to gain from the rigorous skill-training and general cultural awareness they will receive by pursuing a Minor in Liberal Studies or by taking some Liberal Studies courses as electives.

The Liberal Studies Major is for you if

- you do not yet want to confine yourself to a traditional discipline, but want a more general education in which the relationships among various disciplines are explored;
- you want to complement your work in a traditional discipline with a broad understanding of its context and relevance;
- your goal is a career in law, public service, architecture, business, art, the media, education or any of a host of alternative where a broad education is recognized as an important asset.

Many possibilities for graduate study will also be open to those who combine a major in Liberal Studies with one in a specialized discipline. Our students have gone on to postgraduate and professional study in law, architecture, public administration, education, marine archaeology, communications, folklore studies, English, history, women's studies, philosophy and so on, usually without having to complete a qualifying year. A certain number proceed to Post-Degree Programs

in elementary or secondary education, and many are working in ESL and adult education.

## Programs and Courses in Liberal Studies

The Liberal Studies first-year courses, LBST 111/112, provide an introduction to interdisciplinary study focusing on the development of basic academic skills. They are open to all students and satisfy the Degree English Requirement. LBST 211 and LBST 212 extend this introduction into the artistic and scientific realms.

**Liberal Studies Major and Minor Programs:** Prior to year 3, students will consult with a degree advisor to declare their degree intentions. The Major and Minor in Liberal Studies are based around a series of core and companion courses. The 6-credit core courses involve the analysis of interesting and significant works (in literature, philosophy, theology, science, social science, art and music), and all four courses together ensure a varied and deep exposure to the western cultural tradition from ancient times to the present day. The 3-credit companion courses include laboratories, enquiry seminars, art and music workshops, trips to special events and opportunities for travel-study. They support the understanding, gathered in the core courses, of a particular historical period.

**Major Program:** The normal route to a Liberal Studies Major involves entering at the start of third year and taking a pair of courses each semester over two years: one 6-credit core course and one 3-credit companion course.

	Core Course	Companion Course
<b>Third Year, Fall</b>	LBST 310	LBST 311
<b>Third Year, Spring</b>	LBST 320	LBST 321
<b>Fourth Year, Fall</b>	LBST 410	LBST 411
<b>Fourth Year, Spring</b>	LBST 420	LBST 421

Variations on this scheme are possible, as allowed by the degree requirements explained below.

**Minor program:** The main purpose for the Minor program is to offer students a chance to experience a significantly different form of pedagogy for part of their undergraduate career. The Liberal Studies focus on basic academic/employability skills will be of value to those who take even a part of the program. Furthermore, the availability of a Minor will offer students who decide, in mid-career, not to complete a Liberal Studies Major an identifiable credential which marks their achievement in Liberal Studies. The required courses for a Liberal Studies Minor may be completed in as little as two semesters.

**Liberal Studies Courses as Electives in Other Programs:** Liberal Studies courses are open to all students who meet their prerequisites (see individual LBST course descriptions for prerequisite details). As such they will provide a generalist complement to the disciplinary experience acquired elsewhere. Of special interest to students who lack specific prerequisites for other courses but would like to sample the Liberal Studies approach to learning are LBST 430 and 440, which require only third-year standing as the prerequisite. provide students in other disciplines with a taste of the distinctive Liberal Studies approach to learning, in the form of 6-credit upper-level electives whose only prerequisite is third-year standing.

## Requirements for a Major

Students must fulfill all the Institutional B.A. degree requirements, including Degree English Requirements and courses listed below:

**Years 1 and 2:** Minimum of 54 credits (LBST 111/112 and/or 211/212 are recommended but not

required).

**Years 3 and 4:** 36 upper-level credits: 24 credits in core courses (LBST 310, 320, 410, 420); and 12 additional credits in "companion" courses (normally LBST 311, 321, 411, 421).

**Note 1:** 6 credits from LBST 322, 323, 390, 391, 392, 400, 412, 422 may be substituted for 6 credits from LBST 311, 321, 411, 421. These 6 credits will count for 6 of the 12 credits required in "companion" courses (normally LBST 311, 321, 411, 421).

**Note 2:** In exceptional circumstances, and with permission of the Chair, 6 credits of alternative upper-level LBST courses (other than LBST 430 and 440) may be substituted for 6 credits of the required courses.

**Note 3:** In the case of certain double Major combinations involving Liberal Studies, where there is some degree of overlap between the contents and methodologies of the two programs, special arrangements have been made to enable students to fulfill the requirements of both Majors without an excessive load in upper-level courses. For example, a double Major in History and Liberal Studies requires only 24 credits of upper-level History courses in addition to the 36 credits of Liberal Studies. All such arrangements are subject to the joint agreement of the Chairs in each Major program.

## Requirements for a Minor

Students must fulfill all the Institutional B.A. degree requirements, including Degree English Requirements and courses listed below:

**Years 1 and 2:** Minimum of 54 credits (LBST 111/112 and/or 211/212 are recommended but not required).

**Years 3 and 4:** Minimum of 18 credits of Liberal Studies courses (other than LBST 430 and 440) numbered 300 or above, including at least 12 from LBST 310, 320, 410 and 420. Normally these 18 credits will include LBST 310, but variations may be allowed by permission of the Chair.

## Liberal Studies Abroad

LBST 290, 291, 292, 322, 323, 390, 391, 392, 412, 422, 490 and 491 are offered in Europe during the summer, as part of the Liberal Studies Abroad program. This opportunity for intensive, on-site study of a particular cultural period and place is extended to students within or outside the Liberal Studies B.A. on a cost-recovery basis. Contact the Chair for further details, or visit [viu.ca/liberalstudies/lsabroad.htm](http://viu.ca/liberalstudies/lsabroad.htm).

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