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Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Programs

Liberal Studies (BA)

Location Offered:

Nanaimo

Credential:

Bachelor Degree

Options:

Major, Minor

Program Length:

4 Years

The Program

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 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

LBST 111 and 112 are recommended but not required and 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. Second-year courses allow students to explore some more concentrated topics.

Liberal Studies Major and Minor Programs

Students with third-year standing (54 completed academic credits) who wish to complete either program in two years should take LBST 350 and LBST 360 in one year and LBST 370 in the next (along with any necessary additional courses; if LBST 250 is taken instead of LBST 350 - both cannot be taken - then an additional 6 credits of upper-level LBST credits will be needed for the Major or the Minor).

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 three 6-credit courses, a 3-credit capstone course, a choice between a 3-credit field placement or 3-credit major essay, and a set of adjunct 3-credit 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 three courses together ensure a varied and deep exposure to the Western cultural tradition from ancient times to the present day. These core courses tend to cover time periods in a chronological fashion and students should try to take them in the following order: either LBST 250 or LBST 350, then LBST 360, and then LBST 370. The program culminates in a capstone course (LBST 450) that brings primary texts from the core courses into conversation with contemporary thinkers on a shared theme. From there, students may choose between the field placement course (LBST 452), giving students opportunities to use program-related skills in volunteer work; and the major essay course (LBST 451), which guides students in the writing of a major research paper. The 3-credit adjunct courses include laboratories, enquiry seminars, art and music workshops, trips to special events and opportunities for travel-study. They further inquiry into themes explored in the core courses.

Major Program

The Major requires completion of 30 upper-level Liberal Studies credits. The first core course for a Liberal Studies major can be taken at either the 2nd year level (LBST 250) or third-year level (LBST 350). Subsequently, students take the remaining 6-credit core courses, and in the fourth year, the capstone course and either one of the field

placement and major essay courses. Students taking LBST 250 must also complete at least four 3-credit adjunct courses, which may be taken at any time; students taking LBST 350 must also complete at least two 3-credit adjunct courses, which may be taken at any time.

Accelerated Entry

Students who have attained a mark of B- in any course in Liberal Studies, Philosophy or English may enter the third-year core courses after having completed 24 credits, i.e. with second year standing.

Minor Program

The Minor requires completion of 18 upper-level Liberal Studies Credits. 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. Students completing the Liberal Studies Minor will take all three 6-credit core courses (either LBST 250 or 350, LBST 360, LBST 370). Students who take LBST 250 (rather than 350) must also take an additional six credits of any upper-level Liberal Studies courses.

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.

Program Outline

Requirements for a Major

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

Years 1 and 2

LBST 111 and 112 are recommended but not required. If both are completed they can be applied to meet the Degree English Requirements.

LBST 250 and LBST 350 are the same six-credit course content, with different evaluation and requirements. You may take LBST 250 in the second year or LBST 350 in the third year (or in the second year if you meet the requirements described above in the section "accelerated entry").

Years 3 and 4	Credits
LBST 350* - (Finding the Human, Knowing the Divine [Advanced])	6
LBST 360 - (New Worlds and New Heavens)	6
LBST 370 - (Revolutions of the Modern World)	6
LBST 450 - (The Human Condition: Questions Past and Present)	3
LBST 451 - (Major Essay) <i>or</i> , LBST 452 - (Field Placement)	3
Upper-level LBST electives	6-12**

** Choose either LBST 250 in Year 2 or LBST 350 in Year 3.*

*** For students who select LBST 250, the Major in Liberal Studies requires an additional 12 credits of upper-level LBST courses, which may be taken in any year.*

*** For students who select LBST 350, the Major in Liberal Studies requires an additional 6 credits of upper-level LBST courses, which may be taken in any year.*

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

LBST 111 and 112 are recommended but not required. If both are completed they can be applied to meet the Degree English Requirements.

LBST 250 and LBST 350 are the same six-credit course content, with different evaluation and requirements. You may take LBST 250 in the second year or LBST 350 in the third year (or in the second year if you meet the requirements described above in the section "accelerated entry").

Years 3 and 4	Credits
LBST 350* - (Finding the Human, Knowing the Divine [Advanced])	6
LBST 360 - (New Worlds and New Heavens)	6
LBST 370 - (Revolutions of the Modern World)	6
Upper-level LBST electives	0-6**

** May be taken in year 2 as LBST 250.*

*** For students who select LBST 250, the Major in Liberal Studies requires an additional 6 credits of upper-level LBST courses, which may be taken in any year.*

*** For students who select LBST 350, the Major in Liberal Studies does not require any additional credits of upper-level LBST courses.*

Liberal Studies Abroad

The Liberal Studies Department offers the following Liberal Studies Abroad courses.

Liberal Studies Abroad	Credits
LBST 290 - (Special Topics in Liberal Studies (Abroad) I)	3
LBST 291 - (Special Topics in Liberal Studies (Abroad) II)	3
LBST 292 - (Special Topics in Liberal Studies (Abroad) III)	3
LBST 322 - (Special Topics in Western Culture: The Italian Renaissance I)	3
LBST 323 - (Special Topics in Western Culture: The Italian Renaissance II)	3
LBST 390 - (Advanced Special Topics in Liberal Studies (Abroad) I)	3
LBST 391 - (Advanced Special Topics in Liberal Studies (Abroad) II)	3
LBST 392 - (Advanced Special Topics in Liberal Studies (Abroad) III)	3
LBST 490 - (Directed Study in Liberal Studies I)	3
LBST 491 - (Directed Study in Liberal Studies II)	3

The Liberal Studies Abroad courses are offered in Europe during the summer. This opportunity for intensive, on-site study of a particular cultural period and place is extended to students within or outside the Bachelor of Arts - Liberal Studies program on a cost-recovery basis. Contact the Department Chair for further details, or visit VIU Liberal Studies Abroad.

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