

## Offices of the Registrar and the Dean

### Summary of Academic Requirements: Fall 2015

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

- Pass 32 semester courses; UP TO 3 of the 32 MAY BE TAKEN ON A P/F BASIS.
- Pass 4 Winter Study Projects
- Complete a major with at least a C- average in the major; courses for the major may not be P/F, except 1<sup>st</sup> course.
- Complete 4 physical education activities by the end of the sophomore year
- Complete the Distribution Requirement – only regularly graded courses may be counted

#### WHAT IS THE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT?

Four parts to requirement – DIVISIONAL, EXPLORING DIVERSITY INITIATIVE, WRITING & QUANTITATIVE/FORMAL REASONING

#### DIVISIONAL DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT

- The departments are divided into 3 divisions: (1) Languages and the Arts, (2) Social Studies, (3) Science and Mathematics
- Must pass 3 graded semester courses from each division; 2 of the courses in each division must be passed by the end of the sophomore year
- No more than 2 courses in each division used to satisfy the divisional distribution requirement can have the same subject/prefix, e.g., in Division 1, no more than 2 could be in English

#### EXPLORING DIVERSITY INITIATIVE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT

Courses that comprise the Exploring Diversity Initiative may fall under a variety of categories, including (but not limited to) the following:

1. Comparative Study of Cultures and Societies. These courses focus on the differences and similarities between cultures and societies, and/or on the ways in which cultures, peoples, and societies have interacted and responded to one another in the past.
2. Empathetic Understanding. These courses explore diverse human feelings, thoughts, and actions by recreating the social, political, cultural, and historical context of a group in order to imagine why within that context, those beliefs, experiences, and actions of the group emerged.
3. Power and Privilege: These courses link issues of diversity to economic and political power relations, investigating how cultural interaction is influenced by various structures, institutions, or practices that enable, maintain, or mitigate inequality among different groups.
4. Critical Theorization: These courses focus on ways scholars theorize the possibilities of cross-cultural understanding and interaction; they investigate the ways that disciplines and paradigms of knowledge both constitute "difference" and are reconfigured by the study of diversity-related questions.
5. Cultural Immersion: In various ways these courses immerse students in another culture and give them the tools with which to understand that culture from the inside. They include those foreign language courses that explicitly engage in the self-conscious awareness of cultural and societal differences, traditions, and customs as an integral aspect of language study.

All students are required to complete ONE course that is part of the Exploring Diversity Initiative. Although this course, which may be counted toward the divisional distribution requirement, may be completed any semester before graduation, students are urged to complete the course by the end of their sophomore year. Courses used to fulfill this requirement may not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Courses designated as exploring diversity initiative are marked with D in catalog, and with a globe symbol online.

#### WRITING REQUIREMENT

- Must pass 2 graded semester courses which are writing intensive; 1 by the end of the sophomore year and 1 by the end of the junior year
- Courses may also be used for Divisional, Exploring Diversity Initiative, Quantitative/Formal Reasoning Requirements and/or major
- Courses designated as writing intensive are marked with W in catalog (and with a pencil online.)

#### QUANTITATIVE/FORMAL REASONING REQUIREMENT

- Must pass 1 graded semester course primarily concerned with quantitative or formal reasoning by end of junior year; passing Quantitative Skills Test or MATH 102 is a prerequisite
- Course may also be used for Divisional, Exploring Diversity Initiative, Writing Requirements and/or major
- Courses designated as QFR are marked with Q in catalog (and with a # online.)

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAJORS NOW?

- You will declare your major during the spring of your sophomore year but you should think about majors when choosing your courses
- The catalog describes requirements for each major
- To be eligible for a major must have at least C- in each course in major taken in first and second years

#### WHAT IS THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDING?

A ten-person faculty committee that hears petitions to waive academic rules; also reviews student records after each term

#### ADVANCED PLACEMENT CREDITS

AP CREDIT MAY NOT BE USED TOWARD THE 32 SEMESTER OR 4 WSP COURSES REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION OR TOWARD THE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT. With permission from the appropriate department or program, AP credit may be used for placement and/or toward major or concentration requirements.

### **WHAT IS THE NORMAL COURSE LOAD FOR A SEMESTER?**

You must take 4 regularly graded courses each semester, or three regularly graded with one P/F (up to a max of 3 P/F total).

Although not usually recommended for first-term students, you may take an extra course which will not count toward graduation; register for this extra course at the beginning of the semester; at mid-term, you will receive a form that allows you to drop this extra course from your record or continue in it. (P/F option applies in the same way regardless of how many courses you are taking – a max on 1 P/F per term, a max of 3 total in your four years at Williams.)

### **WHAT LIMITS ARE THERE ON COURSES THAT FIRST YEAR STUDENTS CAN SIGN UP FOR?**

During the first two years of study, students are limited in the number of courses they may take in one department or subject each semester as follows:

- a) First-year students may take no more than one course with the same course prefix, nor more than two in one department, in a semester.
- b) Sophomores may take no more than two courses with the same course prefix, nor more than three in one department, in a semester.
- c) Sophomores may take no more than three courses with the same course prefix, nor more than four in one department, during the full year.
- d) A student may take no more than a total of five courses with the same course prefix, nor more than eight in one department, during the first two years.
- e) Any exception to the above *early concentration rule* may be requested by a petition to the Committee on Academic Standing (C.A.S.) filed at the time of registration. Petitions can be found here <http://web.williams.edu/Registrar/petitions/index.html>

### **WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING?**

First-year students must receive 3 grades of C- or higher or 2 grades of C- or higher and a P, and no failures each semester and pass a Winter Study Project.

Sophomores and above must receive 4 C- or higher grades each semester or 3 grades of C- or higher and a P and pass a Winter Study Project.

### **HOW DO I CHANGE MY SCHEDULE?**

All course changes must be made using SELFREG, the on-line registration system  
Complete instructions provided at Registrar's Office web page

### **IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW AND REMEMBER**

Some courses are "year-long" and are hyphenated in catalog; must pass both semesters to get any credit

Your grades will be sent only to you; it is up to you to share them with others, including parents, as you see fit

### **WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE CHANGES, FINAL EXAMS, ETC.?**

The Registrar's Office web site includes an up-to-the-minute on-line catalog and handbook, academic calendars for three years, SELFREG documentation, the final exam schedule and much more

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

Ask your advisor; come to the Registrar's Office; come to the Dean's Office - Don't hesitate to ask!

More details about the academic requirements of the College can be found here  
<http://web.williams.edu/Registrar/catalog/academicinfo.html#degree>