

Core Requirements Overview

This handout provides a brief overview of Occidental’s Core Requirements. Students are expected to complete all of their Core Requirements by the end of the junior year.

Official designation criteria for Core Requirements can be found on the Core Program website:

<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/core-program/courses-requirements>

I.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">Fall FYS Course</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">Spring FYS Course</div> </div>	<p><i>First-year student must take these courses. This requirement is waived for transfer students.</i></p>
II.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e1eef6; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPUD U.S. Diversity</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e1eef6; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPRF Regional Focus</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e1eef6; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPGC Global Connections</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffe0e0; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPFA Arts</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffe0e0; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPPE Pre-1800</div> </div>	<p><i>Some courses satisfy both a blue requirement and a red requirement.</i></p>
III.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e2efda; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPMS Math or Science (1)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e2efda; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">CPMS Math or Science (2)</div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e2efda; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">CPLS Lab Science</div>	<p><i>Lab Science (CPLS) courses can also be used to fulfill one or both of the CPMS requirements</i></p>
IV.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e1eef6; padding: 5px; width: 150px; text-align: center;">LANG Language Proficiency</div>	<p><i>Student must have proficiency in a non-English language equivalent to having completed a 102-level course.</i></p>

Description of Requirements

I. First-Year Seminars

These are small first-year writing seminars, each designed by a faculty member around a topic in their field of expertise, emphasizing discussion, critical analysis, and intensive instruction in writing. Incoming first-year students are required to take one seminar in the fall and one in the spring, for a minimum of eight units. FYS courses are graded on an S/U basis.

Note: Transfer students are waived from the First-Year Seminar requirement.

II. Culture and Fine Arts

U.S. Diversity (CPUD). Courses satisfying this requirement study difference in the U.S., with a focus on race, religion, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or sexuality; and use frameworks from different academic fields (such as but not limited to ethnic studies, gender studies, and religious studies) to explore how U.S. identity and experience have been shaped by a diverse array of intellectual and cultural influences and traditions.

Regional Focus (CPRF). Courses satisfying this requirement examine a region outside of the United States without privileging a U.S.-centric perspective. A CPRF course focuses on a region through unifying characteristics, which could be literary, artistic, religious, philosophical, economic, ecological, ideological, political, intellectual, linguistic, scientific, etc.

Global Connections (CPGC). These courses provide students with an understanding of the interconnectedness of cultural, socioeconomic, and political systems on a global level. Courses satisfying this requirement have a global or transnational perspective and a comparative framework, exploring at least two nations or regions and their global interactions; and address in their content at least two interconnected systems (literary, artistic, religious, philological, economic, ecological, ideological, political, social, intellectual, scientific, etc.).

Fine Arts (CPFA). Courses satisfying this requirement focus on art-making and/or cultural and historical understandings about creative works of art. These courses are intended to help students understand how creative works are conceived, produced, and disseminated, as well as how they are analyzed and interpreted.

Pre-1800 (CPPE). In courses meeting this requirement, at least 50% of the course topics and materials are drawn from before 1800 CE.

Important Note: Some course may be able to fulfill the Fine Arts or Pre-1800 requirement *in addition to one of:* U.S. Diversity, Regional Focus, or Global Connections. It is also possible to fulfill Fine Arts *and* Pre-1800 requirements with a single course; *however, a single course can never* fulfill more than two Core Requirements. In cases where a course has three Core Requirement attributes, only two requirements will be fulfilled. If Degree Works does not apply the course to the desired requirement, the student should contact the Registrar's Office for assistance.

II. Science and Math

Two courses in Math or Science (CPMS). The purpose of the Core Program Math/Science (CPMS) requirement is to ensure that students have significant exposure to, and experience with, disciplinary-specific thinking based on systematic observation, the analysis of data, and/or the use of mathematical concepts and formal methods of reasoning.

One Lab Science course (CPLS). CPLS courses are regularly scheduled classes typically held on a weekly basis, and are usually, composed of class meetings where some mixture of instructor-led explanation occurs ("lecture" sessions) coupled with practical sessions ("labs"). Courses that meet the Core Program Lab Science (CPLS) requirement include hands-on data collection through observation or experimentation in the field or laboratory; the use of numerical methods such as data analysis and modeling; and emphasize and demonstrate fundamental concepts of scientific inquiry (such as falsifiability and reproducibility, recognition of error, uncertainty, and bias).

IV. Language Proficiency

All students must achieve at least 102-level proficiency or the equivalent in a language other than English. There are several ways that a student can satisfy this requirement:

- *Through the completion of language courses.* Placement exams are available to determine the appropriate level to begin your study. If you are placed into a 101-level course (or if you are studying a language that is new to you), you will need to complete both the 101- and 102-level courses in order to fulfill the requirement. If you are placed into a 102-level course, you will only need to complete the single course to satisfy the requirement.
- *Exemption through placement exam.* Students who take a placement exam and are placed into the 201-level (or above) have the option of taking an additional exemption exam, the successful completion of which will fulfill the requirement. (For some languages, the placement and exemption exams are combined.)
- *Exemption through AP or SAT Subject Exam.* Students who receive a score of 4 or 5 on an Advanced Placement language exam can satisfy this requirement by submitting their official score report to Occidental. Additionally, students are exempt if they receive a score of 560 or above on the SAT Subject exam in French, Spanish, or Latin; a 550 or above in German or Chinese; or a 560 or above in any other non-English language. To receive an exemption based on a test score, the results must be sent to the Registrar's Office directly from the testing company.
- *Elementary Education in a non-English Language.* Students who have completed six years of elementary education or more in a non-English language are exempt from the Core language requirement. Such students should contact the chair of one of the language departments for more information; student will typically need to show documentation from a previous educational institution.
- *Special Proficiency Assessment.* For some languages not taught at Occidental, students may be able to complete the requirement by taking the ACTFL oral proficiency interview (OPI) and the writing proficiency test (WPT), or another similar language assessment. Please contact the Language Education Specialist for more information about this option.

Note: Some majors and minors have additional language requirements.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the 4-letter codes listed after each of the requirements?

These codes (CPUD, CPRF, CPLS, etc.) are the attribute codes used on Course Counts and Degree Works to represent each Core Requirement. Look in the column labeled "Core" to see if a course fulfills any requirements.

2. How do I know which Core Requirement I have already fulfilled?

Degree Works provides students with an easy way of tracking all of their requirements, including the Core Requirements. It can be accessed through myOxy.

3. How do I find courses that satisfy a specific Core Requirement?

You can also use the “Core Search” tab on the Course Counts website (<http://counts.oxy.edu>) to search for all courses that satisfy a given requirement.

4. How many Core Requirements can be fulfilled by a single course?

At the most, a course can fulfill two requirements, even if a course is tagged with three or more requirements. For example, ARTH 270 (Greek Art) is tagged with Regional Focus, Fine Arts, and Pre-1800. A student completing this course, however, will only fulfill two of those three Core Requirements. (To choose which two requirements are fulfilled, contact the Registrar’s Office.)

5. Can transfer courses be used to fulfill a Core Requirement?

Yes, approved transfer courses can be used to fulfill Core Requirement. Current students interested in taking a course at another institution during the summer should contact the Core Program *in advance* to get approval for any courses that they wish to fulfill a Core Requirement. Transfer students should contact the Core Program (coreprogram@oxy.edu) to discuss approvals for previous coursework.

6. Can AP or IB scores fulfill a Core Requirement?

In most cases, AP or IB scores can *not* be used to fulfill Core Requirements. The only exception is the language proficiency requirement, which can be fulfilled using an AP score of 4 or 5 on a non-English language exam.

7. Where can I get more information?

If you have additional questions about the Core Requirements, please talk to your adviser or contact the Core Program (coreprogram@oxy.edu) or Advising Center (advisingcenter@oxy.edu).