



آغا خان یونیورسٹی
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



COURSE CATALOG

2025-2026

www.aku.edu/faspk

Disclaimer

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences Course Catalog 2025–26 is designed to provide students and stakeholders with useful information about academic programs, policies, and resources. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the catalog should not be considered a binding document.

This catalog offers an overview, but details will evolve as we continue refining our offerings. Courses, schedules, and other information may be subject to change based on ongoing academic planning and institutional priorities.

Any changes are made in the spirit of continuous improvement and a commitment to delivering a high-quality educational experience.

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Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The Aga Khan University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) has a core mission to educate youth to become future leaders.

This involves providing a transformative educational experience that is challenging, stimulating, and designed to cultivate innovative thought and consequential action in its graduates.

FAS is dedicated to developing leaders who not only possess strong character and intellectual capacities but are also impassioned and well-informed, driven to take action to improve lives and shape a better future.

Dean's Welcome

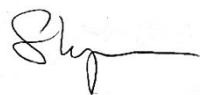


Welcome to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Our undergraduate program offers an exciting opportunity to challenge yourselves and those around you to make sense of the scholarship and the science that has been produced by those who came before us. It's exhilarating to embrace higher education not as satisfying assessment criteria, but rather as part of a life-long journey of exploration and growth.

The need for critical engagement with knowledge has never been greater. The world is at a turning point and the future is decidedly uncertain. We need to prepare students for a future that will be subject to ongoing change. Teaching a specific professional skill set is insufficient—we need to ensure that students are capable and ready to take on enriching and challenging careers from the day they graduate, but that they will also be able to pivot throughout their careers to seize opportunities that are currently unimaginable. For this, students need to be able to generate, evaluate and critique knowledge in diverse contexts. They need to be able to integrate theory and empirical knowledge in ways that enable more effective practice in governance, the arts, business, science and beyond. Equally, they need to ensure that their actions are grounded in sound ethical frameworks in which the injustices of the past are not inadvertently repeated or amplified.

The goal of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is not to *tell* students what to think, but rather to give them the opportunity to engage critically with their own learning to develop the knowledge and skills to make decisions throughout their lives that positively impact the world around them.



Professor Stephen Lyon

DEAN, FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Mission Statement

Our Vision

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Aga Khan University envisions a future in which higher education serves as a transformative force—for individuals, communities, and societies. Grounded in the values of the Aga Khan Development Network and aligned with AKU’s founding mission of academic excellence and social impact, FAS seeks to cultivate knowledge that is not only rigorous but also relevant and responsible.

Guided by the principles of **Impact, Quality, Relevance, and Access (IQRA)**, FAS prepares students to lead with integrity, think across boundaries, and act with purpose in a rapidly changing world. Through interdisciplinary learning, ethical inquiry, and meaningful engagement with global and local challenges, the faculty fosters curiosity, reflection, and civic responsibility.

FAS is committed to nurturing scholars who are intellectually ambitious, ethically grounded, and deeply committed to improving the human condition. By fostering an environment of academic excellence and public service, the faculty contributes to a more just, sustainable, and pluralistic future.

Approach to Learning

At the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, learning is designed to be transformative—integrative in structure, collaborative in spirit, and responsive to the world around us. FAS students engage with big questions and complex challenges through a curriculum that bridges the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, encouraging them to draw connections across disciplines and perspectives.

Grounded in active exploration, students write, question, debate, research, and create in an environment that values dialogue and experimentation. Through immersive experiences—whether in classrooms, communities, archives, laboratories, or field sites—they connect theory with practice and ideas with action.

Our approach is defined by:

- **Interdisciplinary learning** that empowers students to think critically across fields and confront complexity with creativity.
- **Close faculty mentorship** that nurtures intellectual independence and ethical reflection.
- **Experiential education** through internships, fieldwork, workshops, and community-based projects that engage real-world challenges.
- **Global and local engagement** that instills civic responsibility and cross-cultural understanding.

This model prepares students to lead with humility, communicate with insight, and contribute meaningfully to a more just and sustainable world.

The FAS Graduate: A Portrait of Impact

An FAS education culminates in graduates who are equipped to lead, innovate, and serve in an interconnected world. FAS graduates embody a unique combination of skills and values, enabling them to not only succeed but also lead with conscience and purpose.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION	ETHICAL LEADERSHIP	ENGAGEMENT WITH PLURALISM	OBJECTIVE REASONING
Capable of articulating complex ideas clearly and persuasively across various platforms, from written to spoken and visual communication	Demonstrate integrity, independent ethical reasoning, and a commitment to acting with honesty and responsibility in all aspects of life	Skilled in rethinking problems, adapting ideas across contexts, and understanding diverse perspectives to foster innovation and collaboration	Committed to contributing to the greater good, with an awareness of the human and environmental impact of their actions
CREATIVITY	ENTREPRENEURIAL OUTLOOK	COMMITMENT TO SERVICE	SERVING COMMUNITIES
Creativity helps us adapt ideas, see through diverse perspectives, and understand unfamiliar worldviews with empathy across cultures and disciplines	Embrace calculated risks and innovation, ready to tackle challenges and create new possibilities across disciplines, from business to science and the arts	Lead with a focus on service to others, upholding high principles and using their knowledge to positively influence communities	Committed to contributing to the greater good, with an awareness of the human and environmental impact of their actions

A Lifelong Commitment to Change

Through its innovative curriculum, global engagement, and unwavering commitment to social responsibility, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Aga Khan University prepares students to thrive not only as professionals but as change-makers. Whether in public service, research, entrepreneurship, or beyond, FAS alumni will be prepared to enrich the intellectual, cultural, and civic life of their communities—and of the world.

Our Faculty

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences brings together a dedicated and diverse group of educators with expertise in environmental sciences, politics, philosophy, economics, sociology, anthropology, and history.

Our faculty includes full-time members based at the Stadium Road campus in Karachi, along with part-time sessional instructors who offer specialized courses. Affiliated faculty from the Medical College, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Office of Environment and Sustainability, and the English Language Enhancement Network also contribute regularly. Together, they create a dynamic, interdisciplinary learning environment where students engage with a broad range of perspectives and approaches.

We also benefit from faculty across all Aga Khan University campuses, most notably at our sister institution, the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations (AKU-ISMC) in the United Kingdom. Though not based in Karachi, they play a vital role in our curriculum by offering hybrid courses that connect students across locations. This cross-institutional experience fosters a rich exchange of ideas and broadens students' intellectual and global outlook.

Core, Sessional, and Teaching Faculty

Stephen Lyon	Dean and Professor of Anthropology PHD ANTHROPOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF KENT
Duane Rousselle	Associate Dean of Research and Associate Professor PHD CULTURAL STUDIES, TRENT UNIVERSITY
Muhammad Ashar Malik	Associate Dean of Education and Assistant Professor PHD HEALTH ECONOMICS, ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM
Zoya Sameen	Director of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Professor PHD HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Chisaki Fukushima	Assistant Professor PHD RURAL ECONOMY, UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
Fozia Parveen	Assistant Professor PHD ENGINEERING SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Mariam Sabri	Assistant Professor PHD HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
Mohsin Nawaz	Assistant Professor PHD ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING, KYUNGPOOK NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Abbas Muhammad Husain	Lecturer M.ED., UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
Irene Martinez Fernandez	Lecturer MSC DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS, SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Farah Nisar	Assistant Lecturer PHD BOTANY, UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI
Yousuf Hasan	Assistant Lecturer MA PHILOSOPHY, WESTERN ONTARIO UNIVERSITY
Bina Shah	Visiting Faculty M.ED. EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Muhammad Shahid Waheed	Sessional Faculty MPHIL ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI
Saadia Asad Pathan	Sessional Faculty MA MODERN LITERATURE AND CULTURES, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON
Umme Farwah Halai	Sessional Faculty M.ED., AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Miriam Kugele	Lecturer and Director, Environment and Sustainability MSC NATURE, SOCIETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Rahedeen Shamsher Ali	Instructor and Teaching Specialist, ELE Net MA INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI
Leroy Johns	Instructor and Director of Courses, Alliance Française de Karachi

Affiliated Faculty in Aga Khan University

Pakistan	
Zahra Hassan	Professor, Medical College
Nimira Asif	Associate Dean and Assistant Professor, AKU-SONAM
Shagufta Iqbal	Senior Instructor, AKU-SONAM
United Kingdom	
Alex Bellem	Assistant Professor and Language Program Coordinator, AKU-ISMC
Hadi Enayat	Assistant Professor, AKU-ISMC
Jeff Tan	Associate Professor, AKU-ISMC
Jonas Otterbeck	Professor of Islamic Studies, AKU-ISMC
Mathew Barber	Assistant Professor, AKU-ISMC
Peter Verkinderen	Assistant Professor, AKU-ISMC
Sanaa Alimia	Assistant Professor, AKU-ISMC
Sarah Bowen Savant	Professor of History and Director of the Centre for Digital Humanities, AKU-ISMC
Shahzad Bashir	Professor of Islamic Humanities, AKU-ISMC
Walid Ghali	Associate Professor and Head Librarian, AKU-ISMC
East Africa	
Amina Abubakar	Professor and Director, Institute for Human Development, Kenya
Emmanuel Sulle	Director, Arusha Climate and Environmental Research Centre, Tanzania

Academic Policies

This section is supplemental and should be read in conjunction with the Aga Khan University **Undergraduate Programs Student Handbook**, which is available at: <https://www.aku.edu/admissions/Documents/undergraduate-handbook.pdf>.

Academic Conduct and Integrity

Aga Khan University is committed to creating a learning environment where all individuals are encouraged to share their views respectfully. Students and faculty members are assured equal treatment, regardless of their political, religious, or personal beliefs. Everyone within the AKU community must contribute to maintaining an atmosphere that allows for effective teaching, learning, and research.

The Student Academic Integrity Policy sets clear expectations for honesty in academic pursuits, including coursework and research. The policy explicitly addresses issues such as plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation, with disciplinary actions ranging from grade penalties to more severe measures like suspension or expulsion, depending on the case. The University uses tools such as Turnitin to detect plagiarism, and students are made aware of this practice through course syllabi.

Faculty assess students based on the academic criteria established at the beginning of each course. Should students feel that their academic integrity or grading has been unfairly judged, an appeals process is available to ensure fair treatment and resolution.

University Statement on Anti-Discrimination

AKU fosters a zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of harassment, including bullying, discrimination, and sexual harassment. The University is dedicated to maintaining a safe and respectful environment, ensuring that students are protected from harassment, intimidation, and exploitation. The policy promotes mutual respect and dignity, encouraging students to be aware of and report any incidents of harassment. It also emphasizes that all complaints will be thoroughly investigated, ensuring confidentiality and no retaliation. Through this commitment, the University aims to create an environment free from discrimination and harassment, fostering a culture of openness and support for victims.

Gender Equality

The University's Statement on Gender Equality for Students underscores the institution's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment free from discrimination based on gender. The policy aims to promote equality, dignity, and respect, ensuring that both women and men are treated fairly and without bias. It strives to eliminate gender-based discrimination and harassment through education and effective procedures. The University also seeks to create a balanced representation of men and women across all levels and areas of study, while ensuring

accessible student support services and an inclusive academic environment that supports traditionally underrepresented groups.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

AKU is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for students with disabilities, providing an inclusive environment that supports their full participation in academic and social life. The University offers accessible campuses, classrooms, and resources, including disability services such as academic accommodations, counseling, and assistive technologies. The policy focuses on removing barriers and making reasonable adjustments in curriculum, examinations, and campus facilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to communicate their needs, and appropriate support will be provided to help them achieve academic success. The Disability Advisory Committee, led by the Dean of Students and Director of Student Experience, oversees the implementation of these services, ensuring compliance and continuous improvement.

Assessment and Grading

AKU ensures fairness, consistency, and transparency in assessment and grading. Student performance is evaluated through various methods, including written assignments, presentations, creative works, and practical applications, aligned with program objectives.

Grading Scale			
Letter	Percentage	Grade Point	Grade Description
A+	95 - 100	4	Exceptional work significantly exceeding course expectations
A	90 - 94	4	Outstanding work
A-	85 - 89	3.7	Excellent work
B+	80 - 84	3.3	Very Good work
B	75 - 79	3	Sound quality, good work
B-	70 - 74	2.7	Satisfactory work
C+	65 - 69	2.3	Adequate for the course
C	60 - 64	2	Marginal Pass
C-	55 - 59	1.7	Marginal Fail: No credit for C- or below.
F	< 55	0	Fail: No credit; affects GPA/CGPA.
P	Pass	Not applicable	Credit given; not included in GPA/CGPA.
I	Incomplete	Not applicable	Must be cleared within 90 days; does not affect GPA/CGPA.
W	Withdrawn	Not applicable	Does not affect GPA/CGPA.

Bachelor of Studies in Arts and Sciences

The **Bachelor of Studies (BS) in Arts and Sciences** at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is a transformative four-year undergraduate program designed to educate and develop future leaders.

Program Overview

The **Bachelor of Studies in Arts and Sciences** is grounded in a philosophy and approach that diverges from traditional professional education models by providing a broad, interdisciplinary foundation integrating humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. It emphasizes a holistic educational approach, nurturing the development of the ‘whole person’ by fostering intellectual capacities, ethical reasoning, and a commitment to active citizenship and meaningful lives. FAS aims to cultivate graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also impassioned to address complex global challenges and improve society. The program fosters a learning environment that values critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability, preparing students to navigate an interconnected and rapidly changing world.

Foundational Components of the Program

- **The Core Curriculum** introduces students to a breadth of study across the arts, humanities, and natural and social sciences. This interdisciplinary approach integrates knowledge and diverse perspectives, developing essential skills in historical, social, and ethical analysis, quantitative reasoning, scientific inquiry, and writing and rhetoric.
Students are expected to complete the majority of their core requirements in their first year of study.
- Students choose from four **Interdisciplinary Majors**: Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Human and Environmental Biology, Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, and Social Development Studies. Each major builds upon the foundation of the Core Curriculum. **We strongly encourage students to begin major coursework as early as possible, starting in their first year.** By the end of their second year, they formally declare their major and continue with more advanced study in their chosen field.
- **Experiential learning** is integrated throughout the program, connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts. This includes internships, community engagement, and the use of the Design and Development Laboratory (D-Lab) to foster innovation and problem-solving skills.
- The program culminates in a **Senior Capstone Project**, a self-directed research or creative project in the student’s area of specialization. While many students choose to write a thesis, other forms of inquiry and presentation are encouraged, depending on the nature of the project. This capstone promotes independent inquiry, critical thinking, and the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge, preparing students for future academic or professional pursuits.

The BS Arts and Sciences equips graduates with the knowledge, skills, and adaptability to tackle real-world challenges. With a strong intellectual foundation and practical experience, they are prepared for advanced study, professional careers, and significant contributions to society.

BS Arts and Sciences Semester Grid								
Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4	Semester 5	Semester 6	Summer (Year 2 or 3)	Semester 7	Semester 8
Rhetoric and Reasoning (3 credits)	Islamic Thought and Civ (2 credits)	The Art of Argument (3 credits)	Core: Arts and Humanities (2 credits)	Major Elective 1—300/400 (3 credits)	Major Elective 6—100/200 (3 credits)	Experiential Learning/ Internship (3 credits)	Senior Thesis I: Capstone (3 credits)	Senior Thesis II: Capstone (3 credits)
Analytical Methods (3 credits)	Engaging with Climate Change (2 credits)	Major Core 3 (3 credits)	Major Core 7 (3 credits)	Major Elective 2—300/400 (3 credits)	Major Elective 7—100/200 (3 credits)		Major Elective 9—100/200 (3 credits)	Major Elective 5—300/400 (3 credits)
Theoretical Foundations (2 credits)	Principles of Entrepreneurship (2 credits)	Major Core 4 (3 credits)	Major Core 8 (3 credits)	Major Elective 4—100/200 (3 credits)	Major Elective 8—100/200 (3 credits)		Major Elective 10—100/200 (3 credits)	Major Elective 6—300/400 (3 credits)
The Scientific Method (3 credits)	Mathematics in a Changing World (3 credits)	Major Core 5 (3 credits)	Major Elective 2—100/200 (3 credits)	Major Elective 5—100/200 (3 credits)	Major Elective 3—300/400 (3 credits)		Major Elective 4—300/400 (3 credits)	Open Elective 4 (3 credits)
Critical Thinking (3 credits)	Major Core 1 (3 credits)	Major Core 6 (3 credits)	Major Elective 3—100/200 (3 credits)	Open Elective 2 (3 credits)	Open Elective 3 (3 credits)			
Modern Pakistan (2 credits)	Major Core 2 (3 credits)	Major Elective 1—100/200 (3 credits)	Open Elective 1 (3 credits)					

Key

Major Coursework (72 credits)					
Core Curriculum (30 credits)	Major Core ¹ (24 credits)	Major Electives (48 credits)	Open Elective Coursework (12 credits)	Experiential Learning /Internship (3 credits)	Senior Capstone Project (6 credits)

¹ Requirements for **Philosophy, Politics, and Economics** are different: the Major Core comprises **30 credits** and Major Electives comprise **42 credits**. Please consult the PPE section of this catalog on pages 33-39 for more information.

Planning Your Degree

Credit Distribution Summary	
Program Component	Required Credits
Core Curriculum	30
Major Coursework	72
Open Elective Coursework	12
Experiential Learning/Internship	3
Senior Capstone Project	6
Total	123

To graduate from the BS Arts and Sciences program, **students must complete at least 123 credits**, which include the Core Curriculum, major coursework, open electives, internship credits, and the senior capstone. This credit distribution ensures a well-rounded education, combining foundational knowledge, specialized study, and practical experience.

Course levels generally correspond to the year in which they are typically taken: 100-level courses (e.g., 100) are usually taken in Year 1, 200-level courses in Year 2, and so on. However, this is not a strict rule—students may take courses at different levels depending on their background, prerequisites, and academic plan.

Ideal progression through the program typically follows these key milestones:

- Complete the majority of Core Curriculum courses by the end of Year 1
- Begin coursework in your major as early as Semester 2 and no later than Semester 3
- Select a major by the end of Year 1, with the option to change by the end of Year 2
- Complete credited internships in the second or third summer of the program
- Focus on the senior capstone and advanced coursework during Years 3 and 4

The semester grid provides a general roadmap for completing the BS Arts and Sciences program, though individual coursework may vary. Students should periodically consult the semester grid and credit distribution summary as planning tools and work closely with their faculty adviser, assigned in their first year, to stay on track for graduation.

The following sections of this catalog outline Core Curriculum requirements, major-specific coursework, and guidelines for the internship and senior capstone. These resources will help students map their coursework onto the semester grid, ensuring a clear and structured path to completing their degree.

The Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum provides students with a broad and integrative foundation in the arts and sciences. Comprising **12 required courses and 30 credits**, the Core ensures that all students develop the ability to think critically, engage with complex ideas, and express themselves with clarity and precision. Through an interdisciplinary approach, students cultivate intellectual flexibility, problem-solving skills, and a deeper understanding of the world around them. While students are expected to complete the majority of Core requirements within their first year, some requirements may be fulfilled in later semesters alongside major coursework.

Structured around **five key areas of inquiry**, the Core fosters writing and rhetoric, scientific and quantitative inquiry, perspectives in social science analysis, ethical and civic engagement, and arts, humanities, and culture. Students develop strong analytical and writing skills, apply scientific and logical reasoning, utilize social science methodologies, critically engage with ethical and civic responsibilities, and explore historical, artistic, and cultural traditions. The Core connects theoretical learning with real-world applications, preparing students to navigate complex societal, environmental, and ethical challenges.

Rooted in interdisciplinary inquiry, the Core encourages students to explore multiple ways of thinking and develop an appreciation for the interconnectedness of knowledge. By engaging with diverse perspectives, methodologies, and intellectual traditions, students gain the skills necessary to assess information critically, articulate thoughtful insights, and contribute constructively to academic and professional discourse. Upon completing the Core, they will be well-equipped to pursue specialized coursework in their chosen major, building on the intellectual and analytical foundation established through these essential courses.

Core Curriculum Requirements				
Core Areas	Courses	Courses Required	Credits	Description
Writing and Rhetoric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Rhetoric and Reasoning • Expository Writing: The Art of Argument OR Introduction to Fiction Writing 	2	6	Develops students' ability to express ideas with clarity and precision through analytical reading, structured writing, and argumentation. Strengthens critical thinking, persuasive communication, and engagement with intellectual discourse.
Scientific and Quantitative Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scientific Method • Critical Thinking • Mathematics for a Changing World 	3	9	Develops students' logical reasoning, problem-solving abilities, and scientific literacy through foundational training in mathematics, critical thinking, and the natural sciences. Enables students to evaluate evidence, assess complex problems, and

				apply scientific principles across disciplines.
Perspectives in Social Science Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical Methods • Theoretical Foundations of Social Sciences 	2	4	Provides a foundation in social structures, analytical methods, and theoretical frameworks. Helps students critically assess social phenomena, analyze political and cultural developments, and understand the forces shaping contemporary society through various social science perspectives.
Ethical and Civic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with Climate Change • Principles of Entrepreneurship 	2	4	Encourages critical reflection on ethics, responsibility, and social engagement. Explores the intersections of religious thought, environmental challenges, and entrepreneurship to foster civic responsibility and leadership.
Arts, Humanities, and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Making of Modern Pakistan • Islamic Thought and Civilization • Any AMES Course*—Offerings vary per semester 	3	6	Explores historical, literary, and philosophical traditions, fostering critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and cultural awareness. Encourages engagement with diverse narratives, religious and ideological traditions, and the interpretation of human experiences.
Total		12	30	

* A list of AMES courses can be found on pages 23-26 of this catalog. Students should note that the course they choose to fulfill their core curriculum requirement cannot then be used to fulfill a major requirement. Language courses cannot fulfill the Core Curriculum requirement.

Core Course Descriptions

Introduction to Rhetoric and Reasoning

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course introduces first-year students to the foundational skills of academic communication through the lens of rhetoric and reasoning. Students will learn to engage critically with academic texts, participate in scholarly discussions, and develop written arguments with clarity and purpose. Emphasizing academic language as both a tool for analysis and expression, the course covers strategies for reading complex texts, listening actively in academic settings, and contributing thoughtfully to discussions and presentations.

Through lectures, readings, interactive exercises, and peer workshops, students will explore the conventions of academic genres and practice revising and editing their own work. In addition to

building a strong academic vocabulary and improving listening and speaking skills, students will cultivate a reflective and process-based approach to writing. The course culminates in a final critical essay, demonstrating students' ability to construct and communicate reasoned arguments in written form.

Expository Writing: The Art of Argument

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

Building on foundational writing and communication skills, this second-year course equips students with the tools to craft persuasive, research-driven arguments. Through the study of rhetoric, critical analysis, and evidence-based writing, students will refine their ability to construct and support complex arguments across academic and public contexts. Emphasizing writing as a process, the course fosters reflective practices, encouraging revision and iterative development. In addition to written composition, students will engage with the performative aspects of communication, learning to present their research effectively through oral delivery, visual storytelling, and digital media. By integrating rigorous research, analytical thinking, and rhetorical strategy, this course prepares students to communicate with clarity, precision, and impact in both written and spoken forms.

Introduction to Fiction Writing

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This upper-level fiction writing course helps students strengthen their creative and critical skills through the principle that “powerful writing emerges from attentive reading, fearless writing, and rigorous revision.” Students will study elements of craft through readings, discussions, and writing exercises both in and outside of class. They will also attend literary events and reflect on their experiences as writers. The course guides students through all stages of the writing process—mining, drafting, shaping, and revising—and introduces them to multilingual writing practices. By the end of the course, students will produce a portfolio that includes early drafts, revisions, and final pieces. This course is intended for students who have completed a first-year writing course and one literature course; first-year students may enroll with instructor permission.

The Scientific Method: Styles of Reasoning in the Natural and Applied Sciences

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This core course provides an in-depth exploration of the scientific method as a structured approach to inquiry, emphasizing argumentation, observation and experimentation. Students will engage with key reasoning strategies used in the natural and applied sciences, learning to formulate hypotheses, construct clear definitions and critically evaluate analogies and samples.

Students will recognize and avoid logical fallacies and cognitive biases that can distort scientific reasoning. Through case studies drawn from biology, chemistry, physics, computer science and environmental sciences, students will analyze real-world examples of scientific discovery, debate competing interpretations of data and assess the reliability of experimental results.

Critical Thinking: Reasoning in an Age of Misinformation

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course introduces students to the art of clear and effective argumentation in a world saturated with disinformation, propaganda, and conspiracy theories. Rather than focusing solely on fallacies or formal logic, the course emphasizes practical reasoning and critical engagement with real-world information—drawn from social media, political debates, news outlets, advertisements, cultural narratives, and personal beliefs. Alongside strategies for identifying

faulty reasoning, students explore ways to recognize and mitigate cognitive and social biases, and develop habits of thoughtful, constructive dialogue. These skills are relevant not only to academic work, but to public life, persuasion, and informed citizenship in an uncertain world.

Mathematics for a Changing World

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course reimagines mathematics as a practical and dynamic tool for understanding the world. Students will engage with real-world problems—analyzing data trends, modeling financial scenarios, interpreting risk, and making evidence-based predictions. From understanding probability in decision-making to applying algebra in economic and environmental contexts, this course equips students with the quantitative reasoning skills essential for navigating an increasingly data-driven society. Emphasizing problem-solving, critical analysis, and hands-on applications, this course moves beyond rote calculation, empowering students to think mathematically in diverse academic and professional fields.

Analytical Methods

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course introduces students to methods and methodologies for scientific and scholarly enquiry. The course combines different disciplinary methods and their associated theoretical frameworks to enable students to carry out primary and secondary research in the humanities and social sciences. Students will understand how to conduct productive database and literature searches, store and manage complex datasets, conduct basic primary data production, and write up the results of their research.

Theoretical Foundations of Social Sciences

Level: 100 | Credits: 2

This course introduces students to the foundational principles of the social sciences, examining how disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics have evolved to explain human societies. Beginning with historical efforts to define and categorize social life, the course explores the development of key theories and methodologies that shape our understanding of human behavior, institutions, and communities. Emphasizing the interconnected nature of social sciences, students will engage with cross-disciplinary debates that challenge conventional boundaries and highlight the complexity of social structures. Through critical analysis and discussion, the course equips students with the tools to navigate and interpret the ever-evolving landscape of social inquiry.

Engaging with Climate Change

Level: 100 | Credits: 2

With a globally declared climate emergency and lack of commitment from world leadership to bring about radical changes in resource consumption and exploitation, it has become crucial to bring that change at personal and community level. To address the entrenched systemic challenges that stem from continued exploitation of our natural resources, a macro level societal shift is needed. This can be achieved through sustainable community education. A vision and strategy for combating climate change should be adopted that explicitly addresses the role of collective action, multi-actor networks, and sociotechnical innovation in forming that transition process. For this purpose, a curriculum that draws upon pertinent interdisciplinary information and demonstrates the interdependence of the environmental and climatic changes are necessary. This course is designed for anyone and everyone to be equipped with essential knowledge required for behavior and systemic changes.

Principles of Entrepreneurship

Level: 100 | Credits: 2

This course cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset by combining faculty-led lectures with student-led workshops, guiding students from idea generation to project execution across diverse fields, including arts, sciences, healthcare, and education. Through hands-on group projects and individual assessments, students will develop skills in problem-solving, market research, branding, and resource management while exploring ethical and sustainable entrepreneurship. Emphasizing both creativity and strategic thinking, the course challenges students to design, prototype, and pitch initiatives—whether commercial, social, or technical—equipping them with the tools to turn ideas into real-world opportunities.

Nation and Narrative: The Making of Modern Pakistan

Level: 100 | Credits: 2

This course introduces students to the history of Pakistan. Students will engage with foundational works that have commanded the field of Pakistani history alongside new pathbreaking perspectives that challenge established narratives and expand the limits of a national history. This course begins by exploring the relationship between civilizational roots and modern national identities. We then delve into the plurality of ideological and constitutional imaginings of a Muslim homeland in South Asia before examining the history of Partition, the state formation of Pakistan, and major themes and questions in the development of a ‘Pakistani’ culture and society. The course is designed to address major chronological flashpoints in the history of Pakistan as well as everyday histories of gender, class, environment, and religion. Alongside lectures and seminar discussions, students will draw on secondary and primary sources across written, visual, and oral mediums to critically engage with the question of what constitutes Pakistani history and what factors shape these narratives.

Islamic Thought and Civilization

Level: 100 | Credits: 2

This course explores the intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual traditions that have shaped the historical and contemporary landscape of Pakistan. Beginning with the early history of Islam, it examines the development of Islamic thought, the contributions of Muslim societies to science, philosophy, and governance, and their influence on global civilizations. Students will critically engage with key political, economic, and social transformations in Islamic history, while also analyzing the challenges and opportunities faced by contemporary Muslim societies. By connecting historical insights with present-day realities, the course fosters a deeper understanding of the role of Islamic thought in shaping identity, governance, and cultural expression in Pakistan and beyond.

Interdisciplinary Majors

The Bachelor of Studies program offers **four interdisciplinary majors**, each designed to equip students with the analytical and practical skills needed to navigate complex global and regional challenges:

- **Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**
- **Human and Environmental Biology**
- **Philosophy, Politics, and Economics**
- **Social Development Studies**

Each major builds on critical inquiry, interdisciplinary analysis, and applied research, helping students develop a strong theoretical foundation and practical problem-solving skills. By drawing from multiple disciplines, students learn to analyze real-world issues from different perspectives. Graduates will be prepared for careers in research, policy, development, governance, and various professional sectors requiring interdisciplinary expertise and strategic thinking.

The following sections provide a detailed breakdown of each major, outlining learning outcomes, core courses, elective options, and graduating requirements for students.

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

The **Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES)** major offers an interdisciplinary and regionally focused approach to the study of Asia and the Middle East. Moving beyond traditional area studies, the program emphasizes thematic and disciplinary specializations while maintaining a strong regional core. Students engage with history, politics, religion, art, literature, and philosophy, while also integrating research methods and experiential learning opportunities.

The curriculum is structured to allow flexibility and intellectual exploration in the first two years, enabling students to develop a personalized learning pathway. Foundational courses introduce critical thinking, research methodologies, and engagement with primary and secondary sources. By their third and fourth years, students take specialized courses aligned with faculty research expertise, culminating in a capstone project that demonstrates their ability to conduct independent inquiry.

A key feature of AMES is its commitment to transcultural and comparative perspectives, challenging Eurocentric academic narratives by centering the histories, cultures, and intellectual traditions of the Asia and Middle East region. Students are required to study a regional language, ensuring deeper engagement with primary sources and cultural contexts. Additionally, the integration of D-Lab experiential learning provides opportunities to collaborate with external stakeholders, apply research to real-world contexts, and build professional networks.

The program emphasizes interconnected histories and regional dynamics, examining how trade, migration, and cultural exchange have shaped societies across Asia and the Middle East. By exploring diverse environments—including land and maritime networks—students gain a deeper understanding of historical and contemporary global connections. Through its rigorous and dynamic approach, the AMES major prepares students for academic research, policy work, cultural preservation, and careers that require deep regional expertise and analytical skills.

Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate with a major in **Asian and Middle Eastern Studies** will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate regional expertise** by analyzing the histories, cultures, and intellectual traditions of Asia and the Middle East through interdisciplinary perspectives.
2. **Apply rigorous research methods** by engaging with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches in the study of AME-related topics.
3. **Critically engage with sources** by interpreting primary and secondary materials, including texts, archives, visual culture, and oral histories.
4. **Comprehend connected histories** by examining the Indian Ocean as a space of cultural, economic, and intellectual exchange across the AME region.

5. **Communicate effectively** by presenting research and disciplinary content across diverse mediums and audiences.
6. **Engage in experiential learning** by applying knowledge through **D-Lab** projects, fieldwork, and collaborations with external stakeholders.
7. **Conduct independent research** by designing and executing a capstone project that integrates theoretical, methodological, and regional expertise.

Major Requirements

Students pursuing a major in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies must complete a total of **123 credits**. This coursework is divided into Core Curriculum requirements, Major Core courses and electives, open electives, experiential learning practicum, and a final capstone project. To graduate, students must maintain a minimum 2.50 CGPA.

Core Curriculum

All students are required to complete **12 courses** as part of the Faculty of Art and Sciences' Core Curriculum, which spans multiple disciplines and foundational areas of knowledge. These courses cover key forms of thought and inquiry, ensuring that students develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills essential for academic and professional success. For more details, please refer to the Core Curriculum section of this academic catalog.

AMES Core

The AMES major requires students to complete **24 credits of core coursework**, introducing them to interdisciplinary approaches in the study of Asia and the Middle East. These courses equip students with the theoretical and analytical tools necessary to examine the region's literature, languages, histories, and cultural traditions. By engaging with diverse perspectives, students develop a deeper understanding of historical transformations, contemporary global issues, and intellectual movements across Asian and Middle Eastern societies.

AMES Electives

Students must complete **48 credits of electives within the AMES program**, allowing for specialization in particular themes, time periods, or regions. These electives are divided into lower-level introductory and intermediate courses and upper-level advanced and seminar-style courses, enabling students to gradually build expertise in their chosen areas. Topics may range from linguistics and religious studies to colonial history, gender and sexuality, and environmental change. By selecting electives aligned with their academic and career interests, students can customize their AMES education to suit their goals.

Open Electives

To encourage intellectual exploration beyond AMES, students are required to complete **12 credits of open electives outside their major**. These courses allow students to integrate knowledge from fields such as history, sociology, political science, and environmental studies, providing broader contexts for understanding regional and global dynamics. This interdisciplinary approach enhances students' analytical skills and prepares them for research or professional work that requires cross-disciplinary perspectives.

Field Experience

As part of the AMES curriculum, students must complete **3 credits of field experience**, which involves a 6–8-week internship or applied learning opportunity. This requirement ensures that students engage with the practical applications of their studies by working with regional institutions, NGOs, cultural organizations, or research projects. The field experience provides valuable hands-on exposure, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings while also developing professional connections.

Senior Capstone Project

In their final year, students must complete a **6-credit-hour Senior Capstone Project**, which serves as the culmination of their AMES studies. This two-semester research project enables students to apply the methodologies and theories they have studied throughout the program. The capstone can take various forms, including an independent research thesis, digital humanities project, or applied policy analysis, depending on the student's academic and professional aspirations. The capstone experience allows students to showcase their ability to conduct original research and contribute rigorous scholarship to the field of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

AMES Graduating Requirements

Component	Credits	Details
Core Curriculum	30	<i>12 required courses—see Core Curriculum breakdown</i>
Required Major Core (8 courses)	24	Imagining Asia and the Middle East (3 credits) Thinking Historically: Foundations and Methods (3 credits) The Global Past (3 credits) Digital Humanities (3 credits) Trends in Contemporary and Modern Literature (3 credits) The Structure of Language (3 credits) Introduction to Anthropology (3 credits) Approaches to Art (3 credits)
Required Major Electives	48	<i>9 Lower-Level AMES Electives (100 or 200 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i> <i>7 Upper-Level AMES Electives (300 or 400 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Open Electives*	12	<i>4 Required Courses**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Experiential Learning	3	6-8 weeks internship and practical learning opportunities with regional institutions and organizations
Senior Thesis: Capstone	6	Self-directed research project in major, integrating analytical and practical knowledge
Total Credits	123	

* Any courses beyond the student's major, excluding the Core Curriculum and Senior Thesis.

**This is the maximum number of courses students can take if each course is worth 3 credits. If some courses are 4 credits, students will need to take fewer courses to reach the required credits for graduation.

AMES Core Course Descriptions

Imagining Asia and the Middle East

100 | Credits: 3

The regions we call Asia and the Middle East today are recent geopolitical imaginaries. Historically, they have been imagined in myriad ways, ascribed a range of names, governed by multiple empires, divided, and repartitioned into distinct nation-states, expanded in territorial scope, claimed, and renounced as home by peoples within and afar. This introductory course offers a critical and compelling interdisciplinary study of places and peoples from Morocco to Malaysia.

The course illuminates the regions' earliest civilizations and expansive empires to modern nation-states and dynamic diasporas. Readings and discussions are designed to unsettle essentialist notions of geography, history, community, and polity. Each week's secondary readings are temporally ascribed with primary sources and additional resources emphasizing two or three salient themes for collective scrutiny and reflection. The thematic foci will range from governance, economy, environment, culture, knowledge, religion, caste, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, mobility, and memory. Selected sources are particularly attentive to unheard voices and eclipsed perspectives—non-elite, minority (ethnic, religious), female, queer—as well as countries on the fringes whose stories are less written and told.

Thinking Historically: Foundations and Methods

200 | Credits: 3

How do we make sense of the past? Who gets to tell history, and how do different perspectives shape what we know? This course introduces students to the craft of historical thinking, exploring how historians interpret evidence, construct narratives, and connect local and global events. Through written records, oral histories, and material artifacts, students will engage with history as an evolving conversation rather than a fixed set of facts.

The course tackles major debates and ethical questions in the field, from how we organize historical time to the role of memory and public history. Students will also explore emerging fields like environmental and digital history, broadening their understanding of how the past is studied today. With an emphasis on inclusive and interdisciplinary approaches, this course equips students with essential skills in research, critical analysis, and historical writing—valuable tools for understanding the past and its lasting impact on the present.

The Global Past: Silk Roads in World History

200 | Credits: 3

The Global Past examines broad historical processes from a global perspective, with this iteration's focus on the Silk Roads—a network of trade and cultural exchange routes connecting Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Far more than a single road or a conduit for silk, these routes facilitated the movement of goods, ideas, religions, technologies, armies, and diseases, shaping Eurasian history. This course critically evaluates the Silk Roads as a historical framework, comparing it with other approaches. Spanning Late Antiquity (4th century CE) to the early modern period (16th century CE), it follows a chronological yet thematic structure. Emphasizing active learning and source criticism, seminar-style discussions will engage students in analyzing primary and secondary sources, while a collective project will map and document key cities and routes using historical travel accounts.

Digital Humanities

200 | Credits: 3

In this exciting project-based course, students will learn the basics of computational textual analysis, which makes it possible to study texts and even entire textual traditions on a scale that has been unthinkable until recently. Students will be learning by doing—active learning is key to this course. The course is centered around three mini-projects, each addressing an aspect of a Digital Humanities project: digitization and corpus building, processing and analysis, and visualization and presentation. Students will learn the basics of the programming language Python and use it to analyze texts and visualize data. They will also be introduced to theoretical and methodological debates in the field of global digital humanities and discuss ethical and philosophical implications of data, visualizations, and digital methodologies. There are no technical prerequisites for this course. We assume students have no special computer skills apart from basic tasks like using an internet browser or writing a text in word processing software.

Trends in Contemporary and Modern Literature

200 | Credits: 3

This course is a multi-faceted introduction to modern and contemporary literature. In a seminar setting, students will engage with the twentieth literary and cultural landscape, exploring its historical contexts and its enduring influences on global literatures till today. The readings delve into the possibilities, rewards, and challenges of reading literature. We will navigate the role of literature and literary studies in cultural politics, with particular attention to literature as a tool of colonialism and cultural imperialism. In addition to developing an understanding of literary styles and legacies, students will be supported to strong critical reading and writing skills and receive guidance around formulating and executing a research thesis independently. The course contributes to the FAS program's goals of developing critical thinkers and leaders by empowering students to explore and identify the cultural influences that have shaped society.

The Structure of Language

200 | Credits: 3

Language is a fundamental part of human experience, shaping how we communicate, think, and interact with the world. This course introduces the core principles of linguistics, exploring how languages are structured—through sounds, words, sentence patterns, and meaning—and how they evolve over time. Focusing on the diverse languages of the Muslim world, including Arabic, Persian, and South Asian languages, students will examine topics such as language variation, multilingualism, linguistic change, and the relationship between language and power. Through real-world examples, hands-on analysis, and interactive discussions, the course will highlight how language influences identity, culture, and society.

Designed for students with no prior background in linguistics, this course offers an accessible and engaging introduction to the hidden structures behind how we communicate.

Introduction to Anthropology: People, Places, and Ideas

200 | Credits: 3

Students will learn about the development of contemporary anthropology, which was developed in Europe and North America, and will examine the applicability of the theories and methods for different contexts around the world. The course is comparative and so will draw on ethnographic cases from across Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, and North America. Students will conduct primary data production exercises with one another in class and independently. Once students have successfully demonstrated their mastery of some field methods and have undergone ethical review, there will be opportunities for primary data

production beyond the classroom. Upon successful completion, the course participants should be able to: have an understanding of the foundational theories of anthropology; how anthropological theories have developed; apply data production methods in the field relevant to anthropology; develop a logical, evidence-based argument and communicate this in writing a research essay.

Approaches to Art and Architecture: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture

200 | Credits: 3

Approaches to Art and Architecture is a module that examines visual and built environments across Asia and the Middle East. Its focus varies based on the convener's approach, allowing for different thematic and methodological emphases.

This iteration, centered on the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), explores how cultural heritage is preserved, reinterpreted, and revitalized through case studies from AKTC projects across multiple regions. Students will engage with themes such as architectural restoration, urban conservation, museum curation, and the role of cultural institutions in shaping public memory. Combining historical analysis, conservation practices, and contemporary design perspectives, the course offers an interdisciplinary foundation in art and architectural studies. A D-Lab experiential learning component provides opportunities for applied research and engagement with real-world challenges.

AMES Elective Course List

Different AMES electives are offered each semester. To meet graduation requirements, students **must complete 48 credits from AMES electives outside of the major core**. The following electives include courses that have been taught in the past, many of which will be offered in the 2025-26 Academic Year, with others scheduled for future semesters. Please note that we do not guarantee that every course listed will be offered each academic year.

Level	Course Name	Credits
100	Arabic-I	3
100	Japanese-I	3
200	Anthropology of Religion in Muslim Contexts	3
200	Arts, Crafts, and Technology	3
200	City Learning: Cultures and Creative Approaches	3
200	Ecologies of Culture: An Anthropological Approach	3
200	Environmental Challenges and Opportunities	3
200	Introduction to Sociology	3
200	Japanese-II	3
200	Modern South Asia: History, Politics, and Society	3
200	Paths in Sufism	3
200	Sociolinguistics of the Muslim World	3
200	The Spoken Word: An Introduction to Drama and Performance	3
200	Interpreting Gender in Islam: Texts, Debates, and Realities	3
300	Colonial Encounters: Power, Culture, and Violence	3
300	Creativity in Islam	3
300	Gender, Sexuality, and Literature	3

300	Geopolitics of East Asia	3
300	Histories of Science, Environment, and Capitalism	3
300	Indian Ocean Worlds: Merchants, Monsoons, and Migrations	3
300	War, Peace, and the Politics of Security	3
300	Writing Resistance: Literatures of the Subcontinent	3
400	Decolonization and the Afterlives of Empire	4
400	History, Nations, and Nationalism	4
400	Interrogating History: Gender as Category and Method	4
400	Seminar/Special Topics in History	4

Human and Environmental Biology

The **Human and Environmental Biology (HEB)** major offers an integrated approach to understanding the interconnectedness of human health, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability. The program combines biological sciences, ecology, and environmental policy to explore how living systems interact in a dynamic world. Students gain a deep understanding of biological and environmental systems and the impact of human activities on these systems across local, regional, and global scales.

The curriculum provides foundational knowledge in biology, ecology, and environmental science, with practical experiences through fieldwork and lab courses. Lab-based learning equips students with essential skills in biological analysis, environmental testing, and data interpretation. As students progress, they develop critical research skills in environmental policy, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem management. In their final years, students complete independent research projects that apply systems theory to address complex environmental issues.

The HEB program focuses on systems thinking, where students examine the interconnectedness of biological, environmental, and social systems. This approach helps students understand how factors such as climate, policy, human behavior, and ecosystems affect planetary health, preparing them to address challenges with a holistic, solution-oriented mindset. Students engage with real-world applications through environmental data analysis, the development of sustainable practices, and the evaluation of policy frameworks aimed at mitigating environmental degradation. The program also emphasizes the long-term consequences of environmental change and the importance of sustainability.

Graduates are equipped for careers in environmental science, public health, conservation, sustainability, and policymaking, with the skills to tackle ecological challenges and contribute to planetary health.

Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate with a major in **Human and Environmental Biology (HEB)** will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge** of planetary and human health, biodiversity, and ecological systems by integrating concepts from biological and environmental sciences.
2. **Analyze key interactions between humans and the natural environment** and assess how these relationships have evolved over time.
3. **Critically evaluate complex climate and ecological systems** by considering multiple interacting variables and applying interdisciplinary approaches.

4. **Apply diverse research methodologies and scientific innovations** by utilizing laboratory techniques, field research methods, and computational tools to investigate biological and environmental challenges.
5. **Bridge science, policy, and ethics** by understanding environmental governance, bioethics, and sustainability frameworks, enabling informed decision-making in conservation, public health, and planetary health.
6. **Commit to lifelong learning and leadership** by adapting to emerging scientific and environmental challenges while preparing for careers in sustainability, conservation, research, health sciences, and policymaking.
7. **Effectively communicate scientific knowledge** across disciplines using various mediums, including research papers, policy briefs, digital media, and public outreach, to engage diverse audiences.

Major Requirements

Students pursuing a major in Human and Environmental Biology must complete a total of **123 credits**. This coursework is divided into Core Curriculum requirements, Major Core courses and electives, open electives, experiential learning practicum, and a final capstone project. To graduate, students must maintain a minimum 2.50 CGPA.

Core Curriculum

All students are required to complete **12 courses** as part of the Faculty of Art and Sciences' Core Curriculum, which spans multiple disciplines and foundational areas of knowledge. These courses cover key forms of thought and inquiry, ensuring that students develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills essential for academic and professional success. For more details, please refer to the Core Curriculum section of this academic catalog.

HEB Core

The HEB major requires students to complete **24 credits of core coursework**, providing them with an interdisciplinary foundation in environmental science, biology, and ecology. These courses equip students with the theoretical and analytical tools needed to examine the complex relationships between human health, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability. Through these core courses, students gain a solid understanding of ecological systems, biological processes, and how human activities impact both local and global environments. By engaging with diverse scientific principles, students will be prepared to address environmental challenges with critical thinking and a holistic approach.

HEB Electives

Students must complete **48 credits of electives** within the HEB program, allowing for specialization in particular environmental topics, biological fields, or sustainability issues. These electives are divided into lower-level introductory courses and upper-level advanced courses, enabling students to gradually deepen their expertise in areas such as environmental policy, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem management. By selecting electives that align with their academic and career interests, students can tailor their HEB education to address key environmental challenges and pursue their professional goals.

Open Electives

To encourage intellectual exploration beyond HEB, students are required to complete **12 credits of open electives outside their major**. These courses allow students to integrate knowledge from fields such as history, sociology, political science, and environmental studies, providing broader contexts for understanding regional and global dynamics. This interdisciplinary approach enhances students' analytical skills and prepares them for research or professional work that requires cross-disciplinary perspectives.

Field Experience

As part of the HEB curriculum, students must complete **3 credits of field experience**, which involves a 6–8-week internship or applied learning opportunity. This requirement ensures that students connect their academic studies to real-world environmental applications, working with regional institutions, NGOs, conservation organizations, or environmental research projects. The field experience provides valuable hands-on exposure to environmental challenges, allowing students to develop practical skills while also building professional connections in the field of environmental science and sustainability.

Senior Capstone Project

In their final year, HEB students must complete a **6-credit-hour Senior Capstone Project**, which serves as the culmination of their studies in human and environmental biology. This two-semester research project enables students to apply the interdisciplinary knowledge and research methodologies they have developed throughout the program. The capstone can take various forms, including an independent research thesis, environmental policy analysis, or a field-based project addressing sustainability challenges. The capstone experience allows students to showcase their ability to conduct original research, apply systems thinking, and contribute innovative solutions to environmental problems.

HEB Graduating Requirements

Component	Credits	Details
Core Curriculum	30	<i>12 required courses—see Core Curriculum breakdown</i>
Required Major Core (8 courses)	24	Introduction to Environmental Sciences (Credits: 3) Foundations of Biology and Ecology (Credits: 3) Environmental Biochemistry (Credits: 3) Environmental Statistics (Credits: 3) Policy Frontiers for a Sustainable Future (Credits: 3) Biodiversity, Conservation and Adaptation (Credits: 3) Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System (GIS) (Credits: 3) Environmental Research Methods and Ethics (Credits: 3)
Required Major Electives	48	<i>9 Lower-Level HEB Electives (100 or 200 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i> <i>7 Upper-Level HEB Electives (300 or 400 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Open Electives*	12	<i>4 Required Courses**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Experiential Learning	3	6-8 weeks internship and practical learning opportunities with regional institutions and organizations
Senior Thesis: Capstone	6	Self-directed research project in major, integrating analytical and practical knowledge
Total Credits	123	

* Any courses beyond the student's major, excluding the Core Curriculum and Senior Thesis

**This is the maximum number of courses students can take if each course is worth 3 credits. If some courses are 4 credits, students will need to take fewer courses to reach the required credits for graduation

HEB Core Course Descriptions

Introduction to Environmental Sciences

Level 100 | Credits: 3

This course provides an introduction to the fundamental concepts of environmental science, exploring the interconnections between natural processes and human activities. Students will learn key principles from physics, chemistry, biology, and earth sciences, with a focus on how these disciplines relate to environmental issues. Topics include the Earth's structure, climate systems, ecosystems, the origin of life, and the impact of human activity on natural systems. Through lectures, hands-on activities, and field trips, students will gain a deeper understanding of natural processes such as energy cycles, biodiversity, and the role of humans in shaping the environment. The course also examines natural disasters and their effects on ecosystems and communities, offering students a holistic view of the Earth's dynamic systems and the challenges of sustainability.

Foundations of Biology and Ecology

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course introduces core principles of biology and ecology, focusing on the relationship between living organisms and their environment. Students will explore biological processes like physiology and genetics, alongside key ecological concepts such as ecosystems, biodiversity, and energy flow. The course emphasizes critical thinking and offers hands-on learning through laboratory and fieldwork to help students understand how biological systems interact within ecological contexts.

Environmental Biochemistry

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course explores fundamental biochemistry concepts with a focus on their applications in environmental biology. Students will study metabolic pathways, enzyme functions, and biochemical cycles in ecosystems, as well as the roles of plants, animals, and microbes in environmental processes. Topics include energy metabolism, nutrient cycles, bioremediation, and the biochemical mechanisms underlying pollution and environmental toxicity. Through lectures and laboratory work, students will gain hands-on experience with biochemical analysis techniques used to assess environmental quality, including water, soil, and microbial assessments.

Environmental Statistics

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course provides students with essential statistical tools to make sense of biological and environmental data. With a focus on real-world applications, students will learn how to identify patterns, quantify ecological and biological variation, and draw evidence-based conclusions. Topics include data visualization, probability, hypothesis testing, correlation, regression, and basic modeling. Students will engage directly with datasets from fields such as ecology, climate science, and environmental health, using tools like R or Python to analyze and present their findings. The course emphasizes hands-on learning and the development of critical thinking skills, preparing students to interpret data in research, policy, and everyday life.

Policy Frontiers for a Sustainable Future

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

Environmental policy is central to addressing the interconnected global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution—collectively termed the “triple planetary crisis.” This course offers a comprehensive exploration of international and domestic environmental policy frameworks, tracing the evolution of key agreements, institutions, and governance mechanisms that shape decision-making across scales. Students will critically examine landmark treaties such as the Paris Agreement, the Montreal Protocol, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, while also considering the political, economic, and social dynamics that influence implementation and compliance.

Blending theoretical insights with case-based learning, the course highlights both the achievements and limitations of environmental governance. Comparative case studies and interactive simulations provide opportunities to assess diverse policy responses—from global institutions to grassroots initiatives. Emphasis is placed on emerging trends such as corporate sustainability, technological innovation, and climate justice. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to analyze, critique, and contribute to policy solutions that support a more sustainable and equitable future.

Biodiversity, Conservation and Adaptation

Level: 300 | Credits: 3

This course explores the critical intersection of biodiversity, conservation, and adaptation strategies in the face of environmental change. Students will examine the major threats to biodiversity, such as habitat loss, climate change, and pollution, while learning about conservation efforts and sustainable practices to promote ecosystem resilience. The course includes case studies and fieldwork to help students understand the role of biodiversity in mitigating climate change and preserving ecosystem health.

Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System (GIS)

Level: 300 | Credits: 3

This course offers an in-depth exploration of remote sensing (RS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), focusing on their applications in environmental science, urban planning, agriculture, and climate change. Students will learn about satellite imagery, image processing, and spatial analysis techniques, while gaining hands-on experience with GIS software such as QGIS. The course prepares students for careers in environmental management, research, and decision-making, emphasizing the use of spatial data to solve real-world problems.

Environmental Research Methods and Ethics

Level: 300 | Credits: 3

This course equips students with the skills necessary for conducting environmental research, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. Students will engage in both wet lab research, including water and soil analysis, microbial assessments, and pollution testing, as well as ethnographic fieldwork to explore human-environment interactions. The course places significant emphasis on ethical considerations, such as informed consent, data integrity, and cultural sensitivity, in environmental research.

HEB Elective Course List

Different HEB electives are offered each semester. To meet graduation requirements, students **must complete 48 credits from HEB electives outside of the major core**. The following electives include courses that have been taught in the past, many of which will be offered in the 2025-26 Academic Year, with others scheduled for future semesters. Please note that we do not guarantee that every course listed will be offered each academic year.

Level	Course Name	Credits
200	Coastal Ecology	3
200	Ecologies of Culture: An Anthropological Approach	3
200	Environmental Challenges and Opportunities	3
200	Health, Safety, and Environment	3
200	Introduction to Microbiology	3
200	Introduction to Public Health	3
200	Plant Life: Structure, Function, and Growth	3
300	Climate Change and Air Quality	3
300	Corporate Environmental Management	3
300	Environmental Microbiology	3
300	Environmental Toxicology	3
300	Green Architecture: Designing for Climate Resilience	3
300	Green Economics: Resources and Sustainability	3
300	Mangroves and Blue Carbon Economy	3
300	Sustainable Agriculture	3
300	Urban Ecology and Ethical Citizenship	3
400	Public Health in a Warming World	4
400	Water and Wastewater Treatment	4
400	Total Quality Management	4

Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

The **Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)** major is designed to foster the development of ethical leadership, particularly in contexts where institutions have become fragile due to weak governance, mismanagement, and both internal and external challenges. Drawing on the strengths of the three core disciplines—**Philosophy, Politics, and Economics**—this major equips students to understand and address complex societal challenges. Students will learn to bridge foundational ideas (e.g., justice, freedom, or truth, etc.) with real-world empirical analysis, preparing them for thoughtful engagement in public life, policymaking, research, and active civic participation.

Philosophy offers students the tools for rigorous reasoning and meaningful reflection. It invites learners to grapple with fundamental questions about truth, being, society, justice, and knowledge, while also honing their ability to think critically and ethically in everyday life. At FAS, Philosophy is not just about abstract thinking; it is dialogical, experiential, and grounded in real social contexts. From examining how knowledge is developed to exploring public reasoning, students develop an intellectual openness that prepares them for ethical leadership and collective problem-solving.

Politics examines the influence of political institutions on modern societies, delving into the values and concepts used in political analysis. It provides students with a deeper understanding of governance structures, power relationships, and the decision-making processes that shape both domestic and international landscapes. Studying political systems, collective decision-making, and power dynamics helps students understand how political decisions shape governance, resource distribution, and social well-being, preparing them to influence policy and strengthen democratic systems.

Economics explores how individuals and societies make choices about resource allocation, focusing on improving economic exchange to foster growth and development. Students will gain a strong understanding of economic systems, including how markets function, the role of government policies in economic outcomes, and the implications of economic decisions on broader social goals like poverty reduction and development. This interdisciplinary approach allows students to analyze and propose solutions to global economic challenges, equipping them with the tools to contribute to sustainable development and societal progress.

By combining these disciplines, the PPE program fosters a holistic understanding of societal challenges. Students will not only analyze problems but also develop informed solutions that integrate ethical considerations, political realities, and economic principles. This interdisciplinary approach prepares students for leadership roles in public service, NGOs, research, policy analysis, and other fields, empowering them to become critical thinkers and effective change-makers.

Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate with a major in **Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)** will be able to:

1. **Critically analyze complex arguments** and texts from philosophical, political, and economic perspectives, providing well-reasoned responses to address multifaceted issues.
2. **Integrate knowledge and methods** from philosophy, political science, and economics to evaluate real-world challenges, acknowledging the interconnections between these disciplines.
3. **Apply ethical frameworks and political economic theories** to assess public policies and social institutions, focusing on justice, efficiency, and welfare.
4. **Demonstrate proficiency in quantitative and qualitative research methods**, effectively collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in philosophical, political, and economic contexts.
5. **Acquire a solid understanding of key theories** and concepts in philosophy (e.g., ethics, epistemology, metaphysics), political science (e.g., political institutions, international relations, comparative politics), and economics (e.g., microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics).
6. **Construct, communicate, and critique arguments** in ways that promotes dialogue and fosters shared understanding.
7. **Communicate complex ideas** clearly in both written and oral formats, contributing to informed and constructive civic discourse on contemporary social and political issues.

Major Requirements

Students pursuing a major in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics are required to complete a total of **123 credits**. This coursework includes Core Curriculum requirements, Major Core courses, electives, open electives, practical experience, and a final capstone project. To graduate, students must maintain a minimum CGPA of 2.50.

Core Curriculum

All students are required to complete **12 courses** as part of the Faculty of Art and Sciences' Core Curriculum, which spans multiple disciplines and foundational areas of knowledge. These courses cover key forms of thought and inquiry, ensuring that students develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills essential for academic and professional success. For more details, please refer to the Core Curriculum section of this academic catalog.

PPE Core

The PPE major requires students to complete **30 credits of core coursework**, introducing them to interdisciplinary approaches across the three disciplines. These courses equip students with

the theoretical foundations and analytical tools to examine and apply real-world data, enabling them to integrate and triangulate theories from philosophy, political science, and economics.

PPE Electives

Students must complete **42 credits of electives** within the PPE program, allowing for specialization in specific sub-themes. Electives are divided into lower-level introductory and intermediate courses as well as upper-level advanced and seminar-style courses. Topics may include, but are not limited to, developmental economics, foreign policy and diplomacy, governance and public policy, behavioral economics, health economics, epistemology, international trade, the economics of sustainability and resources, and the politics of security.

Open Electives

To foster intellectual exploration beyond PPE, students are required to complete **12 credits of open electives** outside their major. These courses allow students to integrate knowledge from fields such as history, sociology, political science, environmental studies, development studies, and evaluation sciences, emphasizing their application in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This interdisciplinary approach enhances students' analytical skills and prepares them for research or professional roles that demand cross-disciplinary perspectives.

Field Experience

As part of the PPE curriculum, students must complete **3 credits of field experience**, which involves a 6–8-week internship or applied learning opportunity. This requirement ensures that students engage with the practical application of their studies by working with financial institutions, civil services, corporate entities, and NGOs. The field experience offers valuable hands-on exposure, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings while developing professional connections.

Senior Capstone Project

In their final year, students are required to complete a **6-credit Senior Capstone Project**, which serves as the culmination of their PPE studies. This two-semester research project enables students to apply the methodologies and theories they have studied throughout the program. The capstone may take various forms, including research hypothesis testing, panel data analysis, political economy analysis, or revisiting a philosophical dilemma. The project allows students to showcase their ability to conduct original research and contribute meaningful scholarship to one or more of the PPE fields.

PPE Graduating Requirements

Component	Credits	Details
Core Curriculum	30	<i>12 required courses—see Core Curriculum breakdown</i>
Required Major Core (10 courses)	30	Introduction to Philosophy (3 credits) Philosophy of Science and Society (3 credits) Social and Political Philosophy (3 credits) Introduction to Political Theory (3 credits) Comparative Political Analysis (3 credits) International Political Economy (3 credits) Mathematics for Economists: Linear Algebra and Calculus (3 credits) Introduction to Microeconomics (3 credits) Introduction to Macroeconomics (3 credits) Econometrics (3 credits)

Required Major Electives	42	<i>8 Lower-Level PPE Electives (100 or 200 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
		<i>6 Upper-Level PPE Electives (300 or 400 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Open Electives*	12	<i>4 Required Courses**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Experiential Learning	3	6-8 weeks internship and practical learning opportunities with regional institutions and organizations
Senior Thesis: Capstone	6	Self-directed research project in major, integrating analytical and practical knowledge
Total Credits	123	

* Any courses beyond the student's major, excluding the Core Curriculum and Senior Thesis

**This is the maximum number of courses students can take if each course is worth 3 credits. If some courses are 4 credits, students will need to take fewer courses to reach the required credits for graduation

PPE Core Course Descriptions

Introduction to Philosophy

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course introduces central areas of philosophical inquiry—epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics—through enduring questions that continue to shape how we think and live. Can we ever be certain about anything? Is it ever wrong to follow the law? Do we shape the world—or does it shape us? Students encounter philosophy not as a set of fixed answers, but as a disciplined and imaginative practice: one that sharpens reasoning, deepens reflection, and invites serious engagement with cultural, social, and political life. The course encourages clarity of thought alongside openness to complexity—habits essential for navigating a complex world.

Philosophy of Science and Society

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

How does science shape society, and how does society shape science? This course explores the philosophical foundations of scientific inquiry alongside the social, political, and cultural forces that influence scientific knowledge. We begin by examining what distinguishes science from other ways of knowing, the role of reasoning and evidence in scientific progress, and the boundaries between science and pseudoscience. As the term unfolds, we delve into scientific explanation, the nature of laws and theories, and the evolving norms of scientific practice. We also examine the limits of science, its historical and contemporary relationship with religion, and the ways in which gender, politics, funding, and institutional power shape what counts as knowledge. From Kuhn's paradigm shifts to feminist critiques of sciences, students will engage with key philosophical debates while developing tools to critically access scientific claims in their broader social context. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to think deeply about the role of science in society and its implications for the future.

Social and Political Philosophy

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course explores key philosophical questions at the intersection of politics, ethics, and society. What makes a society just? What do individuals owe to one another? When is inequality fair, and when is it not? Through these questions, students will examine how philosophers have conceived political and social justice—from the justification of state authority to debates about equality, liberty, and redistribution. Core themes include the nature of rights, the role of the state,

and the moral limits of markets. Readings will include foundational texts in political philosophy and contemporary arguments about redistributive justice. Thinkers such as John Rawls and Robert Nozick will help frame debates about fairness and freedom. This course encourages students to critically engage with competing visions of a just society, and to reflect on how these theories apply to the world around them.

Introduction to Political Theory

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This introductory course offers an exploration of key political ideas that have shaped the modern world. It covers the basic concepts of power, liberty, authority, and justice, focusing on how these concepts have been developed and interpreted by political philosophers. The course examines seminal works from thinkers such as Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx. Students will consider the philosophical arguments behind democracy, authoritarianism, and socialism, analyzing the conditions under which various political systems emerge and how they function. The course aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of political thought, encouraging students to engage critically with the foundational ideas that have influenced contemporary political discourse. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with the intellectual tools to evaluate political ideologies and systems, and to understand the theoretical basis of political practices today.

Comparative Political Analysis

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course provides a comprehensive study of political systems, institutions, and behaviors, examining how historical, cultural, and economic factors shape political outcomes. Students will explore key methods and theories used in comparative politics, analyzing case studies from both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Topics include institutional analysis, political behavior, and the political economy. By applying these theories to real-world examples from regions such as the U.S., India, China, and Brazil, students will develop the skills to critically assess political systems on both a regional and global scale. The course equips students with a deeper understanding of how political institutions function and the factors influencing political decisions worldwide.

International Political Economy

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course examines the political foundations of the global economy, analyzing how states, markets, and institutions interact across borders. Students will explore major theoretical frameworks—liberal, realist, and critical approaches—to understand global trade, finance, and development. Key topics include the legacy of colonialism, the politics of debt and foreign investment, global inequality, and the influence of institutions like the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. Through case studies from Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, the course investigates how international economic structures shape national development strategies and global power relations.

Mathematics for Economists: Linear Algebra and Calculus

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course equips students with essential mathematical tools for economic analysis, focusing on foundational concepts in calculus, linear algebra, and selected topics in probability theory. Emphasizing application over abstraction, the course develops the quantitative skills necessary for understanding and constructing economic models, analyzing data, and interpreting empirical research. Students will learn to work with mathematical functions, optimize using derivatives,

apply matrix operations to systems of equations, and interpret key results in multivariate and logistic regression. Topics include limits, derivatives and integrals, optimization techniques, matrix algebra (including eigenvalues and eigenvectors), and an introduction to probability distributions and Bayes' Law. Economic applications—such as utility maximization, production theory, and comparative statics—will be integrated throughout. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to engage with advanced coursework in economics and to apply quantitative reasoning in policy, business, and research contexts.

Introduction to Microeconomics

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course introduces students to the foundational concepts of microeconomics, focusing on how individuals and firms make decisions about the allocation of resources. Topics include demand and supply analysis, consumer theory, producer theory, market structures, and government intervention. Students will examine how markets work, how prices are determined, and how public policy can influence economic outcomes. Special attention will be paid to understanding the behaviors of consumers and firms in different market environments, from perfectly competitive markets to monopolies. Real-world examples, case studies, and problem-solving exercises will help students develop the analytical tools needed to assess market outcomes and evaluate the effects of policy interventions. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply microeconomic principles to understand and analyze everyday economic decisions and public policies.

Introduction to Macroeconomics

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

In this course, students will explore the broader economic forces that shape national economies. The course covers key macroeconomic concepts such as national income, inflation, unemployment, economic growth, and the role of government in managing the economy. Students will study how fiscal policy (government spending and taxation) and monetary policy (central bank control over money supply and interest rates) influence economic stability and growth. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the causes and consequences of recessions, inflationary periods, and economic booms. Students will also explore the global economy, analyzing issues such as international trade, exchange rates, and the interconnectedness of national economies. By the end of the course, students will have a solid understanding of how macroeconomic forces shape both local and global economies and will be able to assess the impact of economic policies on real-world issues.

Econometrics

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course introduces students to econometric methods used to analyze and interpret economic data. Building on mathematical and statistical principles, students will learn techniques such as regression analysis, hypothesis testing, and model building to understand relationships between economic variables. Topics include ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation, time series analysis, and advanced topics in econometric modeling. The course uses real-world data sets to illustrate the application of these techniques, allowing students to conduct their own analysis and draw empirical conclusions. Students will also learn how to critically evaluate econometric research and apply these methods to policy analysis, business forecasting, and social science research. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with the skills to conduct independent research, interpret statistical results, and apply econometric methods to real economic problems.

PPE Elective Course List

Different PPE electives are offered each semester. To meet graduation requirements, students **must complete 42 credits from PPE electives outside of the major core**. The following electives include courses that have been taught in the past, many of which will be offered in the 2025-26 Academic Year, with others scheduled for future semesters. Please note that we do not guarantee that every course listed will be offered each academic year.

Level	Course Name	Credits
200	Deductive Logic	3
200	Developmental Economics	3
200	Economic Transformations in Asia	3
200	Foreign Policy and Diplomacy	3
200	Gender, Law, and Justice in Pakistan	3
200	Geopolitics of East Asia	3
200	Governance and Public Policy	3
200	History of Economic Thought	3
200	International Macroeconomics	3
200	International Relations	3
200	Data Sciences and Machine Learning	3
300	Continental Philosophy	3
300	Epistemology: The Craft of Knowing	3
300	Ethics in Governance	3
300	Green Economics: Resources and Sustainability	3
300	Indian Ocean Worlds: Merchants, Monsoons, and Migrations	3
300	International Trade, Globalization, and Global South	3
300	Metaphysics: What it Means to Be	3
300	Philosophy of Mathematics	3
300	Population Dynamics and Development	3
300	War, Peace, and the Politics of Security	3
300	Writing Resistance: Literatures of the Subcontinent	3
400	Behavioral Economics	4
400	Health Economics	4
400	Evaluation Sciences of Social Policy	4
400	Practical Ethics: Animal Welfare, Famine, and Bioethics	4
400	Seminar/Special Topics in PPE	4

Social Development Studies

The **Social Development Studies (SDS)** major offers students of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and engaged approach to contemporary social development challenges and opportunities. The major is rooted in principles of critical inquiry, social engagement, and rigorous scholarship and draws from the disciplines of sociology, history, philosophy, anthropology, political science, economics, and human/environmental sciences. Through intensive coursework and experiential learning opportunities, students shall interrogate diverse perspectives in development studies, challenging its conceptual frameworks while fostering an attitude of cultural sensitivity, pluralism, sustainability, creativity, and inclusion. This major engages theoretical paradigms, communication strategies, knowledge translation and policy, and ethical protocols, with local community engagement.

This major addresses the increasing focus on social aspects of development in policy, planning, and practice. It takes a critical approach to ethical and people-centered development for promoting quality of life, well-being, and equitable citizenship in the context of highly diverse societies and rapid urbanization. Students will learn to critique development interventions from a socio-cultural perspective especially in emerging citizenship in the Global South. Courses offered in the SDS major develop foundational knowledge and skills including critical thinking, problem-solving, quantitative reasoning and qualitative inquiry, and civil society engagement for good governance. Students will be exposed to the disciplines of literacy, migration, and displacement.

For practical learning, students are offered an invaluable opportunity to engage with practitioners and projects substantiating the various fields of endeavor in human development and community empowerment, as led by the Aga Khan Development Network in Pakistan and globally. Graduates will be prepared for professional roles in social work, community organization, institution building, communications, education, advocacy, public service, international relations, and across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. Students can also apply to graduate schools in education, development, sociology, public policy, and business.

Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate with a major in **Social Development Studies** will be able to:

1. **Analyze and assess** how institutional, municipal, provincial, federal, and international policies are developed and how institutions are created.
2. **Evaluate and contextualize** regional governance frameworks within histories of colonialism, post-colonialism, modernization, globalization, and local power dynamics.
3. **Design and implement** qualitative and quantitative research methods relevant to the development sector.
4. **Conduct and critique** research studies of social organizations across various scales (institutional, regional, NGO, etc.).

5. **Apply and integrate** experiential learning through D-Lab projects, fieldwork, and collaborations with external stakeholders.
6. **Demonstrate and articulate** an understanding of key developmental paradigms and frameworks across multiple disciplines (e.g., sociology, politics, economics, anthropology, environmental science).
7. **Develop and defend** an independent research project that synthesizes practical, theoretical, and methodological challenges within the development sector.

Major Requirements

Students pursuing a major in Social Development Studies must complete a total of **123 credits**. This coursework is divided into Core Curriculum requirements, Major Core courses and electives, open elective, experiential learning practicum, and a final capstone project. To graduate, students must maintain a minimum 2.50 CGPA.

Core Curriculum

All students are required to complete **12 courses** as part of the Faculty of Art and Science's Core Curriculum, which spans multiple disciplines and foundational areas of knowledge. These courses cover key forms of thought and inquiry, ensuring that students develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills essential for academic and professional success. For more details, please refer to the Core Curriculum section of this academic catalog.

SDS Core

The SDS major requires students to complete **24 credits of core coursework**, providing a strong interdisciplinary foundation in the study of social development. These courses equip students with the theoretical and analytical tools necessary to critically engage with development paradigms, governance structures, policy frameworks, and socio-economic transformations. Through this core curriculum, students will explore key debates in social theory, ethics, and public policy, developing the skills to assess and address complex social challenges across diverse global and local contexts.

SDS Elective

Students must complete **48 credits of electives within the SDS program**, allowing for specialization in specific themes, sectors, or geographical contexts. Electives are structured across introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels, enabling students to progressively build expertise in areas such as human rights, migration, sustainability, urbanization, gender and development, environmental policy, and social justice movements. By selecting electives aligned with their academic and professional interests, students can tailor their SDS education to prepare for careers in policy, advocacy, research, international development, and social entrepreneurship.

Open Electives

To foster intellectual breadth and cross-disciplinary engagement, SDS students are required to complete **12 credits of open electives outside their major**. These courses allow students to integrate knowledge from fields such as history, sociology, political science, environmental studies, and economics, providing broader perspectives on social development, governance, and global challenges. This interdisciplinary approach enhances students' critical thinking and

analytical skills, equipping them for research and professional work that demands a multifaceted understanding of development issues.

Field Experience

As part of the SDS curriculum, students must complete **3 credits of field experience**, involving a 6–8-week internship or applied learning opportunity. This requirement ensures that students engage with the practical applications of development work by collaborating with NGOs, social enterprises, policy organizations, community initiatives, or research projects. Through hands-on exposure, students will apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings, develop professional skills, and establish valuable connections within the field of social development.

Senior Capstone Project

In their final year, SDS students must complete a **6-credit Senior Capstone Project**, serving as the culmination of their studies in Social Development. This two-semester research project allows students to apply the theories, methodologies, and analytical frameworks they have developed throughout the program. The capstone may take various forms, including an independent research thesis, policy analysis, community-based research, or applied development project, depending on the student's academic focus and career aspirations. Through this experience, students will demonstrate their ability to conduct original research, critically engage with real-world development challenges, and contribute substantive scholarship to the field of social development.

SDS Graduating Requirements

Component	Credits	Details
Core Curriculum	30	<i>12 required courses—see Core Curriculum breakdown</i>
Required Major Core (8 courses)	24	Introduction to Sociology (3 credits) Social and Political Philosophy (3 credits) Sustainable Development (3 credits) Digital Humanities (3 credits) Governance and Public Policy (3 credits) Policy Design: From Data to Action (3 credits) Ethical Reasoning in Social Development (3 credits) Globalization and Social Change (3 credits)
Required Major Electives	48	<i>9 Lower-Level SDS Electives (100 or 200 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i> <i>7 Upper-Level SDS Electives (300 or 400 courses)**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Open Electives*	12	<i>4 Required Courses**—Offerings vary per semester</i>
Experiential Learning	3	6-8 weeks internship and practical learning opportunities with regional institutions and organizations
Senior Thesis: Capstone	6	Self-directed research project in major, integrating analytical and practical knowledge
Total Credits	123	

* Any courses beyond the student's major, excluding the Core Curriculum and Senior Thesis.

**This is the maximum number of courses students can take if each course is worth 3 credits. If some courses are 4 credits, students will need to take fewer courses to reach the required credits for graduation.

SDS Core Course Descriptions

Introduction to Sociology

Level: 100 | Credits: 3

This course provides some essential and introductory coordinates for navigating classical and contemporary topics in psychosocial pathologies. We shall explore the social utility of symptoms while emphasizing its anti-social residue. We shall also engage in a practical discussion of clinical topics such as the importance placed upon preliminary sessions, termination of treatment, new symptoms, debates concerning differential diagnosis, and the centrality of patient testimony and the case study method. Our overarching objective will be to demonstrate an alternative to the sociological paradigm on the social determinants of health that focuses on the singularity of symptoms. Students shall engage in mock clinical sessions and field trip workshops.

Social and Political Philosophy

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course explores key philosophical questions at the intersection of politics, ethics, and society. What makes a society just? What do individuals owe to one another? When is inequality fair, and when is it not? Through these questions, students will examine how philosophers have conceived political and social justice—from the justification of state authority to debates about equality, liberty, and redistribution. Core themes include the nature of rights, the role of the state, and the moral limits of markets. Readings will include foundational texts in political philosophy and contemporary arguments about redistributive justice. Thinkers such as John Rawls and Robert Nozick will help frame debates about fairness and freedom. This course encourages students to critically engage with competing visions of a just society, and to reflect on how these theories apply to the world around them.

Sustainable Development

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

This course explores the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development in the Global South, with a focus on Karachi, Pakistan. Students will critically examine issues such as urbanization, resource scarcity, waste management, and environmental justice in rapidly growing cities. Through case studies and fieldwork, the course will highlight the intersection of economic growth, social inequality, and environmental degradation. Students will also explore locally relevant solutions and global best practices for fostering sustainability in urban contexts. Through this course, students will gain practical skills to design and assess sustainable policies tailored to the specific needs of the Global South.

Digital Humanities

Level: 200 | Credits: 3

In this exciting project-based course, students will learn the basics of computational textual analysis, which makes it possible to study texts and even entire textual traditions on a scale that has been unthinkable until recently. Students will be learning by doing—active learning is key to this course. The course is centered around three mini-projects, each addressing an aspect of a Digital Humanities project: digitization and corpus building, processing and analysis, and visualization and presentation. Students will learn the basics of the programming language Python and use it to analyze texts and visualize data. They will also be introduced to theoretical and methodological debates in the field of global digital humanities and discuss ethical and philosophical implications of data, visualizations, and digital methodologies. There are no

technical prerequisites for this course. We assume students have no special computer skills apart from basic tasks like using an internet browser or writing a text in word processing software.

Governance and Public Policy

Level: 300 | Credits: 3

We live in a time of frequent changes in both what governments do and how they are organized to function. These shifts may be driven by internal social, political, or economic developments or arise from external global influences. This course provides an analytical framework to understand public policy and governance across historical and comparative contexts. It equips the student with the tools to critically assess how public policy can be formulated, and how public services can be organized and delivered. The course will explore different forms of government, the reasons for state intervention in society and the economy, and the processes of policymaking, implementation, and evaluation. It covers key elements of public governance, including accountability and transparency.

We will begin by exploring the systems and processes of government, along with public policy decision-making. We will then focus on stakeholder management and risk management in the public sector. Students will navigate the full spectrum of the public policy process—identifying problems, crafting policies, implementing solutions, and evaluating outcomes. Through critical analysis, they will assess governance systems and their ability to address pressing policy challenges effectively.

Policy Design: From Data to Action

Level: 300 | Credits: 3

This course explores how evidence is used to design, implement, and evaluate public policies. Students will examine the principles of evidence-based policymaking and develop skills to assess the effectiveness of social programs in health, education, and economic development. Key topics include data collection and analysis, impact assessment methods, and the challenges of translating research into policy action. Through real-world case studies, students will evaluate policy successes and failures while gaining hands-on experience in assessing different types of evidence. Students will learn to apply evidence-based approaches to policy design, effectively communicate findings, and critically analyze the ethical considerations of using evidence in decision-making.

Ethical Reasoning in Social Development

Level: 300 | Credits: 3

This course explores the ethical dimensions of social development, providing an understanding of how moral principles shape decisions and actions in social policy and development. Students will engage with various ethical theories and frameworks, evaluating the fairness and impact of policies and practices in both global and local contexts. Through real-world case studies, they will examine complex issues like equity, justice, human rights, and sustainability, developing critical reasoning skills to address these challenges.

The course encourages students to think critically about how policies can promote fairness and justice, the ethical dilemmas in development, and how global and local contexts influence ethical decisions. It is ideal for those pursuing careers in social work, public policy, community development, or professions focused on social equity. This course will enable students to acquire the tools to approach ethical challenges in social development thoughtfully and responsibly.

Globalization and Social Change

Level: 400 | Credits: 3

This course examines the complex impact of globalization on societies, cultures, and economies, exploring how global interconnectedness drives social change and reshapes power dynamics. Drawing from social development theories and critical analyses, students will explore key topics such as migration, inequality, cultural exchange, environmental challenges, and the role of technology. We will investigate how globalization both creates opportunities and intensifies tensions, with a focus on the political, economic, and social consequences for different communities. The course provides students with the tools to critically assess globalization's far-reaching effects and to understand the social, cultural, and economic transformations it triggers. Students will gain the skills to critically examine globalization, explore its diverse impacts on communities, and apply theoretical frameworks to better understand its wide-ranging consequences in today's global landscape.

SDS Elective Course List

Different SDS electives are offered each semester. To meet graduation requirements, students **must complete 48 credits from SDS electives outside of the major core**. The following electives include courses that have been taught in the past, many of which will be offered in the 2025-26 Academic Year, with others scheduled for future semesters. Please note that we do not guarantee that every course listed will be offered each academic year.

Level	Course Name	Credits
100	Introduction to Anthropology: People, Places, and Ideas	3
200	Anthropology of Religion in Muslim Contexts	3
200	City Learning: Cultures and Creative Approaches	3
200	Ecologies of Culture: An Anthropological Approach	3
200	Environmental Challenges and Opportunities	3
200	Gender, Law, and Justice in Pakistan	3
200	Health, Safety, and Environment	3
200	Policy Frontiers for a Sustainable Future	3
200	Psychosocial Pathologies	3
200	Social and Political Philosophy	3
200	Social Transformation in East Asia	3
200	Sustainable Agriculture	3
300	Developmental Economics	3
300	Ethics in Governance	3
300	Green Architecture: Designing for Climate Resilience	3
300	Media and Society	3
300	Population Dynamics and Development	3
300	Urban Ecology and Ethical Citizenship	3
400	Advanced Psychoanalysis for Pakistan	4
400	Public Health in a Warming World	4
400	Social Development Practicum: The Link Road Project	4

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is central to the Bachelor of Studies program, connecting theory to real-world practice through the Design and Development Lab (D-Lab), co-curricular activities, and credited internships. Students gain hands-on experience both in the classroom and through field experience, fostering professional growth with placements locally and internationally, often in collaboration with Aga Khan University campuses.

Field Experience and Internships

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences Internship Program is an integral part of the BS Arts and Sciences, reflecting the university's commitment to experiential learning as a key pedagogical strategy. This approach emphasizes contextual learning, enabling students to connect classroom concepts to real-world situations. As part of this framework, the internship serves as a structured opportunity for students to apply academic knowledge in professional environments while developing essential skills for both personal and career growth.

Students must complete an internship, **equivalent to a 3-credit course**, to fulfill their requirements for graduation. This experience allows them to engage with complex societal challenges, gaining firsthand exposure to the dynamics of community life, industry practices, and global issues.

Access to Internship Opportunities

Students are encouraged to explore and apply for internship opportunities that align with their academic and professional interests. While institutional support is available, students may also seek placements independently. AKU facilitates internship placements both locally in Pakistan and internationally where the university has a presence, ensuring students have access to engaging and high-quality professional experiences.

The university provides structured guidance and resources to help students navigate the internship process. This includes:

- **Career development workshops** focusing on resume writing, interview preparation, and workplace skills.
- **Information sessions and networking** events to connect students with potential employers and internship hosts.
- **Faculty-led research projects**, offering additional hands-on experience.
- **Access to the Design and Development Lab (D-Lab)**, where students can develop innovative solutions to societal challenges.
- **International internship placements**, facilitated through the Global Engagement office, broadening students' global exposure.

In addition to internship placements, experiential learning at FAS extends to residential retreats and co-curricular clubs, further enriching students' academic and professional development. The university also collaborates with exceptional host organizations to create highly productive assignments that maximize student learning.

Internship Structure and Supervision

Internships are typically completed during the summer of the third year. Students work under the guidance of faculty supervisors and external mentors to develop a structured work plan with defined objectives and milestones. Upon completion, students receive academic credit and detailed feedback from both their mentor and faculty supervisor.

The internship experience is a cornerstone of the FAS experiential learning model, bridging academic learning and professional practice. By combining institutional support with student engagement, the program equips graduates with the skills, insights, and experiences necessary for success in their future careers.

Senior Capstone Project

The senior capstone project is a culmination of a student's academic journey, representing a self-directed area of research closely tied to their major. This thesis-based project integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application and provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their independence and critical thinking skills. It bridges academic study and real-world challenges, preparing students for their next steps in professional or academic pursuits.

Senior Thesis

The senior thesis, which serves as the capstone project for the final year, is a graduation requirement worth 6 credits. This project represents a significant opportunity for students to engage in self-directed research within their field of study. It allows them to build upon the skills and knowledge developed throughout their coursework and apply them to a focused research topic.

Process Overview

Year 3:

- **Identify a Thesis Advisor:** By the end of Year 3, students must identify a faculty advisor who will guide them through the thesis process. The advisor helps refine the research question and ensures that the project aligns with academic expectations.
- **Thesis Proposal Approval:** Students must submit their thesis project proposal for approval. The proposal should outline the research question, methodology, and objectives of the thesis, ensuring that the research is academically rigorous and feasible.
- **Conduct Preliminary Research:** Students are encouraged to use the summer between their third and fourth years to conduct initial research. This allows them to gather data, refine their research question, and ensure they are prepared to begin writing and workshopping their thesis during Year 4.

Year 4:

- **Senior Capstone I and II:** In Year 4, students will be enrolled in Senior Capstone I and II, courses designed specifically for workshopping and peer-reviewing their thesis material. These courses provide structured opportunities for students to present their research, receive feedback, and refine their writing through iterative processes.
- **Workshops and Peer Review:** In these Capstone courses, students engage in peer-review writing workshops, allowing them to receive constructive feedback from fellow students and faculty. This collaborative process helps strengthen their thesis and enhances their ability to critically evaluate their own work and that of others.
- **Develop Thesis Plan:** Students create a detailed thesis plan, which includes clear milestones and expected outcomes. They continue regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure their research stays on track and to resolve any challenges that may arise during the research and writing phases.
- **Final Thesis Submission:** The thesis culminates in a written project that presents original research findings, analysis, and conclusions. The final submission is evaluated by a capstone review committee, which assesses the quality of the work and its adherence to academic standards.

Expected Outcomes

- Students should demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their field and a capacity to conduct independent, original research.
- The thesis offers an opportunity to engage with complex issues, develop critical analysis skills, and apply theoretical concepts to practical research.
- Upon completion, students will have a polished research project that can serve as a key asset for future job applications or graduate studies.

Note on Alternative Thesis Formats

While the senior thesis is typically a written project, students may petition to submit an alternative form of thesis output, such as a digital, visual, or multimedia project, depending on the nature of their research. Any alternative format must be clearly defined and measurable in terms of workload and intellectual rigor, ensuring that it is equivalent to the effort of a traditional written thesis. Students must present a detailed proposal outlining how the alternative project will meet the academic standards of the thesis requirement, and it must be approved by their faculty advisor. This ensures that the alternative project demonstrates the same level of research, analysis, and academic depth expected from a traditional written thesis.

The senior thesis provides students with a chance to develop vital skills in research, writing, and critical thinking, making it an essential part of their academic and professional development. Through this project, students gain experience that will be highly valued in both the job market and in further academic pursuits.



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