The College of Arts and Sciences offers an education in the liberal arts leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science. The faculty believe a good liberal arts education must provide students with an extensive base of intellectual content and skills that enables them to explore ideas, evaluate evidence critically, draw reasoned conclusions, and communicate one’s thoughts in a clear, coherent manner. Such abilities are particularly important in a world in which knowledge and professions are changing rapidly, and the United States is increasingly part of a global social and economic network. A good liberal arts education thus demands not only rigor and depth, but also sufficient breadth to expose students to a wide range of subjects and methods of studying them.

The College’s website, http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/undergrad, contains a wealth of current information pertinent to the topics covered in this section.

**Competency Requirements** These requirements provide the foundation for successful study in the liberal arts, for meeting subsequent challenges in the work place, and for serving effectively as an educated member of society:

1. **Composition**: We expect every liberal arts graduate to have the ability to write clearly, succinctly, and in a logical manner.
2. **Foreign Language**: Language is not simply a means to communicate, but also an avenue for insights into other cultures. Many students also discover that learning a second language improves their understanding of English and broadens their awareness of an increasingly diverse America.
3. **Courses for competency requirements must be taken on a graded basis.**
Area Requirements The faculty established area requirements to ensure that all students have the background and breadth for further learning in a variety of disciplines. In completing these requirements, students explore a wide range of disciplines, points of view, and modes of inquiry. In addition, they investigate unfamiliar areas and thus can make more informed judgments about their major and elective courses.

The faculty encourages students to design programs of study that offer the maximum range of intellectual opportunities. The area requirements are therefore organized to provide experience with a broad array of intellectual approaches rather than prescribe a specific body of content:

1. Social Sciences allow students to explore techniques of analysis and modes of reasoning for studying a wide range of social, economic, and political relations.
2. Humanities: improve the student’s understanding of the achievements and potential of literature and the arts, whether verbal, visual, or musical. They may also address basic questions concerning values and ethics.
3. Natural Sciences and Mathematics improve a student’s comprehension of the fundamental principles of natural phenomena and of scientific methods as a way of describing and understanding the world.
4. Non-Western Perspectives broaden students’ exposure to other cultures and to the ways those cultures perceive their environment or organize their society.
5. Historical Studies introduce students to the historical forces that have shaped and changed the nature of human societies and methods that are required to study such forces. Encourages students to think about cause and effect and the continuity and change over time.

All courses used for area requirements must be taken on a graded basis.