ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY

To fulfill its goals for students, faculty, and the entire college community — and to do so explicitly guided by and in concert with the college mission — the faculty of Central College have developed and continually assess, refine and augment an academic curriculum recognized nationally for its:

- unfailing foundation in the liberal arts
- innovative programs to develop high-level rhetorical skills
- significant emphasis on global awareness, and the understanding and appreciation of all facets of human diversity
- demonstrated academic rigor and intellectual challenge

While students’ academic experiences are governed by the college’s graduation requirements, those experiences are most powerfully shaped by the instructive and nurturing relationships developed among students and faculty, and by each student’s individual desire to be intellectually curious and to engage oneself in the lifelong quest for the knowledge that sustains and advances us all.

Communication across the curriculum

One of the most significant components of Central’s curriculum — and of all quality liberal arts curricula — is an exemplary commitment to the development of speaking and writing skills. Central College has one of the longest histories in American higher education of helping students become rhetorically sophisticated, so that they may best adapt to and communicate successfully in a multitude of academic and professional settings.

Central’s Communication Across the Curriculum Program, initially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Meredith Corporation and subsequently driven by its own success, is grounded in the understanding that communication skills employed in context are best learned in context.

A critical component of each academic major is that students will learn effective communication skills in the context of their major. These skills are embedded within the major curriculum and students are assessed in a developmental manner appropriate to the discipline. Accordingly, the development of students’ written and oral rhetorical skills is the responsibility of faculty teaching courses in each academic major, and writing intensive courses throughout the curriculum.

LAS 110 Intersections

A hallmark of the first-year experience at Central College is the Intersections course, LAS 110. Required of all new, first-year students in the fall semester, Intersections is an interdisciplinary seminar designed to introduce students to the intellectual life at a liberal arts college in general and, more specifically, to academic life at Central. Small groups of students explore the intersections at which academic/intellectual disciplines, ideas, and events converge, connect and collide. Faculty from throughout the natural sciences, behavioral sciences, fine arts, and humanities teach the seminars. All sections of the course share a common reading and an introduction to the liberal arts. Instructors select their own topics for the remainder of the course.

LAS 410 Liberal Arts Seminar

As the culmination of the liberal arts core at Central College, the Liberal Arts Seminar stresses an interdisciplinary approach, recognizing that real-world, complex problems and questions cannot be considered only within disciplinary boundaries. Liberal Arts Seminars focus on a significant question for inquiry which needs the analysis and synthesis of more than one discipline. Seminar topics seek to engage the student in independent inquiry, critical thinking and persuasive communication. The seminar encourages students to examine how knowledge, integrated and alive, informs our professional, civic and personal lives. Examples of LAS topics include: Natural Hazards and the Human Dimension; HIV and the AIDS Pandemic; Human Rights, Politics, and Culture; The Evolution of Sex in Biology and Popular Culture; Disease and Health Through Space and Time; The “Disney-fication” of Identities, Representations, and Development; The Future of the Past: Memory, Amnesia, and Visual Culture; Schooling Societies: The Local, the Global, and the In-Between; and Buddhist Traditions of Tibet and the Himalayas.

Advising

Academic advising at Central College is a shared responsibility of the student, the advisor, and the college. The academic advising program aims to empower students to become lifelong learners through examination of life goals, participation in curricular and co-curricular programs, and knowledge of career opportunities. A faculty advisor is assigned to each student admitted to Central. Students may change advisors as their major interests change or develop.

Advisors’ responsibilities are

- To provide accurate information about requirements for the Core, majors, minors and overall fulfillment of the degree
- To provide guidance and referrals for choosing classes and helping students map a career path
- To be available and responsive to concerns and questions
- To provide guidance and referrals for students to resolve academic or personal issues
• To maintain confidentiality regarding students' academic records

Students' responsibilities are
• To know the college's requirements and policies
• To articulate and pursue personal, educational and career goals congruent with personal values and realistic self-appraisal
• To monitor progress by means of the degree audit
• To consult with an academic advisor several times a semester to review their academic program and progress toward their goals.
• To accept the consequences of academic decisions such as declaration of a major or minor, course selection or withdrawal, follow-through with referrals, and related decisions.