The centerpiece of Jesuit education has always been a common curriculum that emphasizes the study of defining works in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. The Boston College Core is designed to provide a broad understanding of the forces that have shaped world history and culture, challenging students to think across the disciplines, to make good decisions, and to communicate effectively in an increasingly complex world.

To fulfill Core requirements, each student must complete:

1. course in Arts: Art, Art History, Film, Music, Theatre
2. courses in History
1. course in Cultural Diversity
2. courses in Natural Science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Physics
2. courses in Social Science: Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology
2. courses in Theology: 1 course in Christian Theology, 1 course in Sacred Texts and Traditions
1. course in Writing

To view all courses that satisfy Core requirements, visit: BC.EDU/CORE

**Complex Problems Courses**

Each of these six-credit courses, team-taught by professors from different disciplines, satisfies at least two Core requirements. Complex Problems courses consist of three 50-minute lectures and one 75-minute lab session each week, along with a weekly meeting during the evening for reflection and integration.

**Enduring Questions Courses**

These linked pairs of courses are taught by professors from different disciplines, who collaborate in choosing common readings and questions for consideration. The same group of 19 students takes each class. Four evening reflection sections will be scheduled over the course of the semester. Taken together, the courses are worth six credits and fulfill at least two Core requirements.

As a member of the class of 2023, you are invited to enroll in one of Boston College’s innovative, team-taught Core courses. Open only to first-year students, there are two types of interdisciplinary offerings: Complex Problems, which probe compelling contemporary issues such as global climate change and citizenship and immigration in the United States; and Enduring Questions, which explore subjects crucial to the human experience including health and illness, love and marriage, and the relationship between humans and the natural world.

Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses extend inquiry beyond the classroom to labs, reflection sessions, conversations with outside speakers, and off-campus field visits, creating an intensive shared learning experience for both teachers and students. They exemplify Boston College’s innovative approach to Core education by establishing a foundation for students’ intellectual development and preparing them to become engaged, effective world citizens.

You will have the opportunity to enroll for the Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses described in this catalog when you register for Spring 2020 semester. There is no limit to the number of Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses you may take during your first year at BC.

“It’s the most diverse class I ever had at BC. It was the first class where I could talk about social justice in a very open setting.”
HIST151301 + EESC150701
John Ebel, Earth and Environmental Sciences
Conevery Valencius, History
▶ Fulfills 1 History II + 1 Natural Science
This course explores U.S. energy. From the perspectives of history, culture, technology, engineering, and foreign policy, we ask how we created and distributed energy in the past, how energy systems function in the present, and how they may evolve. We investigate energy production, distribution, and use—coal, oil, nuclear power, hydropower, wind, and solar power—along with cables, pipelines, and transmission systems. Through hands-on exercises and field trips, students learn how past technological and economic choices shaped current U.S. energy systems, how energy systems affect the environment, and how sustainable energy systems will be in the future.
MWF 1 p.m. (lecture) + Tues. 6–7:50 p.m. (reflection) + 1 lab section (times below)
To register for this course:
1. Register for both HIST151301 and EESC150701
2. You must also register for one of the following labs:
   • HIST151401  T 9:00–10:15 a.m.
   • HIST151402  T 10:30–11:45 a.m.
   • EESC150801  TH 9–10:15 a.m.
   • EESC150802  TH 10:30–11:45 a.m.

#Shop-Apocalypse: Consumer Culture’s Past and the Fate of the Planet
SOCY171401 & HIST171701
Juliet Schor, Sociology
Robin Fleming, History
▶ Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 History II
Although we are increasingly aware that our habits of consumption affect the environment, it is hard to imagine that consuming patterns are capable of being changed. In this class, students will learn that practices of consumption are both socially and historically constructed, that they change dramatically over time, and that there are (and always have been) urgent moral issues connected to practices of consumption. We will explore the global, social, and environmental dimensions of consumption, studying things like the 1897 Sears catalog, 1950s television shows, Canada Goose jackets, DIY manuals and makerspaces, and hippy cookbooks of the 1960s.
MWF 9 a.m. (lecture) + Thurs. 6–7:50 p.m. (reflection) + 1 lab section (times below)
To register for this course:
1. Register for both SOCY171401 & HIST171701
2. You must also register for one of the following labs:
   • SOCY172001  T 3:00–4:15 p.m.
   • SOCY172002  T 4:30–5:45 p.m.
   • HIST172401  TH 3:00–4:15 p.m.
   • HIST172402  TH 4:30–5:45 p.m.

Science and Technology in American Society
HIST151101 + BIOL150301
Andrew Jewett, History
Christopher Kenaley, Biology
▶ Fulfills 1 History II + 1 Natural Science
What roles do science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) play in advanced, knowledge-dependent societies? This course examines our institutional and cultural relationships to innovation—our hopes and fears about STEM, views of science and religion and concepts of democracy, the emergence of DIY and geek culture, and more. It also explores ethical questions that have arisen in response to STEM, including debates over biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, climate change, and mass extinction. The course gives students the basic technical background they need to address these questions, and an opportunity to imagine a technological application of their own with which to address complex problems of the 21st century.
MWF 2 p.m. (lecture) + Thurs. 6–7:50 p.m. (reflection) + 1 lab section (times below)
To register for this course:
1. Register for both HIST151101 and BIOL150301
2. You must register for one of the following labs:
   • HIST151201  T 12:00–1:15 p.m.
   • HIST151202  T 1:30–2:45 p.m.
   • BIOL150201  TH 12:00–1:15 p.m.
   • BIOL150202  TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.

“I believe this course is great in helping students to learn how to draw connections between different disciplines.”

“I was pushed to my limits academically and spiritually. Overall, what I have learned in this class goes outside of the classroom and will genuinely stay with me for years to come.”

Student comments in this brochure taken from anonymous survey responses
Being Human: Secular-Humanist Perspective COMM170201
Being Human: Theological Perspective THEO170601

Marcus Breen, Communication
Louis Petillo, Theology

▶ Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 Theology
(Christian Theology)

These paired courses invite students to consider the questions and challenges that artificial intelligence poses for human existence. Can human intelligence and freedom be digitally or mechanically replicated? What are the ethical responsibilities of humans living in a world of thinking machines? How does artificial intelligence inform the way we think about human meaning and purpose? While one course approaches these questions from a secular and humanistic perspective, the other assumes a religious and theological viewpoint. Students will explore these questions through their engagement with a variety of academic texts, literature, film, and other creative arts.

T TH 9 a.m. and MWF 10 a.m.
Tues. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both COMM170201 and THEO170601

Nature and Power: Making the Modern World HIST171001
Nature and Power: Reading the American Place ENGL172401

Ling Zhang, History
Suzanne Matson, English

▶ Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 History II

How does nature act upon us and our imaginations, and how do we act upon it—transforming and representing it? How do our links with nature change across time and place to produce the modern world and contemporary consciousness? These paired courses use global comparative case histories and in-depth literary readings of the American place to trace changing conceptual frameworks of both conquest and conservation. Students will think critically, write analytically and reflectively, and venture beyond the classroom for urban walks, museum visits, and a field trip to Walden Pond.

T TH 10:30 a.m. and T TH 12 p.m.
Thurs. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both HIST171001 and ENGL172401

The American Divide: The Economics of Inequality ECON170301
The American Divide: The Philosophy of Inequality PHIL171101

Geoffrey Sanzenbacher, Economics
Cherie McGill, Philosophy

▶ Fulfills 1 Philosophy + 1 Social Science

Concern over inequality in the U.S. has shown itself in movements like Occupy Wall Street, the Fight for a Fifteen Dollar Minimum Wage, and Black Lives Matter. These courses will examine the meaning, causes, and consequences of inequality from the perspectives of philosophy and economics. Providing a broad picture of the current state of the U.S. economy, and analyzing the role of economic policy in determining opportunities and outcomes, the courses will prepare students to develop their own views about how past economic choices shaped current economic realities, and how we might create a more equitable future.

MWF 12 p.m. and MWF 1 p.m.
Tues. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both ECON170301 and PHIL171101
enduring questions courses

Coming of Age: Literature UNAS170801
Coming of Age: Film FILM170101

Susan Michalczyk, Honors
John Michalczyk, Art, Art History & Film
► Fulfills 1 Art + 1 Literature
When do we come of age? What influences our actions and reactions throughout our journey into adulthood? How do these experiences affect the lives we choose to lead? From times of crisis to moments of calm, childhood memories carry a range of experiences, from the mundane to the transformational. Literature and film adaptations can capture both the individual and collective experience of these critical years of development and memorialize a common experience of both private and public struggles. In both courses, students will analyze and connect these individual moments to current social concerns.

T TH 12 p.m. and T TH 1:30 p.m.
Thurs. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both UNAS170801 and FILM170101

Family Matters: Stories of Adoption and Kinship ENGL171001
Family Matters: Psychology and Adoption SOCY171501

James Smith, English
Oh Myo Kim, Lynch School of Education
► Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 Literature
In recent decades, the enduring question—what is a family?—has intertwined itself with religious, political, and global concerns as nation-states and many different faiths have begun to regulate and create new modalities of the family. Understanding kinship—biological and constructed—is fundamental to evaluating this global turn. Using adoption as a critical lens, our linked courses encourage students to question definitions of family, evaluate how ideas of kinship have changed over time, and consider kinship’s impact on one’s sense of self, one’s relationship to family and genealogy, and one’s understanding of the past.

T TH 9 a.m. and T TH 10:30 a.m.
Thurs. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both ENGL171001 and SOCY171501

Humans and Other Animals: The Mental Life of Animals PSYC109201
Finding the Animal: Beasts and Boundaries in Literature ENGL172101

Jeffrey Lamoureux, Psychology
Robert Stanton, English
► Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 Social Science
What is a human, and who is an animal? Humanism has questioned attributed reason, morality, speech, ritual, and the capacity to imagine future worlds to humans alone. All major philosophies and religions try to separate humans from animals: in Genesis, God distinguishes Adam and Eve from the beasts, then instructs Adam to name them. Humans still grapple with the ethics of eating, wearing, and experimenting on animals; the environmental effects of raising them; and challenges like habit change and animal-borne disease. These courses use historical and literary study to interrogate the blurry and problematic boundaries between human and nonhuman animals.

MWF 12 p.m. and MWF 2 p.m.
Tues. 6–7:30 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both PSYC109201 and ENGL172101

In the Beginning: Scientific Explorations of Our Origins BIOL170501
In the Beginning: Biblical Explorations of Our Origins THEO170401

Michelle Meyer, Biology
Jeffery Cooley, Theology
► Fulfills 1 Natural Science + 1 Theology
[Sacred Texts and Traditions]
Where did we come from and how did the world come to be? How do the answers to these questions define who we are and determine our purpose? These two courses will introduce students to the fundamental beliefs about human origins among great thinkers in the Western tradition: the originators of Judeo-Christian theology and pioneers of contemporary science.

T TH 10:30 a.m. and T TH 12 p.m.
Tues. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both BIOL170501 and THEO170401

Social Inequality in America SOCY171101
Rhetoric of Social Inequality in America COMM171001

Eve Spangler, Sociology
Celeste Wells, Communication
► Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 Literature + 1 Cultural Diversity (Difference, Justice & the Common Good)
These independent courses explore enduring questions regarding social inequality, social justice, and the social representations of both in America. Both courses take for granted that inequality is embedded in the American experience, but will explore this inequality from different perspectives: one takes a perspective rooted in examining the lived human experience (sociological), and the other takes a perspective rooted in examining the language and resulting creation of human experience (rhetorical). Issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality are explored in both classes.

T TH 12 p.m. and T TH 1:30 p.m.
Tues. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both SOCY171101 and COMM171001

“...”
Motivations for Human Cooperation: Evolutionary Perspective ENVS174601

William Atwood-Charles, Sociology
Yasmin Bijani Zaerpoor, Environmental Studies

Law & Adolescence: Children of Immigrants SOCY174501
Law & Adolescence: History of Childhood HIST174501

Daniel Millan, Sociology
Carlos Zúñiga Nieto, History

What motivates us to cooperate? Are we, as many have suggested, driven primarily by self-interest or is there room for altruism? Readings will draw from sociology, community ecology, sociology, economics, and political theory to highlight examples of cooperation unfolding in the natural world around us, explain why cooperation among humans is so difficult, and identify ways in which we have formulated formal and informal “rules” to incentivize human cooperation. Through case studies, we will explore how cooperation occurs among individuals in small groups and organizations in addition to the role of large institutions in enabling and constraining various types of cooperation. Students will have an opportunity to reflect on theories of cooperation and develop practical frameworks for resolving cooperative dilemmas in an equitable manner.

MWF 10 a.m. and T TH 9 a.m.
Tues. 6–7:50 p.m. reserved for reflection sessions (four times during the semester)

To register for these courses:
Register for both SOCY174501 and HIST174501

ART
Coming of Age: Film FILM170101 paired with Literature UNAS170801

CULTURAL DIVERSITY
Difference, Justice, and the Common Good Social Inequality in America SOCY171101 paired with Literature COMM170301

HISTORY II
#Shop-Apocalypse: Consumer Culture’s Past and the Fate of the Planet HIST173701 paired with Social Science SOCY174401
Science and Technology in American Society HIST151301 paired with Biology BIOL150301
Nature and Power: Making the Modern World HIST171001 paired with Literature ENGL172401
Law & Adolescence: History of Childhood HIST174501 paired with Social Science SOCY174501

LITERATURE
Nature and Power: Reading the American Place ENGL172401 paired with History HIST173701
Coming of Age: Literature UNAS170801 paired with Art FILM170101
Rhetoric of Social Inequality in America COMM170301 paired with Social Science SOCY171101
Family Matters: Stories of Adoption and Kinship ENGL210101 paired with Social Science SOCY171001
Finding the Animal: Beasts and Boundaries in Literature ENGL172101 paired with Social Science PSYC109201

NATURAL SCIENCE
Powering America: The Past and Future of Energy, Technology, and the Environment EESC150701 paired with History HIST151301
Science and Technology in American Society BIOL150301 paired with History HIST151301
In the Beginning: Scientific Explorations of Our Origins BIOL170501 paired with Theology THEO170401
Motivations for Human Cooperation: Evolutionary Perspective ENVS174601 paired with Social Science SOCY174601
The American Divine: The Philosophy of Inequality PHIL171001 paired with Social Science ECON170301

SOCIAL SCIENCE
#Shop-Apocalypse: Consumer Culture’s Past and the Fate of the Planet SOCY174401 paired with History HIST173701
Being Human: Secular-Humanist Perspective COMM170201 paired with Theology THEO170601
The American Divine: The Economics of Inequality ECON170301 paired with Philosophy PHIL171001
Social Inequality in America SOCY171101 paired with Literature COMM170301
Family Matters: Psychology and Adoption SOCY171001 paired with Literature ENGL171005
Humans and Other Animals: The Mental Life of Animals PSYC212011 paired with Literature ENGL172101
Motivations for Human Cooperation: Sociological Perspective SOCY174601 paired with Natural Science ENVS174601
Law & Adolescence: Children of Immigrants SOCY174501 paired with History HIST174501

THEOLOGY
Sacred Texts a Traditions
In the Beginning: Biblical Explorations of Our Origins THEO170401 paired with Natural Science BIOL170501
Christian Theology
Being Human: Theological Perspective THEO170601 paired with Social Science COMM170201

To Fulfill 1 Social Science + 1 History II
WF 10 a.m. and T TH 9 a.m.
WF 11 a.m. and MWF 12 p.m.

To Fulfill 1 Social Science + 1 Natural Science

Register for both SOCY174601 and ENVS174601

(four times during the semester)
"It changed my life."

BC.EDU/CORE