The centerpiece of a 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 Curriculum is designed to provide a broad understanding of the forces that have shaped the world by challenging students to think across the disciplines in order to make good decisions, and to communicate effectively in an increasingly complex world.

Complex Problems courses consist of lectures and weekly lab sessions, along with a weekly meeting during the evening for reflection.

Enduring Questions courses are taught by professors from different disciplines, who collaborate on exploring a single, long-standing question for students to address throughout the semester. 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.

To fulfill Core requirements, each student must complete:

1 course in Arts: Art, Art History, Film, Music, Theatre
1 course in Cultural Diversity
2 courses in History: 1 course in History I, 1 course in History II
1 course in Literature: Classics; English; Romance Languages and Literatures; Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies
1 course in Mathematics
2 courses in Natural Science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Physics
2 courses in Philosophy
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

Student comments in this brochure taken from anonymous survey responses
AS A MEMBER OF THE CLASS OF 2025, YOU ARE INVITED TO enroll in Boston College’s innovative, team-taught Core courses: Complex Problems and Enduring Questions. Each one is collaboratively taught by two faculty members from different academic departments, and each is designed to engage students in interdisciplinary explorations of topics of critical importance. These include areas such as ethics and engineering; race and violence; markets, cultures, and values; economics, law, and health policy; the value of freedom; psychological and literary perspectives of disability; and more.

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 in this fall’s Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses when you register during your summer orientation session. Both are worth six credits and fulfill two of the University’s Core Curriculum requirements. In November, you will be eligible to register for spring 2022 Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses, which are also listed in this brochure.

To view faculty members describing their courses and for more information, visit BC.EDU/COMPLEXENDURING
Complex Problems courses will use PODs for their weekly Reflection sessions. With PODs (Purposeful, Ongoing Discussion), upper-class students mentor first-year students in tackling course material through intellectual conversations and reflections. Through this engagement, students connect content to their daily lives. PODs help BC fulfill its mission to produce “men and women for whom discernment is a habit.”
Life, Liberty & Health: The Economics, Policy and Law of Healthcare  
(UNAS170201 + ECON170201)  
Mary Ann Chirba, BC Law  
Tracy Regan, Economics  
▶ Fulfills 1 History II + 1 Social Science + Cultural Diversity through EDJ

Recently, health has become a central focus of political infighting, public discord, and personal worry. Health care and health insurance now dominate everything from think tanks to Jimmy Kimmel Live! Meanwhile, concussions go up, NFL ratings go down, drug prices soar, and opioid abuse damages individuals, families, the health care system, and the economy. Such complex issues are best understood through interdisciplinary study. These paired classes will introduce basic principles of economics, law, and public policy through the lens of contemporary problems involving enduring questions of government authority and individual autonomy, morality and ethics, social justice, and human rights.

This course meets: Lecture T TH 3–4:15 p.m.  
Reflection T 6–7:25 p.m. and Lab as scheduled

To register for this course:  
1. Register for both UNAS170201 and ECON170201  
2. Register for one of the following Labs  
   • UNAS170202 M 9–10:50 a.m.  
   • UNAS170203 M 11:30 a.m.–1:20 p.m.  
   • UNAS170204 W 9–10:50 a.m.  
   • UNAS170205 W 11:30 a.m.–1:20 p.m.  
3. Choose your POD reflection section.  
   All sections meet T 6–7:25 p.m.  
   • UNAS170206  
   • UNAS170209  
   • UNAS170207  
   • UNAS170210  
   • UNAS170208

Crisis and Storytelling in the Age of Climate Change  
(ENGL173301 + EESC172001)  
Min Song, English  
Hilary Palevsky, Earth and Environmental Sciences  
▶ Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 Natural Science

The realities of a changing climate, including intensified extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and strengthening heat waves and droughts, are already being felt by frontline communities around the world. This course focuses both on hearing stories about climate change as told by climate writers, scientists, and members of frontline communities, and telling these stories ourselves. We will examine storytelling as it works across mediums and genres from literature to scientific data visualizations, and consider what it means to write an essay, produce a graph, create a podcast, or make a film. Students in the course will read, watch, and analyze examples of climate storytelling, broadly defined, and produce their own personal essays, infographics, podcasts, and/or films. Some questions we’ll foreground throughout the semester are: How do we communicate the science and the human impacts of the climate crisis? Whose ways of knowing and lived experiences do we privilege? How can the stories we tell move society toward just climate solutions?

This course meets: Lecture T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.  
Reflection T 6–7:25 p.m. and Lab as scheduled

To register for this course:  
1. Register for both ENGL173301 and EESC172001  
2. Register for one of the following Labs  
   • EESC172002 M 1:30–3:20 p.m.  
   • EESC172003 W 1:30–3:20 p.m.  
   • EESC172004 F 10–11:50 a.m.  
   • EESC172005 F 1–2:50 p.m.  
3. Choose your POD reflection section.  
   All sections meet T 6–7:25 p.m.  
   • EESC172006  
   • EESC172009  
   • EESC172007  
   • EESC172010  
   • EESC172008
When Life Happens: Disability and the Stories We Tell (UNAS170401)

When Life Happens: Psychology Views Disability (UNAS170501)

Clare Dunsford, English
Penny Hauser-Cram, Lynch School of Education and Human Development

▸ Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 Social Science + Cultural Diversity through EDJ

What makes a life worth living?

What is the meaning of disability? How do those with disabilities and their families view themselves and their place in society? How does society view them? In the literature course, students will read memoirs, fiction, and essays written by and about those with disabilities, analyzing rhetorical strategies and questions of representation. In the psychology course, students will explore the meaning of disability from the historical and cultural perspectives promoted by the social sciences and consider the ways in which psychology has both advanced and restricted those with disabilities. Together we will reflect on what disability can tell us about what it means to be human.

These course lectures meet:

• UNAS170401 T TH 9–10:15 a.m.
• UNAS170501 T TH 10:30–11:45 a.m.

Reflection will be held: T 6–7:50 p.m. (4 times per semester)

“I believe this course is great in helping students to learn how to draw connections between different disciplines.”
The Role of Literature in Understanding the Complex Meaning of Justice (ENGL172901)
The Rule of Law and the Complex Meaning of Justice (UNAS171901)

Marla DeRosa, English
R. Michael Cassidy, BC Law

▶ Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 Social Science

What does justice mean and what role do lawyers, authors, and dramatists play in illuminating the many complex issues underlying various conceptions of justice?

Through the analysis of fiction and nonfiction, students in these linked courses will discover multifaceted conceptions of justice and injustice in our society. The courses will ask fundamental questions about justice: How do we define justice? Are lawyers more often portrayed as impediments to justice or as champions of justice, and which portrayal is more accurate? What do we mean by the “rule of law”? What happens when a person’s moral values conflict with the obligations of the law? How have these questions and tensions been portrayed by dramatists throughout the ages? In what ways can literary texts serve as arguments for justice?

Shared texts between the two courses will likely include A Civil Action and Just Mercy.

These course lectures meet:
- ENGL172901 T TH 12–1:15 p.m.
- UNAS171901 T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflection will be held: T 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)

Truth-telling in Literature (ENGL170101)
Truth-telling in History (HIST170101)

Allison Adair, English
Sylvia Sellers-García, History

▶ Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 History I

Is it possible to tell the truth about the past?
When does the imagination produce truth? Do literary techniques reveal truth or obscure it? History and English understand “truth” in different ways. These courses consider both perspectives, using texts drawn from medieval to modern times and from Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

These course lectures meet:
- ENGL170101 T TH 10:30–11:45 a.m.
- HIST170101 T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflection will be held: TH 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)
From Hiroshima to K-Pop: Historical Perspectives (UNAS171601)
From Hiroshima to K-Pop: Filmmakers’ Perspectives (UNAS171701)

Ingu Hwang, International Studies
Christina Klein, English

Fulfills History II + Arts

How did East Asia emerge from the wreckage of the Second World War to become the dominant political, economic, and cultural force it is in the world today? What is the relationship between politics and popular culture? Since 1945, East Asia has experienced the Cold War, civil war, communist revolution, modernization, capitalism, democratization, and economic booms and busts. It has also become a powerhouse producer of popular and art cinema. In these paired courses, students will explore the relationship between politics and culture as they learn how historians and filmmakers have grappled with the tumultuous events of the past 75 years.

These course lectures meet:
- UNAS171601 T TH 12–1:15 p.m.
- UNAS171701 T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.
Reflection will be held: W 6–7:50 p.m. (4 times per semester)
Geographies of Imperialism: Theology of Colonization (THEO170701)
Geographies of Imperialism: History of Colonization (HIST171601)

Natana DeLong-Bas, Theology
Elizabeth Shlala, Assistant Dean, Core Curriculum

- Fulfills 1 Theology (Sacred Texts & Traditions) + 1 History II + Cultural Diversity through DJCG and EDJ

The age of empires is past—or is it?
In this course, we examine the enduring ideas of empires and their challengers through the present day using the lenses of history and theology (Christianity and Islam). Beginning with the traditional geographies of maps, we explore how empires colonized not only territories with physical borders but also bodies and minds, using race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, education, laws, and institutions. Using the British and French empires in the Middle East and North Africa as case studies, we will identify and question how to overcome the boundaries still imposed on people today.

These course lectures meet:
  • THEO170701 M W F 1–1:50 p.m.
  • HIST171601 M W F 2–2:50 p.m.
Reflection will be held: TH 6–7:50 p.m. (4 times per semester)

Art of Creativity: Crisis and Transformation (PHIL170901)
Art of Creativity: Buzzword to Artwork (ARTS170101)

Richard Kearney, Philosophy
Sheila Gallagher, Art, Art History, and Film

- Fulfills 1 Philosophy + 1 Arts

How does the creative power of imagination—with its myths, stories, and philosophies—transform our lives and make us more deeply human?

How does creativity relate to vital issues of human development and politics today? One course in these linked offerings addresses these questions philosophically with texts from Greek and biblical narratives to modern theories of the creative imagination in romanticism, existentialism, and postmodernism. The other course is a hands-on studio art class that is based on the assumption that creative people are made through making. It explores how creativity works through art production and experimental problem solving.

These course lectures meet:
  • PHIL170901 T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.
  • ARTS170101 T TH 3–4:30 p.m.
Reflection will be held: TH 6–7:50 p.m. (4 times per semester)

“This is one of the best classes you could ever take while at Boston College. There is no better way to engage in scholarly research and debate than through this class.”
Encountering Inequalities: The Historical Politics of Inequality (HIST1726)

Encountering Inequalities: Disparity and Protest Art (ENGL1731)

Carlos Zúñiga Nieto, Core Fellow, History
John Brooks, Core Fellow, English
Fulfills 1 History II + 1 Literature

How are inequalities normalized, and how might their normalcy be challenged?

How did we arrive at our current racial and socioeconomic inequality, and how can we understand this moment in a historical context? These paired courses will familiarize students with how power and resistance relate to race, ethnicity, and class. Students will learn to recognize the types and origins of inequalities as well as their political impacts on U.S. democracy and democracies around the world. Our discussions will focus on the myriad ways civil society and traditional liberal thought create unequal systems and how marginalized communities resist them.
There are two sections of this course:
These course lectures meet:
- HIST172601 M W F 9–9:50 a.m.
- ENGL173101 M W F 10–10:50 a.m.
Reflection will be held W 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)

OR
- HIST172602 M W F 12–12:50 p.m.
- ENGL173102 M W F 1–1:50 p.m.
Reflection will be held: T 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)

**Spiritual Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics (THEO170101)**

**Aesthetic Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics (MUSA170101)**

Brian Robinette, Theology
Daniel Callahan, Music

- Fulfills 1 Arts + 1 Theology (Christian Theology)

**How might we train for encounters with beauty and the sacred?**

One objective of these linked courses is to help students realize that their own personal experiences can be the departing point for—and even the subject of—scholarly inquiry; that theology, the arts, and philosophy are not mere disciplines to be learned but practices that are indispensable to being alive and serving the common good. Another aim is for students to realize that deeply meaningful experiences—whether of the true, the beautiful, and the good or the divine in the world and in one’s self—often don’t just happen. Instead, such experiences are usually the result of being situated in the right place and time with the right preparation and mindset; in other words, they are usually the result of a certain type of exercise.

These course lectures meet:
- THEO170101 T TH 12–1:15 p.m.
- MUSA170101 T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.
Reflection will be held: T 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)

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**Grief and Resistance: Theological Responses to Climate Change (THEO1713)**

**Grief and Resistance: Social Responses to American Gun Violence (SOCY1726)**

Russell Powell, Core Fellow, Theology
Nora Gross, Core Fellow, Sociology

- Fulfills 1 Theology (Christian Theology) + 1 Social Science + 1 Cultural Diversity through EDJ

**How do people affectively cope with threats to life? And how do these threats effectively motivate moral and political responses?**

Today’s generation of college students faces twin existential crises: rampant gun violence and a rapidly changing climate. While these crises can induce us to despair, these courses examine the response of grief as a source of moral, social, and political creativity. In one course, we consider how grief in the wake of various forms of gun violence is not only shaped by social inequalities but also used to motivate resistance. In the other, we explore the moral and theological resonances of our grief over deteriorating planetary systems and the inequalities produced from them. Ultimately, we consider how to be hopeful amidst these catastrophes.

**There are two sections of this course:**

These course lectures meet:
- THEO171301 M W F 9–9:50 a.m.
- SOCY172601 M W F 10–10:50 a.m.
Reflection will be held: W 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)

OR
- THEO171302 M W F 1–1:50 p.m.
- SOCY172602 M W F 2–2:50 p.m.
Reflection will be held: W 6–7:50 p.m.
(4 times per semester)
You will be able to register for spring 2022 courses in November. More information about these courses will be provided prior to registration.

**COMPLEX PROBLEMS**

- Making the Modern World: Design, Ethics and Engineering (History II & Natural Science)
- Powering America: The Past and Future of Energy, Technology and the Environment (History II & Natural Science)

**ENDURING QUESTIONS**

- Holocaust, History, Representation & Memory (History II)
- Holocaust, History, Representation & Memory (Art)
- Shifting Forms: Political Belonging in Song and Film (Social Science)
- Shifting Forms: Sexuality and Belonging in Modern Literature (Literature)
- The Making of the Modern Mind: Morality (Social Science)
- The Making of the Modern Mind: Mathematics (Math)
- For the Love of the Game: Theology of Sport (Theology, Christian Theology)
- For the Love of the Game: Sociology of Sport (Social Science)
- Morals and Metaphysics: Political Perspectives (Social Science)
- Morals and Metaphysics: Theological Perspectives (Theology, Christian Theology)
- The Good Life (Literature)
- The Good Life (Theology, Christian Theology)
- Family Matters: Stories of Adoption and Kinship (Literature)
- Family Matters: Psychology of Adoption (Social Science)
- Rhetoric of Social Inequality in America (Literature)
- Social Inequality in America (Social Science)
- Narrative and Myth in American Culture: The Case of Disney (Literature)
- Social Norms and Values (Social Science)
- Revolutionary Media: How Books Changed History (History I)
- Revolutionary Media: How Books Changed Us (Literature)
- Coming of Age: Film (Arts)
- Coming of Age: Literature (Literature)
- Animals in the Moral Imagination: Art and Empathy (Arts)
- Animals in the Moral Imagination: Beyond Human Justice (Philosophy)

**Flawed Founders: George Washington and the Mythology of a Heroic President** (POLI105101)

**Flawed Founders: King David and the Theology of a Political Hero** (THEO171001)

Marc Landy, Political Science
David Vanderhooft, Theology

▶ Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 Theology (Sacred Texts & Traditions)

How can we understand the greatness of heroic political founders who are also flawed human beings?

Ancient Israel’s monarchy and America’s constitutional democracy represent two historically influential and innovative political systems. Each had a major founder, King David and George Washington respectively, who transcend their times and exemplify greatness. David’s messianic identity and theological legacy remain enduring elements of Jewish and Christian theological reflection. Washington’s mythological status persists in the American secular imagination. Yet both figures betrayed significant personal flaws: temper, self-doubt; political conniving; immoral treatment of women, slaves, and peers; dubious military judgement. Must great founders also be moral exemplars? What obligations do we have today to celebrate, condemn, study, and understand these Flawed Founders?

These course lectures meet:
- POLI105101 T TH 12–1:15 p.m.
- THEO171001 T TH 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflection will be held: TH 6–7:50 p.m. (4 times per semester)