

Note: While the description below refers in particular to the bachelor's degrees offered through IUB College of Arts and Sciences, it nonetheless offers an excellent window into **the purpose of the 4-year degree** itself, regardless of which particular major or degree; namely, that it is less about the particular classes taken and more about how the student leverages both in-class and cocurricular opportunities to fulfill the primary purposes of the 4-year undergraduate degree: skill development, experience development, personal development, and professional development.

Liberal Learning at IU

from IUB College of Arts and Sciences Bulletin

www.iu.edu/~bulletin/iub/college/2014-2015/overview/lib-learning.shtml

A liberal arts education begins with the premise that one's world and one's self are worth knowing. To understand our world, we must know something about its physical, biological, cognitive, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. The liberal arts provide these perspectives on knowledge to serve as the basis for a full and effective professional and personal life. No better preparation for success in the professions exists than a strong liberal arts education, and our experience demonstrates that the liberal arts help develop the rigor of mind needed for advanced study in any field and for the pursuit of a richer life through the enlargement of mind and spirit.

By its very name, a liberal arts education suggests that broadness of study is a primary concern. It inspires openness and breadth of mind, regard for values unlike our own, and respect for the creative processes of diverse disciplines. The liberal arts emphasize cultural, social, and biological change and assess the impact of technological progress on the world's environment. They generate appreciation and understanding of many societies' past accomplishments and provide the basis for future insight and enterprise.

The liberal arts education of the College of Arts and Sciences provides the fundamental knowledge, skills, and experience essential for a full, rich, and rewarding life. Such an education taps many of the capacities that we as human beings possess. It offers us fuller lives, in understanding and expressing ourselves and in relating to others.

The arts and sciences are pre-professional in the best sense. They serve as a foundation for many professions, many ways of earning a living. More than training for today's occupations, a liberal arts education offers students the foresight and flexibility they will need as they move on to careers and technologies not yet known or imagined.

Finally, a liberal arts education develops the qualities of mind that are needed by informed and responsible people. Any decision or action—whether personal or professional—informed by knowledge, rationality, and compassion makes the greatest contribution to a better world.

11 Goals: The Liberal Arts and Sciences in the College

from IUB College of Arts and Sciences Bulletin

www.iu.edu/~bulletin/iub/college/2014-2015/overview/11-goals.shtml

At IU, the College of Arts and Sciences provides the means for undergraduates to acquire a liberal arts education: an education that broadens the student's knowledge and awareness in the major areas of human knowledge, significantly deepens that awareness in one or two fields, and prepares the foundation for a lifetime of continual learning. The distinguishing mark of the university is that its faculty is engaged in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, thereby offering students an unusually rich opportunity to gain a liberal education. At Indiana University, the liberal arts curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences directs its students to achieve eleven major goals. Our students:

1. Achieve the genuine literacy required to read and listen effectively, and to speak and write clearly and persuasively.
2. Learn to think critically and creatively. As perceptive analysts of what they read, see, and hear, students must learn to reason carefully and correctly and to recognize the legitimacy of intuition when reason and evidence prove insufficient.
3. Develop intellectual flexibility and breadth of mind. Liberal arts students remain open to new ideas and information, willing to grow and learn, and sensitive to others' views and feelings.
4. Discover ethical perspectives so that they can formulate and understand their own values, become aware of others' values, and discern the ethical dimensions underlying many of the decisions they must make.
5. Cultivate a critically informed appreciation of literature and the arts and forge the aesthetic judgment that makes possible the enjoyment and comprehension of works of the creative imagination.
6. Practice and apply scientific methods. This approach to knowledge forms the basis of scientific research; guides the formation, testing, and validation of theories; and distinguishes conclusions that rest on unverified assertion from those developed through the application of scientific reasoning.
7. Learn to reason quantitatively, a skill essential in an increasingly technological society.
8. Develop historical consciousness so that students can view the present within the context of the past, appreciate tradition, and understand the critical historical forces that have influenced the way we think, feel, and act.
9. Investigate and study the international community to become involved in the contemporary world. By understanding the range of physical, geographic, economic, political, religious, and cultural realities influencing world events, students cultivate an informed sensitivity to global and environmental issues.
10. Develop and practice communication skills in public settings and in the study of at least one foreign language. Public speaking and listening are fundamental skills for participation in civil society. Study of a foreign language not only promotes communication with people from other cultures but also offers insights into distinct patterns of thought and modes of expression.
11. Pursue in-depth knowledge of at least one subject to be complete. Students in the College of Arts and Sciences must learn to acquire and manage a coherent, sophisticated understanding of a major body of knowledge with all its complexities, power, and limitations.