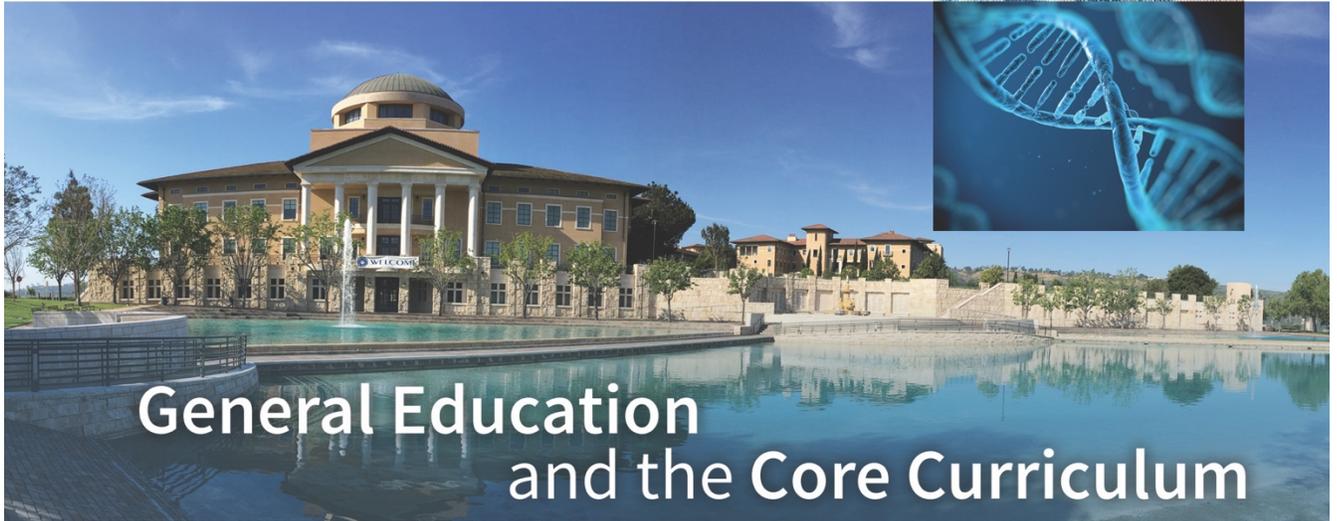


A GUIDE TO



General Education and the Core Curriculum

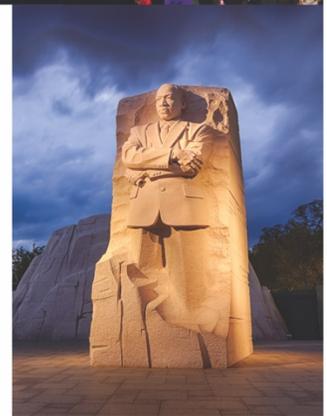


Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Overview of the SUA Curriculum	4
<i>The SUA Liberal Arts Degree – A Summary</i>	5
<i>Graduation Requirements</i>	5
<i>General Education Timeline</i>	7
Core 1 & 2 (Enduring Questions of Humanity)	9
Core 1: Course Overview	10
<i>Core 1 – Faculty Perspectives – “How do I approach Core 1?”</i>	10
<i>Common Readings from Core 1</i>	11
<i>Representative Quotes from the Core 1 Readings</i>	12
Core 2: Course Overview	13
<i>Faculty Reflections on the Role of Core 2 in the SUA Curriculum</i>	13
<i>Readings from Core 2</i>	14
<i>Commonly assigned authors in Core II:</i>	16
The American Experience: Course Overview	17
<i>Faculty Reflections about American Experience:</i>	18
<i>Readings from American Experience</i>	20
Introduction to the Pacific Basin: Course Overview	21
<i>Faculty Approaches to Pacific Basin</i>	22
<i>Selected Readings from Pacific Basin Sections</i>	24
<i>Student Comments</i>	25
Learning Cluster	26
<i>Program Overview</i>	26
<i>Sample Learning Cluster Topics (2018)</i>	28
<i>Sample Learning Cluster Topics (2019)</i>	29
Modes of Inquiry: Course Overview	32
<i>Faculty Testimonials</i>	32
<i>Modes of Inquiry – Pedagogy</i>	34
<i>Faculty Perspectives on Modes of Inquiry</i>	34
University Writing Program	36
<i>Course Offerings</i>	37
<i>Faculty Perspectives on Writing and Communication</i>	37

Science and Mathematics at SUA.....	39
<i>Biological Science</i>	39
<i>Physical Science</i>	40
<i>Mathematics</i>	41
The Creative Arts Program at SUA.....	43
<i>Program Overview</i>	43
<i>The CARTS Requirement</i>	43
<i>CARTS Courses</i>	43
<i>Music Ensemble Courses</i>	44
Faculty Reflections on CARTS at SUA	45
Creativity Forum: Course Overview	47
<i>Faculty Reflections on the Creativity Forum</i>	47
Health and Wellness: Course Overview	50
<i>Faculty Reflections on the Health and Wellness Course</i>	51
Language and Culture Program	52
<i>Program Overview</i>	52
<i>Reflections from LCP Faculty</i>	53
<i>LCP Course Offerings</i>	57
<i>Student Comments and Alumni Outcomes</i>	60
Study Abroad at Soka University of America.....	61
<i>Program Overview</i>	61
<i>Soka University of America Study Abroad Programs</i>	62
<i>Overview of Study Abroad Process</i>	63
<i>Student Testimonials on SUA Study Abroad</i>	64

Overview of the SUA Curriculum

The SUA Curriculum occupies a truly unique place in liberal arts and higher education. Designed to fully develop students for global citizenship, the SUA Curriculum draws upon the cultures and experiences of peoples from across the globe, emphasizing both commonalities and differences. At the heart of the undergraduate program are interdisciplinary concentrations (the Humanities, International Studies, Environmental Studies and Social and Behavioral Sciences) with courses that challenge conventional disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. SUA students are trained to deeply engage with complex interdisciplinary problems without any disciplinary barriers, and to take courses that intentionally interconnect cultures from East and West - as well as those of the global North and South.

SUA has a uniquely international student body with over 40% of its students from outside the United States. Within each graduating class, and in every classroom is a cross-section of the world, with over 32 countries represented among our students. This cultural diversity provides unique opportunities for dialog on issues in the humanities, social sciences, international affairs and the natural sciences. The interdisciplinary undergraduate program at SUA, with its concentrations and innovative General Education and Core curriculum is an outgrowth of the intense dedication and commitment of the faculty; a small community of scholars, who deeply challenge and engage with our students in small seminar discussions and in collaborations in the laboratory, studio, and field settings.

The General Education curriculum provides a breadth of study that includes two Core courses that focus on “Enduring Questions of Humanity” – with Core 1 in the format of a single three-week block that focuses on Classics in the Humanities drawn from both East and West, and Core 2 in a semester-long course studying these questions in a more contemporary social context. Unlike traditional introductory courses in US History, American Experience focuses on the realities and challenges of American life, both past and present. Similarly, Introduction to the Pacific Basin introduces students to diverse perspectives on the historical forces and contemporary realities that have shaped and continue to impact the peoples of this vast and dynamic region. Modes of Inquiry, writing courses for first-year and third-year students, and the Creativity Forum allow for students to develop new capabilities of interdisciplinary inquiry, communication, creativity, and self-reflection that empower them to become leaders. Required General Education courses in the Science of the Physical and Natural world and Mathematics enable students to discover their context within nature, and the many interconnections between humanity and the physical and living world. By studying two or more years of language, supplemented by a compulsory semester studying abroad in the third year, students are able develop skills to enable them to live and work in a globalized environment and to understand different cultures around the world. The classroom experience at SUA arises from dialog between students and faculty in small classes, generally with less than 12 students. These classes combine with international and regional explorations in Learning Cluster and in Study Abroad to develop the capacity within students to respect and understand people of different cultures, and to cultivate a sense of global citizenship.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the SUA education comes from this small and intense academic community - where faculty get to know their students well, and work individually with them in their classes, in research, and as part of a residential community. Across the space of four years, faculty can help students develop in ways that are impossible in a larger campus - making the

education more effective and individualized. The Learning Cluster Program, for example, enables faculty and students to co-design not only the course objectives but also the learning environment where they solve problems of deep interest together. Through an expansive and interdisciplinary General Education curriculum, students gain an awareness of the interdependence between themselves, each other, and the larger environment as it is expressed through nature, science, culture, technology and history. This awareness provides a breadth of study and wisdom to equip students to make lasting contributions to the world of the twenty-first century.

The SUA Liberal Arts Degree – A Summary

The initial degree offered at SUA is a B.A. in Liberal Arts, with concentrations in Environmental Studies, Humanities, International Studies, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Each of these concentrations supports the Pacific Basin focus of SUA, as well as its emphasis on leadership and contributive citizenship. Concentrations will increase in number and range consistent with enrollment increases and student interests. Programs and courses have been designed to provide students with the following:

- Multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural perspectives in every class where appropriate, demonstrating the diversity of cultures and viewpoints between East-West and North-South;
- A General Education program that introduces students to interdisciplinary knowledge and perspectives, as well as the critical and creative thinking and communication skills necessary for life-long learning;
- Four semesters of language and culture training, allowing students access to the literature and speech of one of four languages (Chinese, Japanese, Spanish or French). Students are also required to have a study abroad or internship experience for half their junior year so as to refine their acquired language skills and to deepen their awareness of the associated culture;
- A capstone experience in the senior year, drawing upon the skills and expertise that students have developed during their career at SUA. The capstone experience emphasizes acquisition of the critical tools of investigation and analysis, the integration of knowledge, and the application of creativity toward the solution of local and world problems.

Graduation Requirements

To receive a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from SUA, a student must successfully complete a minimum total of 120 units. A cumulative GPA of 2.0 is required for graduation. Following is a list of the courses required for graduation. Please refer to section VI for details and program area information. All students must fulfill the following course requirements.

General Education (23 credit-bearing courses, including Study Abroad)

Communication skills	2
Modes of Inquiry	1
Science & Mathematics	
The Mathematical World	1
The Natural World	1
The Physical World	1
Creative Arts + Creativity Forum	2
Pacific Basin	1
American Experience	1
Language and Culture	4
Health and Wellness	1
Enduring Questions of Humanity (Core)	2
Learning Clusters: (2 required, and 1 optional)	2

Study Abroad: (12-16 transferable credit units)

Concentration Requirements: (11 +1 courses, which 3 must be upper division courses in the student's declared concentration)

Selected concentration	5
Other concentrations: 1 course each @ two of the concentrations not declared	2
Free choice among concentrations	2
Capstone Experience	2+1(390)

Other Electives: (to fill to 120 units)

Students typically earn 108 credit units (depending on options selected) completing required coursework. They may select from among any course in the SUA undergraduate curriculum to complete the 120 units needed for graduation.

General Education Timeline

First Year: Core I – required in the fall block

Language – required both in the fall and spring semester

Learning Cluster 1 – required in the winter block

Communication Skills 101 – required, either semester

Pacific Basin –recommended, either semester

Science and Mathematics 1 – recommended, either semester

Creative Arts and Creative Arts Forum – recommended, either semester

Health and Wellness – recommended, either semester

Second Year: Language – required both in the fall and spring semester

Modes -- required in the fall semester

Learning Cluster 2 – required in the winter block

Core II – required in the spring semester

American Experience: strongly recommended, either semester

Science and Mathematics 2 – recommended, either semester

Junior Year: Study Abroad – required, either semester

Communication Skills 301/305 – required, either semester

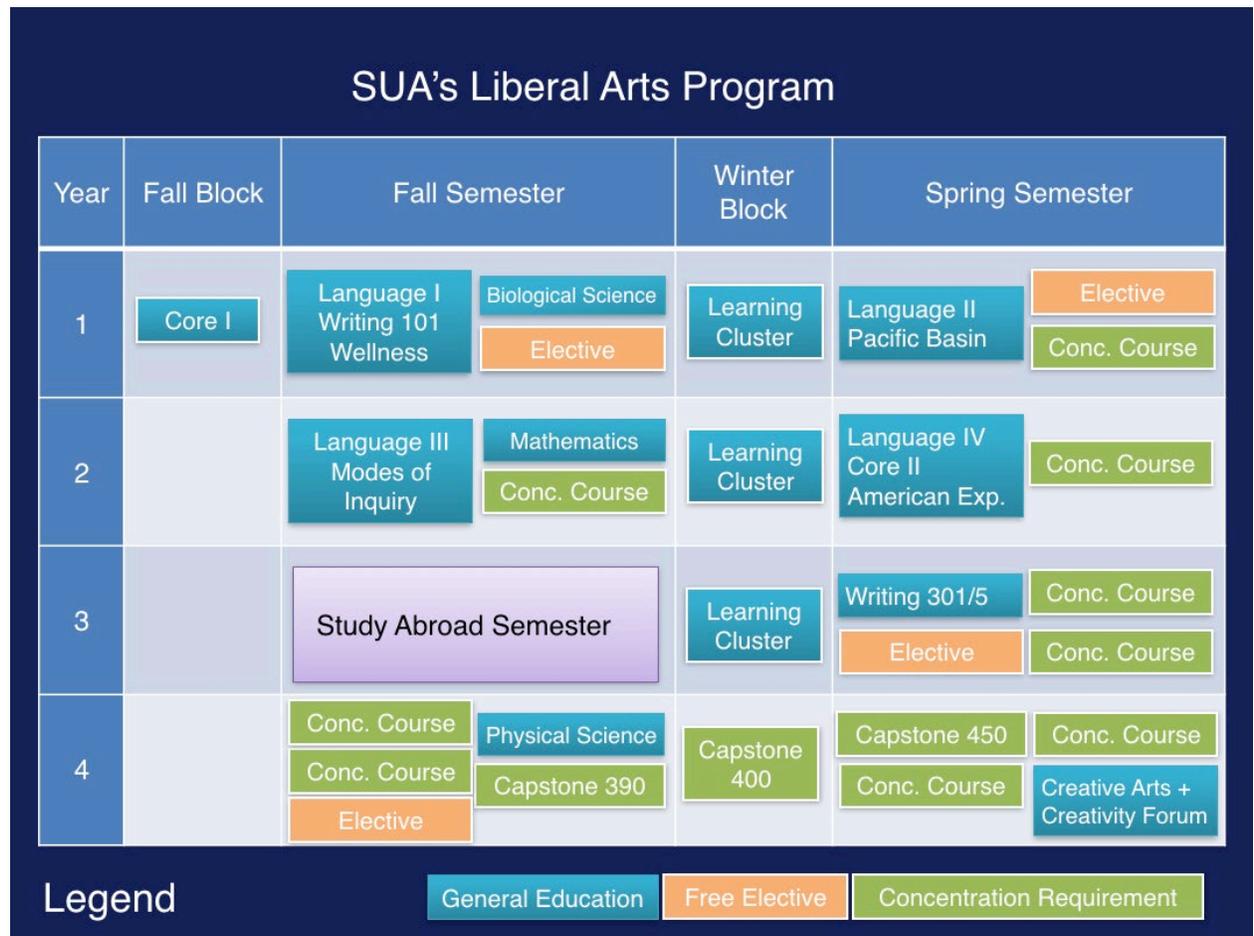
Learning Cluster 3 – optional in the winter block

Senior Year: Capstone 390 -- required in the fall semester

Capstone 400 – required in the winter block

Capstone 450 – required in the spring semester

Below is a diagram that gives a visual representation of the SUA curriculum, with its mix of breadth in Core and GE and depth in concentration courses and capstone. The exact sequence of courses will vary so this is just an illustrative example of one possible path through the SUA Liberal Arts degree.



Overview of General Education

The goal of the SUA Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts program is “to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to leading a contributive life,” with the following learning outcomes:

To foster an awareness of the needs of our changing world through developing a sense of history and an understanding of the nature of reality

To think and investigate critically and creatively

To be effective at various modes of expression and communication

To acquire knowledge and appreciation of multiple cultures and traditions

To become, through integrative learning, active and informed global citizens

Core 1 & 2 (Enduring Questions of Humanity)

Core is a two-course sequence that uses classic texts to explore some of the major questions that humanity has asked itself and to encourage students to engage in critical thinking and discussion. Core 1 is taught in the Fall Block and it is the first course the students will take at SUA. Core 2 is taken in the spring semester of the students’ second year. Both courses are capped at 12 students and are meant to include intensive reading and discussion in a seminar-style class.

The Core sequence at SUA focuses on some of the narratives addressing perennial and enduring questions of human societies that shape and underlie our ecosystem of thought — narratives that have changed dramatically over time and have found various expression in different cultures and traditions. Such questions by their nature require students to integrate their experiences and knowledge from multiple perspectives and disciplines. Originally written for remarkably different audiences and for purposes different from today’s prevalent uses of the narrative, these historically influential works demand that students stretch their abilities in understanding these expressions of thought, and think critically as they engage these sources.

The Core sequence is essential for the students to reach the program’s learning outcomes; one cannot accurately identify the issues of our changing world and comprehend their relative importance, nor can one lead a consciously contributive life that effectively improves human society, without developing a keen and creative sense of the narratives that shape fundamental questions about the needs and challenges of human societies.

Core 1: Course Overview

An important goal of Core 1 is to liberate former high school students from the expectations of others, including their teachers, in order to acquire a critical and comparative appreciation of how societies are understood and organized. Core 1 socializes incoming students to the aspects of active learning that the SUA undergraduate curriculum takes for granted: close reading of a variety of texts, reflective and argumentative writing, and active participation in class discussion. Such socialization can be accomplished with a variety of reading matter, yet Core 1 typically relies on classical texts roughly from the period prior to the Enlightenment because both the style and the substance takes the students out of their comfort zone. The use of classical texts from Eastern and Western philosophy in Core I complements the use of the more contemporary texts in Core II in tracing and examining key narratives that have shaped and continue to influence current ecosphere of thought and argument. Core 1 is not about transmission of knowledge or the acquisition of skills. It is neither a “great books” course nor an introduction to intellectual history. It sets the tone and suggests the purpose of the rest of our undergraduate curriculum by confronting (without necessarily answering) the fundamental questions about the nature of life and the role of ourselves as individuals and our species. Finally, as suggested above, it establishes links between what might otherwise be thought of as abstract intellectual exercises and the realities we face and will face in the future. Ultimately Core 1 helps students find answers to these Enduring Questions in ways that tell us about ourselves and shapes the myriad challenges we face today. Core 1 serves as a gateway to the greater dialogue between ideas, people and cultures that a student will experience at SUA and beyond. It also provides an initial immersion into the process of higher learning, as well as the first steps taken to answer the essential questions: *how can I determine what is true?*

Core 1 – Faculty Perspectives – “How do I approach Core 1?”

“My approach to teaching Core 1 is as a developmental psychologist. Accordingly, my section aims to introduce students to the idea of education (not college) for the purpose of human development (not excellence). The context within which Core 1 takes place is especially important to me as an instructor because it is the first class students will take at SUA and they take this class as a cohort without any other course obligations or older cohorts of students. Furthermore, the class is not based on a grade. This allows for much greater freedom for students to focus on learning, not only within the classroom but beyond it as well.”

(Esther S. Chang, Professor of Psychology)

“I believe that it’s important in Core I to discuss briefly the challenges a college student might face in the next four years, above all prioritizing certain activities over others. Increasingly, due to

innovations in technology, and the increased use of corporate-hosted applications in people's lives, individuals feel responsible for allocating their time to brief, often unproductive, exchanges online. Core I offers students the opportunity to learn how to minimize shallow commitments, and to immerse themselves in deep thinking. Moreover, the small class size allows for seminar style discussions. Students are encouraged to take into consideration the values expressed in the university's mission statement and to counterpoint these values with those articulated by the course readings. I'm confident this important intellectual exercise stimulates students to take responsibility over their own learning; an important first step in becoming an independent, ethically responsible scholar."

(Tomas Crowder-Taraborrelli, Visiting Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies)

"The works studied in Core 1 present us with *enduring questions* that have engaged human thought and provided catalysts for cultural transformation through the millennia. Similarly, we must interrogate these works with our own questions and formulate our own responses as the means of becoming an awakened human being and citizen; these books provoke us so that we may learn how to pose to ourselves and others further questions and provocations of thought. I see the instructor's role not just as one who asks questions, but as one who can help others find their own questions and then attempt to answer them independently."

(John Kehlen, Lecturer of Asian Literature)

"My focus in this course is on identifying some of the Enduring Questions (EQs), exploring responses to those questions from as broad a range of cultures as possible, and encouraging students to consider and realize the degree to which the answers proposed to those questions over the millennia (and still today) are still "alive" and playing out in every aspect of our lives. I use two "conceits" to facilitate this: the perspective of an alien anthropologist (which encourages us to try to look at our species and our planet from a perspective inclusive of but broader than our particular historical and cultural heritage) and the perspective of a band of early humans (which encourages us to consider the reasons for the questions and possible bases for some common answers.)"

(Michael Golden, Professor of Music Composition & Theory)

Common Readings from Core 1

- Postman and Weingartner, "What's worth knowing", chapter from "Teaching as a subversive activity"
- Plato, "Apology", "Meno", "Phaedo"
- Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Books I, II
- Epictetus, The Enchiridion

- Bhagavad-Gita, select sections
- The Analects of Confucius, select chapters
- Lao-Tsu's TaoTeChing
- Makiguchi and Bethel, "Education for Creative Living", chapters 1 and 2
- Upanishads
- Heraclitus, fragments
- Han Yu ("On Teachers") and Ouyang Xiu ("The Old Drunkard's Pavilion")
- Tragedies by Sophocles
- Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"
- Bible, Genesis and New Testament
- Bacon, New Organon
- Galileo, Starry Messengers
- Lucretius, On the Nature of Things
- Quinn, Ishmael
- Popul Vuh

Representative Quotes from the Core 1 Readings

- "Life without inquiry is a life not worth living." (Socrates's Apology)
- "Those who have known the inmost Reality know also the nature of is and is not." (Bhagavad-Gita)
- Fan Chi asked Confucius about the meaning of Humaneness; Confucius replied, "Love others." Fan Chi asked about the meaning of Wisdom; Confucius replied, "Know others." (Analects 12)
- "You have the right to labor, you have no right to the fruits of that labor." (Bhagavad-Gita)
- "...nothing is more blissful than to occupy the heights effectively fortified by the teaching of the wise, tranquil sanctuaries from which you can look down upon others and see them wandering everywhere in their random search for the way of life, competing for intellectual eminence, disputing about rank, and striving night and day with prodigious effort to scale the summit of wealth and to secure power. O minds of mortals, blighted by your blindness! Amid what deep darkness and daunting dangers life's little day is passed! To think that you should fail to see that nature importantly demands only that the body may be rid of pain, and that the mind, divorced from anxiety and fear, may enjoy a feeling of contentment!" (Lucretius)
- "The way can be spoken of, but it will not be the constant way." (Tao-te Ching)
- "We are a mere drop while the world is the ocean; but we should have faith that, if we succeed in crossing to the other shore, the world, too, will." (Gandhi's lecture on the Gita)
- "To see and accept the boundaries of the human mind without vain rebellion, and in these severe limitations to work ceaselessly without protest -- this is where man's first duty lies." (Kazantzakis)
- "A gentleman is not a pot" (Confucius)

Core 2: Course Overview

This course examines how the central questions posed in Core 1 continue to be addressed in the contemporary context. Through readings on the environment, historical development of human societies, current issues of social inequality, as well as personal and group identities and relationships, Core 2 explores some of the major issues facing humanity today. Core 2 prepares students to become active and engaged as well as informed citizens. Core 2 typically focuses on primary texts that provide the foundations for a liberal arts education. Some questions addressed by Core 2 include:

- What does it mean, and what has it meant, to be a person?
- What does it mean, and what has it meant, to be part of a community?
- By what rules should we be governed?
- How is human experience relayed and how can meaning be made?
- What is required of me to make the world better?
- What is the nature of human beings, human knowing, human societies, and the human condition?
- What are the major defect(s) in human nature that is responsible for things that go wrong in human lives and human societies?
- What are the major sources of inequality and violence in human societies?
- What are different ideas about what social justice would look like?
- What is the relationship between humans and the environment?

Core 2 focuses on narratives that address Enduring Questions of Humanity in a social and environmental context. Through self-directed inquiry students are encouraged to explore where our major human narratives come from, what role they have played and continue to play in major social movements, philosophies, the sciences, and what meanings they have in the world of the twenty-first century.

Some Core 2 sections emphasize post-Enlightenment "classics" while others focus on more contemporary readings. Regardless of the exact reading lists, Core 2 examines a set of "enduring questions" that have preoccupied the modern world: What are the origins of inequality? How can we create a more just society? How does technology affect our human interactions and desires? What is the nature of human consciousness, and how does it determine our understanding of self and others?

Faculty Reflections on the Role of Core 2 in the SUA Curriculum

"As far as my course is concerned, I attempt to relate them to the aims of SUA, namely Global citizenship, pluralism, etc, which are universal values, by exposing them to non- Western, Western and 'other' cultures."

(Nalini Rao, Associate Professor of World Art)

“Since Core 2 is at the end of one’s second year in college, I think it is best positioned to rekindle Enlightenment goals of scientific reasoning and social progress. The core curriculum upholds the university mission: ‘fostering a steady stream of global citizens’.”

(Esther S. Chang, Professor of Psychology)

“We think that the above is important for a liberal arts education that stresses critical thinking and inter-disciplinarity. Students are asked to do assignments that get them to think critically about the narratives, apply them to their own lives and futures, and think about how they inform their own values and worldviews. Most of us choose readings that represent a variety of disciplines or the foundational texts of a variety of disciplines ... So the course is not just about how to understand humanity but also how to understand academia and the foundational texts and questions that unite academic inquiry.”

(Sarah England, Associate Professor of Anthropology)

“To further elaborate the conversation of ideas that began with Core 1, received breadth from Amex and Pac Basin, and took on depth with Modes; Core 2 isn’t a synthesis of the Gen Ed curriculum, but a point of departure for students to use all the skills they’ve learned through the first two years of their college education.”

(John Kehlen, Lecturer in Asian Literature)

Readings from Core 2

The readings used in our Core 2 sections are expansive and include modern authors commenting on the social conditions of today’s societies, and thinkers from the 19th and 20th century who have described social theory, economics and politics and other aspects of the human condition in a social context. Well known authors used in sections include John Dewey, Fareed Zakharia, Mohandas Gandhi, Steven Pinker, Ursula K. Le Guin, Francis Fukuyama, Martin Luther King, Jared Diamond, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Jean-Jacques Rosseau, Hannah Arendt, and many others. The diversity of our Core 200 sections is a strength of the program, and more details of the reading lists can be found within the course syllabi from our instructors.

Representative Quotes from the Core 2 Readings

“Read not to contradict and confuse, nor to believe and take for granted...but to weigh and consider.” [Francis Bacon]

“The spirit within which class is conducted is best represented in this quote: ‘Dare to understand!’ or another translation reads, ‘Have the courage to use your own understanding’ [Kant in an answer to the question, What is enlightenment?]

‘Who can explain why one species ranges widely and is very numerous, and why another allied species has a narrow range and is rare? Yet these questions are of the highest importance, for they determine the present welfare and, as I believe, the future success and modification of every inhabitant of this world.’ [from *The Origin of Species* (Darwin, 1859)]”

‘The quintessential revolution is that of the spirit, born of an intellectual conviction of the need for change in those mental attitudes and values which shape the course of a nation’s development. ... Without a revolution of the spirit, the forces which produced the iniquities of the old order would continue to be operative, posing a constant threat to the process of reform and regeneration. It is not enough merely to call for freedom, democracy and human rights. There has to be a united determination to persevere in the struggle, to make sacrifices in the name of enduring truths, to resist the corrupting influences of desire, ill will, ignorance and fear.’ [Aung San Suu Kyi]

‘Thus when nature has unwrapped, from under this hard shell, the seed for which she cares most tenderly, namely the propensity and calling to think freely, the latter gradually works back upon the mentality of the people (which thereby gradually becomes capable of freedom in acting) and eventually even upon the principles of government, which finds it profitable to itself to treat the human being, who is now more than a machine, in keeping with his dignity.’ [Immanuel Kant]

‘Re-vision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction - is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves.’ [Adrienne Rich]

“Dostoevsky once wrote: “If God did not exist, everything would be permitted”; and that, for existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. He discovers forthwith, that he is without excuse. For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one’s action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism – man is free, man is freedom.” [Jean Paul Sartre]

"The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." [Karl Marx]

“Our ignorance of history makes us libel our own times. People have always been like this.” [Flaubert]

“It’s important to be comfortable with uncertainty.” [Guo Xiaolu]

Commonly assigned authors in Core II:

Thomas Hobbes

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Shakespeare

Machiavelli

Nietzsche

Immanuel Kant

Voltaire

Descartes

Adam Smith

Karl Marx

Charles Darwin

Sigmund Freud

Gustave Flaubert

Hannah Arendt

Jean Paul Sartre

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thoreau

Nishitani Keiji

Adrienne Rich

bell hooks

Ursula Le Guin

Ralph Ellison

Chinua Achebe

Francis Fukuyama

Jared Diamond

Steven Pinker

Edward O Wilson

Richard Dawkins

Marcuse

Simone de Beauvoir

Frantz Fanon

Mahatma Gandhi

The American Experience: Course Overview

The American Experience course has been developed as a vehicle to help bridge the very different personal experiences of our students, 40% of whom come from abroad. The dialog between American and International students and the different ways in which both groups of students have experienced the US and its culture offer dynamic possibilities for student and instructor alike. The course encourages American students to question their own personal experience of the US, and how their experience aligns with commonly held notions of US governance, personal freedom, and equality of opportunity. At the same time, the different educational background and cultural experiences of international students at SUA provide a fresh set of insights that create a welcome counterpoint to the assumptions of their American peers.

Each of the instructors approaches the course differently, and each instructor has developed questions and writings that motivate students and stimulate in-class dialog. For one instructor, key themes might include immigration, the rise to globalization, capital flows in the 19th century and slavery. Another instructor uses biographies of Robert Moses and Cesar Chavez as touchstones of what it means to be American. A third instructor discusses freedom of speech and democracy across time and with multiple examples from history to the present day. Students in American Experience seek to describe how some voices are heard – or not – and how the development of human rights, consolidation of power and the rise of social movements are embodied in a public discourse enabled by free speech. In all of the sections of American Experience, the diversity of the students gives a rich collection of stories to inspire discussions about how each student views the American Experience.

One technique that has been found effective in nearly all of our sections is to use biographical or historical case studies which provide a rich level of detail to bear upon the discussion – beyond what any of the students might already know. For both new students to American history and culture, and students with AP credits in the subject, these detailed case studies provide new insights, and the connections they make to the broader themes of American culture and society spark exciting in-class discussions and provide inspiration for student writing assignments.

Many common themes exist across nearly all of our American Experience sections, regardless of the particular biographical or historical focal point. These themes include explorations of power, citizenship, democracy and freedom, inclusion and exclusion, and the ways in which the ideals of democracy in the United States can vary with reality. Within all the American Experience sections, a frequent shift in vantage point between historical examples and the ways in which these themes play out in individual student experience brings a relevance and authenticity to the course. Students

of all origins and backgrounds are able to contribute equally to discussions of what the American Experience means to them individually.

Faculty Reflections about American Experience:

“In my course, I use the experience of two people, Cesar Chavez and Robert Moses, to get the students to define and explain the American Experience. The main themes that have emerged from reading and thinking about these actors are how religion, the media, race, class, immigration, government, politics, capitalism, the police, power, democracy, voters, and education affect the American Experience. In a series of papers, students explain how three factors, many of the ones listed above, shape the American Experience, which they define. The course also explains the roles of political insiders and outsiders in the American Experience.”

(Peter Burns, Professor of Political Science)

“My American Experience section introduces students to some major themes and problems in American cultural history. We consider how race, immigration, class, gender, and sexuality have affected US history in the *longue durée*, with special emphasis on the period since the American Revolution. We consider the conditions and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in US national identity. We think about how social movements have produced change over time. Students think conceptually, critically, and empirically in discussion and in writing.”

(James Spady, Associate Professor of American History)

“American Experience” is a nearly infinite concept. There are as many such experiences of America, its history, culture and politics, as there are people who submit to America’s complex and changing realities. The point of this course is not to delineate one singular view of all that, but to provoke each of you to examine your own experience of American institutions and energies. The “objective” component of our course is comprised within the literary & filmic & musical texts that embody deep cultural expressions of significant elements that derive from the ideals and power, the contradictions and bold aims that have driven America’s evolution and its people. Therefore, it’s incumbent upon you to create a self-conscious understanding of “America” and your sense of “American experiences” (plural) so that the subjective truth of any individual record of that experience takes place for you, by you, in terms of your awareness and articulate self-awakening.”

(Jim Merod, Professor of American Literature)

“My American Experience class engages select counter narratives that represent particular U.S. American experiences with the understanding that there is no one definitive/“authentic” U.S.

American experience and that particular U.S. American experiences are inflected always (albeit in complex and often contradictory ways) by class, gender, race, sexuality, (dis)ability, religion, etc. As we interrogate and unpack the assumptions/inflections of the texts/moments/experiences that we examine, my hope is that class members will learn to upend hegemonic “master narratives” about the US, make crucial connections with what is around us in the here-now, and become vigilant observers of the landscape we find ourselves in. The culminating project invites class members to compose a substantial critical/creative project on any aspect of the “U.S. American experience” that intervenes into the textual conversations of our class by thoughtfully responding to one of the course texts or one aspect of a course text, or building on a theme/issue in several of the course texts, or considering a significant subject that the course texts haven’t addressed.”

(Aneil Rallin, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition)

“As far as AMEX goes, my impression was that one taught it from the perspective of one's discipline. I teach it as kind of American Government lite. I assign a conversation text on American Government called "THINK: American Government". We approach the subject considerably more casually than in a more rigorous American Government course. We also spend a lot of time on current events and issues, discuss them in the context of the US Constitution, values, principles and demographics. We also take a comparative look, consistent with SUA's global citizen approach. The students write a term paper on comparative problem-solving. Finally, they keep a journal of their American experience during the term. This goes for Americans as well. They give an account of whatever they wish in their American experience for the term but consider it in the context of the template laid down in class.”

(James Mitchell, Adjunct Instructor of Political Science)

“My course considers Freedom of Speech as the cornerstone of American Experience. We reflect on American Experience from the perspective of freedom of speech historically, philosophically, and culturally as it progresses into our 21st century. We examine policy, private and public advocacy, and leadership efforts to realize the human rights of people. We consider, discuss, and debate aspects of culture, legislation, and social movements involving speech impacting human rights positively and, in some instances, negatively. The selection of topics and issues includes, among others, protected speech and the United States constitution; natural rights; equality of opportunity; rights of student advocates; rights of officials; experimentation with theories (social policy and development); free flow of ideas (economic and social affairs); and, established legislation as well as potential legislation regulating free speech. We examine persons of influence, as well as thought leaders, foundationally and currently, involved with freedom of speech

issues. The course objectives are active citizenship, civic engagement, and a renewed respect and appreciation for freedom of speech from multiple perspectives.”

(Gregg Jorgensen, Adjunct Instructor of History)

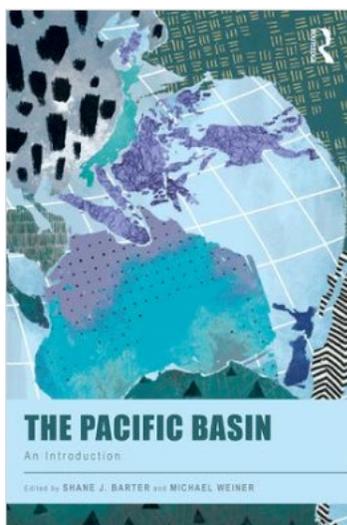
Readings from American Experience

The readings used in American Experience sections include a wide range of authors of literature, philosophy, and politics, as well as texts that describe American politics and political figures, and short pieces by historical figures from American history. Well known authors used in sections include W.E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Geronimo, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, and these authors are supplemented by a wide range of authors commenting on the ranges of experience within the American culture in both present day and in history. The diversity of our American Experience sections is a strength of the program, and more details of the reading lists can be found within the course syllabi from our instructors.

Introduction to the Pacific Basin: Course Overview

An Introduction to the Pacific Basin prepares students to navigate the currents of a Pacific world, locating Asian countries in wider contexts and framing the Americas as part of larger Pacific communities. This course seeks to teach the peoples and places of the Pacific Basin, emphasizing a long history of interactions and a future of interdependence. In recent centuries, the Atlantic has arguably been the hub of world political and economic power. But the rise of Japan, China, and the Asian Tigers as global centers of production, along with growth in the western Americas and Oceania, has led many to foresee the coming of a Pacific Century. As Asian countries take their place in world affairs, and as peoples, investment, technologies, and cultures travel across the Pacific, there is a pressing need to rethink Atlantic-centered worldviews. If the next generation of leaders and global citizens are to understand the modern world, they need an introduction to the Pacific Basin.

SUA is also home to a faculty with considerable expertise on Pacific Basin countries. The faculty members teaching this course approach it from various regional and disciplinary backgrounds, with different emphases on Latin America, North America, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Instructors have backgrounds in history, politics, film, economics, and more, training which influences our respective versions of the course. Despite this diverse expertise, different iterations of An Introduction to the Pacific Basin feature several common themes: Colonialism, the Pacific War, Asian migration, trade and investment, cultural exchanges, territorial conflicts, and identity—to name a few. This expertise helped fuel the creation of the textbook, *The Pacific Basin: An Introduction*, written and edited entirely by SUA faculty.



Although each course section approaches the peoples and places of the Pacific differently, the Pacific Basin is a geographical whole can be understood as a region of regions. Despite its great expanse, the Pacific Ocean has long connected people—be they Polynesian explorers, Asian traders, European colonizers, hopeful migrants, or excited learners. By taking this course students come to appreciate that the Pacific Basin can best be understood as a region of regions, connected by, rather than interrupted by the Pacific Ocean. For students from Asian countries, this course challenges them to see their homelands in regional contexts, cutting across national histories to emphasize interactions and shared challenges. The course also encourages students from other parts of the world to shed their Atlantic biases, seeing the west coasts of the Americas as integral parts of the Pacific.

Faculty Approaches to Pacific Basin

“In my section of PacBasin course, around 50% of the lecturing time is spent on the discussion of the various economies in the area, particularly of the U.S., China, and Japan. Most lectures will begin with one or two research questions and end with some suggested answers through a typical academic process, which is aimed to leading students to the path of research. Geography and Colonization history are introduced and discussed with the help of documentary films and guest speeches by experts in either South America or Southeast Asia. Some issues of the U.S., China, and Japan that go beyond economics, political science, and sociology will be either lectured by guest speakers or discussed by students’ presentations such as religious studies and immigration research. Overall, this section of PacBasin is more like a seminar course tailored to lower-class students than an introductory one of PacBasin history. Some students may walk away equipped with research trainings in social science academically while other students may be confused with a bit overwhelming economic terms, which I usually try but may fail sometimes to explain in class. With the new book edited by Dr. Shane Barter and Dr. Michael Weiner listed as one of the recommended texts in my syllabus, I am finally able to present a course map to students for them to understand what pieces of PacBasin are missing and maybe partially why part of it are being discussed extensively in this section.”

(Junyi Liu, Assistant Professor of Economics)

“My section of the Introduction to the Pacific Basin begins with a basic question: ‘Why are we here?’ Over the semester, students study and apply this question by examining 1) how the North Pacific region came to be settled, colonized, and ruled by our contemporary configuration of national powers; 2) Soka University of America's earliest origins; 3) why and how students may strive toward a pacifistic cosmopolitanism (‘global citizens’ who promote peace). Students learn through many different teaching styles: lecture, seminar discussion, group work, presentation, writing, examination, art making, and simulation. The course makes sense of complex history and

difficult ethical questions by organizing the most important ideas within topographical space (using digital mapping tools) and the ‘Great Scroll’. The scroll, which serves as a repository of ideas and study guide to the two exams, stretches more than 30 feet when unrolled and contains more than a hundred images and a textual timeline that traces the push and pull of empires that have claimed dominion in the Pacific. In addition, students embark on a field trip to explore the myriad ways the Pacific Basin is richly exposed in southern California. The class ends with the possibility that a university born from the ashes of Pearl Harbor and Nagasaki may rise to the challenge of fostering a new, more peaceful and equitable world.”

(Ian Olivo Read, Associate Professor of Latin American Studies & Director of International Studies)

“My section of Introduction to the Pacific Basin begins with an effort to conceptualize the vast area we are studying. Can we make sense of the Pacific Basin as a world region, and why is this course a requirement at SUA? From here, the course is organized into three parts. In part one, we provide brief glimpses into the constituent regions of the Pacific: Oceania, Southeast Asia, East Asia, North America, and Latin America. In part two, we look at historical interactions across the Pacific, noting that human interaction across regions is hardly a new phenomenon. In part three, we explore contemporary themes that cut across the Pacific, including popular cultures, gender relations, armed conflict, development, and more. Returning our core questions, we see the Pacific Basin as a region of regions, one that is increasingly gaining coherence and which has come to rival the Atlantic as a center of world affairs. In a sense, Soka University of America is a representation of the Pacific Basin, and this course helps to prepare our students for an ever-changing, Pacific world.”

(Shane Joshua Barter, Associate Professor of Comparative Politics, Associate Director of the Pacific Basin Research Center)

“My approach is to encourage students to undertake an interdisciplinary investigation of the diverse cultures, histories, societies, and sub-regions that comprise the Pacific Basin. The starting point for our enquiry is how to conceptualize this vast region through the lens of encounters with and responses to imperialism and colonialism, the vast movements of peoples across the Pacific Basin, and the processes associated with globalization and “glocalization”. Students also have the opportunity to examine contemporary issues, such as consumerism, governance and human rights, as well as the ongoing impact of globalization and transnationalism. The task for students is to acquire the skills, both written and oral, to critically evaluate materials from multiple perspectives. By challenging Eurocentric interpretations, students analyze the stages in the structuring of the

‘idea’ of a Pacific while gaining a critical appreciation of the cultural, social, political, and economic transformations that continue to take place within the Pacific Basin.”

(Michael Weiner, Associate Dean of Faculty, Professor of East Asian History and International Studies)

Selected Readings from Pacific Basin Sections

- Barter and Weiner, editors, *The Pacific Basin: An Introduction*.
- Borthwick, *Pacific Century: The Emergence of Modern Pacific Asia*.
- Iglar, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush*.
- Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures*.
- McDougall, *Let the Sea Make a Noise: A History of the North Pacific from Magellan to MacArthur*.
- Gunder-Frank, *Re-Orient, Global Economy in the Asian Age*.
- Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*.
- Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*.
- Brecher and Costello, *Global Village or Global Pillage*.

Selected Student Research Papers

- “The Acculturation of Hip-Hop in Japan”
- “Art Activism in the Philippines”
- “The Asian Model Minority Stereotype in the United States”
- “Chanting down the Crown in New Zealand: Reggae Music as it defies Imperial Oppression”
- “Chinese Immigration and Chinatowns in Latin America and Southeast Asia”
- “Climate Change and the Atolls of Oceania”
- “The Decline of Chinatowns in the United States”
- “Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture and Food Production in the Philippines “
- “The Establishment of Western Classical Music in Modern Japanese Culture: How the Foreign has become the Favorite”
- “Hip-Hop in China”
- “How Has Tourism Shaped Oceania?”
- “Human Trafficking in Regards to the People's Republic of China”
- “Japanese Imperial Ideas in Southeast Asia”
- “Japanese Territorial Disputes: Roots and Consequences”
- “The Memory of the Nanjing Massacre and Nationalism in Modern China”
- “Mexican and Filipino Gang Violence”
- “The Migration of Filipina Mail-Order Brides to the US”

- “Modernization, Diplomacy, and the Geographical Privilege: How Siam Retained its Independence during the Age of European Expansion in Southeast Asia”
- “The Production of K-pop Music in South Korea and its Role in Globalization”
- “The Subordination and Feminization of Asian Men in Hollywood Cinema”
- “Threats to Peace across the Pacific Basin”
- “Tokyo Disneyland’s Modifications and Disney Culture”
- “Whale Migration and Whaling across the Pacific”

Student Comments

“I took this course because it is a requirement. But after I took this course, I really think that this is a great class to expand my point of view. I really enjoyed this course. Thank you very much!”

“I really enjoyed the structure of the course. Topics varied and kept me engaged, which is hard to do because I get bored very easily! I did not expect to like this course so much. The energy that the instructor put into teaching and learning will help all of us from this point on. Damn great class, thank you!”

“I really enjoyed this class. I learned so much about the Pacific Basin and it was a very eye-opening experience. I like being able to compare European history with Asia and find its relevance in my life. The Pacific is so much more interesting to me than a Eurocentric history.”

Learning Cluster

Program Overview

The Learning Cluster is one of the signature features of the SUA curriculum. Learning Clusters are 3.5-week intensive short courses co-designed by faculty and students during the Fall semester. During each Winter Block, a 3.5-week period in early January, Learning Clusters are offered - each one of which is an immersive exploration of a problem of interest to faculty and students. Learning Cluster faculty with groups of 12 or fewer students are launched into explorations across California and the world, where they gather information, observations and experiences that will enable them to understand the full complexity of these problems and develop solutions together. Many Learning Clusters tackle issues of social justice, study marginalized or minority communities, and explore the diverse cultures and environments in Southern California and across the world. More than a geographic journey, the Learning Cluster is an opportunity to journey across cultures and to explore a wide swath of ideas, embodying the “imaginative empathy” characteristic of global citizenship.

The unique Learning Cluster environment is made possible by the innovative academic calendar of SUA, which features a hybrid block/semester structure, where students experience a 3.5-week block in August known as Fall Block, Fall Semester, a 3.5-week Winter Block in January for Learning Cluster, and a Spring Semester. Unlike a typical “January term” course, Learning Clusters are required, graded, full-credit courses. Students are required to take at least two of these courses while at SUA, and they are so popular that students often opt to take a third learning cluster if their Junior year study abroad schedule allows. Student evaluations confirm that these Learning Cluster courses have transformed their lives and their understanding of the world around them.

Learning Cluster courses are co-designed by students and faculty each Fall Semester. Using an online “Learning Cluster Forum,” faculty and students post ideas for new Learning Cluster courses each September, and these ideas grow and evolve in a dynamic and interactive way through the combination of Forum postings, in-person meetings, and discussions during lunch and outside of class throughout the first month of the semester. By October, faculty and students begin to refine their course designs, and some Clusters develop proposals for Nieves Travel Grants, which enable explorations of the Americas and other parts of the world during the January Winter Block. The Travel Grant proposals are reviewed by a committee of three faculty, who study the rationale for the grant, the feasibility and safety of the travel, and the value provided by the travel experience in studying the chosen problem. The committee awards the grants to up to four groups based on this rigorous vetting process. In addition to four Nieves Travel Grants, which are available for longer (including international) journeys, supplemental funding enables other Learning Clusters to explore

all of the cultural riches of California. Regardless of the amount of travel, students are able to engage deeply on a problem without other courses for the entire 3.5-week block, and faculty and students are able to learn together in a unique and vibrant learning environment.

Examples of Nieves Travel Grants within the 2018 Learning Cluster block provide a representative sample of these exciting trips. Travel Grants during 2018 Learning Cluster enabled students and faculty to visit Ghana to study the representation of slavery; to Korea and Japan to study “Abandoned People”; and to Japan to explore political socialization in Tokyo Disneyland. Support was also provided that enabled students to travel to Silicon Valley to study social enterprises, entrepreneurship and business economics. The university is extremely grateful to the Nieves Family Foundation for their generous support of these travel grants which makes these explorations possible.

Examples of SUA 2018 Learning Clusters provide a cross section of the exhilarating range of topics studied by Learning Clusters. In just one session, Learning Cluster courses explored the California Coastal trail from North to South, studied Southeast Asian American communities across Southern California, explored the experience of Immigrant Detainees, explored Chicana and Chicano Identity in the United States, studied fashion activism and performance, looked at the range of human languages in the world, studied second language acquisition, and explored the nexus of language and identity. Learning Clusters also enabled deep explorations of the inner journeys within all of us, such as an exploration of Southern California seeking the “myths and collective dreams of the city,” a study of Yoga for Individual Transformation, a study of Behavioral Economics, and a study of the Psychology of Groups. Our students were also able to delve deeply into environmental issues and help create a more sustainable planet, with learning clusters studying the policy management of disasters, exploring Human Impacts on Coastal Marine Life in Southern California, analyzing how to make a more sustainable campus, and studying the process for creating new pharmaceuticals from plants and spices. Students were also able to study the ways we can help provide a more peaceful planet - through learning clusters offered by former UN Under-Secretary, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury on “The Culture of Peace” and Peacemaking, and another that focused on the prevention of Genocide and mass atrocities.

At the end of the Learning Cluster course, the entire university community comes together for a Learning Cluster Fair that is open to the public. Each of the Learning Clusters is represented by a station featuring groups of students presenting posters, videos, books, and other creative works developed through their Learning Clusters. Nearly the entire campus participates and together are able to share the results of their journeys with each other. From the explorations in Learning Clusters and from the sharing of experience during Learning Cluster Fair, students and faculty are able to emerge with newfound insights into themselves, their relationships with each other, and with our

surrounding communities and with our world. These explorations are more than courses but ways to link Soka University to the entire world.

Sample Learning Cluster Topics (2018)

George Busenberg, Associate Professor of Environmental Management & Policy, developed emergency management expertise among the students and will produce write-up that will be a study of best practices for emergency management that can help SUA improve its procedures. This learning cluster was structured like a Harvey Mudd College Clinic project, which tackles a real-world problem with a design team of students and develops a solution.

Xiaoxing Liu, Professor of Chinese Language and Culture, supplemented her learning cluster by bringing in some accomplished SUA alumni to discuss public health, design thinking and other topics related to health policy. The course also included discussions with remote experts via Zoom videoconferencing. From the consultations with the alumni and outside experts, students were able to develop a new public health program during the Learning Cluster course.

Peter Burns, Professor of Political Science, in his learning cluster was able to develop a conference paper with students to be presented at professional conference. During their travels in Japan, they conducted Interviews at Soka Women's College and other educational institutions, and then students sections of a paper. One of the students, Edison Wong, created a professional quality video which summarized the trip.

Lisa Crummett, Assistant Professor of Biology, was able to take data from a wide variety of tidepool sites in her learning cluster, and then worked on the analysis and visualization of the data using Excel and other programs. During the learning cluster, students were able to gain experience in advanced statistical techniques, and developed their own presentations to present their results in a professional format.

Gail Thomas, Professor of Sociology, took her students to visit immigrant detainees at a local prison, where students met with people who had been detained for as long as 5 years with no visitors. Her learning cluster also met with several speakers including a lawyer who advocates for immigrant rights. Her learning cluster may develop new internships and a volunteer program for the students.

Nalini Rao, Associate Professor of World Art, reported that her students transformed by their experience with yoga, and reported dramatic improvements in their lives. Some students gave up smoking, drugs and junk food, and were able to practice multiple forms of meditation including guided meditation.

Tetsushi Ogata, Visiting Assistant Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, conducted a learning cluster on genocide prevention where students studied several cases in detail, as well as viewed documentary films on Cambodia, the Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide. The students also visited the Tolerance Museum and connected with the Middle East Research Institute in Jerusalem using videoconferencing. From the learning cluster the students learned about efforts to write and translate materials on genocide prevention, and were inspired to make their own documentary, a policy brief and a children's book.

Shane Barter, Associate Professor of Comparative Politics, Associate Director of the Pacific Basin Research Center, saw his learning cluster studying Southeast Asian communities in Southern California have a profound impact on the students. Many of the students were Americans of Southeast Asian descent. In some cases, they connected with relatives and ancestors, as they studied immigrant communities from the Philippines, Vietnam and other countries. The group visited a Philippine war memorial and many students rekindled interest in their own families as they connected with their histories. During the Learning Cluster students also visited several temples to experience the diversity of religious experiences within these communities.

Hongyi Chen, Professor of Economics, studied behavioral economics with her students, and worked closely with Seiji Takaku to bring in psychological aspects of economics. The learning cluster featured a guest lecture, readings in both economics and psychology, and participation from some SUA psychology students.

Sample Learning Cluster Topics (2019)

Ambassador Chowdhury's "Culture of Peace" learning cluster studied the historical background and conceptual context of the culture of peace and its evolution within the United Nations with a focus on women, children, peace and human security. The class curriculum focused on sustainable development goals and eight action areas to promote a culture of peace.

Zahra Afrasiabi, Associate Professor of Chemistry, offered a learning cluster on Basic Science Laboratory Skills, which gave students the opportunity to learn basic laboratory skills and build their confidence by teaching how to apply different techniques for routine lab work. Students prepared several skin care products from natural ingredients in the lab, which provided an opportunity for them to practically use the theoretical knowledge gained in the course.

Peter Burns, Professor of Political Science, offered a learning cluster on the Politics of Disneyland. Students studied the idea of Disneyland park as being an agent of political socialization, creating certain images and ideas that present a perception of American political culture and American history. The students also produced a short video describing representations of American politics and history within the park.

Monika Calef, Associate Professor of Physical Geography, offered a 'Introduction to Geographic Information Systems' learning cluster where students learned about performing spatial analyses using ArcGIS Pro by ESRI. For their final project, students got to create a map on a topic of their choice to present data on their topic in a meaningful and legible map.

Pablo Camus-Oyarzun, Assistant Professor of Spanish Language and Culture, explored the relationship between language, culture and space in Southern California. The group traveled to San Diego, Santa Ana and LA, where they interviewed bilingual high school students and explored the linguistic landscape of the Latino neighborhoods.

Lisa Crummett, Assistant Professor of Biology, led a "Marine and Coastal Citizen Science" learning cluster, where students tackled issues related to human impacts on ocean environments that could be addressed with citizen science. Student projects involved data analysis, often data collected by citizen scientists, and a thoughtful conclusion based on that analysis. Students produced a photo-slide show that exhibited our many field trips including whale and dolphin cruise observations, a citizen science cruise, and multiple tide pool bioblitzes.

Robert Hamersley, Associate Professor of Microbiology led a “Garbology: Managing Waste at SUA” cluster where students conducted waste audits which consisted of actual measurements of what is being thrown away at SUA. The students documented how waste was dominated by disposable coffee cups, paper towels and napkins, and disposable drink bottles. They also studied the fraction of materials recycled at SUA and made recommendations for improving this fraction.

Lisa MacLeod, Associate Professor of International Studies, studied “Women, Peace and Security” in a learning cluster where students studied linkages between sexual violence in armed conflict. Students researched wartime rape, efforts by women in Bosnia to seek justice, sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and sexual violence during and after armed conflict in Liberia.

Anthony Mazeroll, Professor of Biology, studied issues dealing with water quality in the Salton Sea (the largest lake in California) in his learning cluster. Students explored the sea in field trips and studied how the sea is drying, and how this is causing health problems from the toxic dust that is kicked up from the dried seabed.

Tetsushi Ogata, Visiting Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, studied Refugee Resettlement in California through field trips to visit 11 civil society organizations working in refugee and asylum issues in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Orange County. Students conducted research on their field trips, analyzed the effectiveness of refugee resettlement process, studied the role of Islamophobia and its impact on Muslim refugees today, discrimination against LGBT refugees, and stereotypes and (mis)perceptions associated with the notion of refugees. A group of students also performed a play, “*So We Ran*” at the Learning Cluster Fair.

Nalini Rao, Associate Professor of World Art, offered a learning cluster on Arts and Poverty in which students examined works of painting, sculpture, photography in two museums that portrayed poverty and its social effects. By analyzing those works and relating it to what they witnessed in the Homeless Shelters, students were able to develop team projects including visual art and musical compositions to inspire others to feel for the poor.

Ian Read, Associate Professor of Latin American Studies, offered a learning cluster on "Brazil's Great Disaster" which began with this question: "What caused the worst natural calamity in the Americas in the last three hundred years and why has it been mostly forgotten?" With this question in mind, the students spent the first two days designing a rigorous syllabus. Following two weeks of lecture, discussion, presentations, essays, and a visit to the UCLA research library, students began to turn their attention to how a new disaster (e.g., drought, famine, and disease) is likely to occur in the same place today.

Veronica Quezada, Assistant Professor of Spanish Language and Culture, used scholarly texts, articles, documentaries, films, and first-person accounts in a learning cluster entitled “Stereotypes: Mexicans in the National US Imaginary” to examine Mexico-U.S relations and the wave of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination the Mexican community has experienced in the United States. Students studied historical milestones for the Mexican community in the United States, including the U.S.-Mexico War, the Bracero Program, the participation of Mexican-Americans in national defense and wars, and the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties. The students also studied Mexico’s own incurrence in stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, especially in Tijuana with Central American migrants.

Sandrine Siméon, Assistant Professor of French Language and Culture, created a learning cluster exploring the art and implications of filming theater. Students attended a broadcast from London’s National Theater, visited a recording studio, and staged a short play filmed with the help of a professional crew.

Modes of Inquiry: Course Overview

Modes of Inquiry introduces students to diverse ways of approaching, studying, knowing, and understanding information and experience. In doing so, students come to appreciate the assumptions that underlie methods of inquiry in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Through an understanding that every mode of inquiry possesses strengths and limitations in the exploration of a given question or problem, students are better able to sustain a line of argument using one or more disciplinary frameworks, as well as articulate the commonalities and/or differences among various modes of inquiry.

Modes of Inquiry thus helps students to see how disciplines connect and thus introduces them to interdisciplinary thinking and to grasp the coherence of inquiry across the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.

Modes of Inquiry helps students perceive and critically assess claims to knowledge, understand the role of imagination in science, literature and art, and encourages mastery of scholarly argument, greater attentiveness to norms of communication, and discloses the need for meticulous and relevant documentation of insight. Finally, Modes of Inquiry invites students to make tangible connections between problems of knowledge, everyday questions and the impact of the media (print, digital, visual) on the framing of these questions, thereby bolstering students' general media literacy.

Faculty Testimonials

"Many students describe their university activities as 'taking classes' and 'writing papers' or exams. Much of what they 'study' seems useless and forgettable. But the goal of a university education is to enable you to take charge of your *own* learning, and to activate what you learn by integrating it with your goals and practical knowledge. *Inquiry* is a process by which we determine what things are worthy objects of knowledge and belief. Scholarly inquiry is a disciplined process based on fair-mindedness, evidence, and reason within a community setting. The *modes* of inquiry are a set of mental tools that have proved valuable for the most important arenas of human inquiry."

(Robert Hamersley, Associate Professor of Microbiology, Lab Director)

"The point of Modes of Inquiry is to immerse students into the culture of inquiry congruent with high academic achievement, expanded awareness of the fallibility of knowledge and personal concern with ethical, political and social ramifications of the scientific claims."

(Oleg Gelikman, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature & Director of Humanities)

"Modes of Inquiry is distinguished by its focus on the development of knowledge. Students in this course advance their skills of independent thinking and learning; these skills are of great value in a complex and rapidly changing world."

(George Busenberg, Associate Professor of Environmental Management & Policy)

"Modes of Inquiry requires the student to expand their ideas about how claims to knowledge work across and between areas of study, including considerations of contexts and time periods, resulting in a basic understanding of human consciousness. The benefit of such a class is that it teaches how paradigms develop culturally, historically, and also within communities of thinkers. The beauty of this class is that the way thinking is taught and practiced through readings, praxis, and writing allows the student to engage with critical and multi-layered analyses of themes, ideas, and conceptual schemes, and well beyond the actual class of Modes of Inquiry."

(Ryan Ashley Caldwell, Associate Professor of Sociology)

"Modes of Inquiry can be imagined as a simultaneously pragmatic and theoretical exploration of intra-disciplinary intellectual affiliations. As such it poses the possibility, and need, for continuously re-conceptualized cognitive tasks and outcomes. That ambition becomes specific, for example, with inquiries into a borderless hermeneutic supplementation of science, art and philosophy, tho' other epistemic regimes are no less regnant here as well."

(Jim Merod, Professor of American Literature)

"Different modes of inquiry point to different ways of thinking about our world. Yet that does not mean that all answers to a given question are all equally valid or accepted. This course explains why that is the case. Students learn to apply essential elements of critical, fair-minded thinking, critically examine arguments and evidence, and learn to identify and avoid logical fallacies. The ultimate goal is to help students to clarify and improve their own thinking and become lifelong learners and students of life."

(Deike Peters, Assistant Professor of Environmental Planning and Practice)

"Students are taught how to distinguish carefully the various disciplinary methodologies of natural science, social science, history, philosophy and the expressive arts. Students are trained in the precise and proper methods of research inquiry and the use of primary sources for arriving at a thorough practical understanding of direct sources versus secondary commentaries or textbooks. The truly 'great' moments of research discovery in these disciplines are highlighted with respect to their significance for the advancement of civilization into the 21st century. Of particular note in my

Modes is that of cross cultural ethical inquiry, how our day to day conduct and day to day values frame and shape human conduct. Ethical reasoning, assessing the consequences of one's action both as an individual and as a member of a group, society, a planet is explored in order to develop a critical, ethical skill set of practical empowerment that the student can utilize in whatever their chosen field of Concentration and future graduate school and profession."

(Robert Allinson, Professor of Philosophy)

Modes of Inquiry – Pedagogy

Modes of Inquiry places as much stress on the forms learning takes as on the content being learned. Its deeper vocation is to engage students in a life-long interrogation of collective experience, received opinion and their own certainties. To this end, faculty versions of Modes of Inquiry often stress: a) the social nature of knowledge; b) the importance of communication to the emergence of insight; c) the conflict between desire for absolute certainty and commitment to methodological refutation. With the SUA catalogue description as their blueprint, Faculty rely on their expertise in order to create foregrounding histories, debates, concepts and ongoing controversies in the disciplines they have mastered. Modes of Inquiry is typically capped at around 12 students, thereby creating a learning environment conducive to creating a hybrid between seminar, lecture and workshop. Emphasis is placed upon active learning, reflection through revision, group work, communication of insight within relevant linguistic and epistemological constraints. The ultimate objective is to enhance recognition of limitations inherent in any specific claim to knowledge; pattern recognition; demarcation of description, analysis and evaluation; relevance tracking.

Faculty Perspectives on Modes of Inquiry

"Major case studies reveal the processes and practical consequences of inquiry in the real world."

(George Busenberg, Associate Professor of Environmental Management & Policy)

"Through document analysis, class presentations and group-work, students confront the history and dynamics of knowledge society from the 17th century Scientific Revolution to the present. Specific cases, phenomena and myths about knowledge display the contradictions in knowledge production, thus encouraging students to develop a stronger conceptual framework. Contemporary examples of techno-science lead students to consider the consequences of making, applying or consuming knowledge."

(Oleg Gelikman, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature & Director of Humanities)

"In Modes of Inquiry, students are not merely encouraged to voice their views and opinions but rather to critically examine and learn to identify these viewpoints as parts of larger frameworks and claims to knowledge."

(Deike Peters, Assistant Professor of Environmental Planning and Practice)

"As a Philosopher and Applied Ethicist teaching Modes of Inquiry, my section prepares the student to understand and analyze the underlying assumptions and end goals in various methodologies of inquiry and apply these to the courses she/he will take at SUA. My Modes of Inquiry section especially supports their making wise and well informed choices of the Concentration and fields of study in which they will engage at SUA and of their future graduate study and professions."

(Robert Allinson, Professor of Philosophy)

"My approach to teaching Modes of Inquiry is to find a theme or line of thought/argument that exists within each of the areas of Inquiry (as outlined in the Soka Course Handbook), and to examine these claims to knowledge in order to show how rifts and discussions exist cross culturally, contextually, and also over time. It is in this way that students are able to see firsthand how claims to knowledge are complex, dynamic, and based in varied paradigmatic moments. Additionally, students come to see that conversations about knowledge exist across and between different areas of Inquiry, thereby providing webs of thought and versions of "truth" that were not beforehand connected."

(Ryan Ashley Caldwell, Associate Professor of Sociology)

"Students learn to apply specific techniques to critically analyze the thinking behind recent writing. What mode of thinking is used by the writer? What questions are being addressed? What concepts are important? What evidence is marshalled to support what conclusion? And what kind of reasoning is used?" (Robert Hamersley, Associate Professor of Microbiology, Lab Director)

University Writing Program

Writing: A technology for creating conceptual frameworks and creating, sustaining, and performing lines of thought within those frameworks, drawing from and expanding on existing conventions and genres, utilizing signs and symbols, incorporating materials drawn from multiple sources, and taking advantage of the resources of a full range of media.

--Andrea A. Lunsford and Marvin Diogenes

The Writing Program at Soka University of America introduces students to a wide array of principles and strategies of effective communication and argumentation. The program's faculty come from a variety of backgrounds and intellectual traditions, which allows us to work in conjunction with the university's mission to engage students as global citizens. We embrace the diverse forms of knowledge about languages and communication that our students bring to the classroom from all over the world. From this launching point, we strive to provide them with an extensive writerly toolkit to be used in a variety of rhetorical situations both in their classes at SUA and beyond.

The University Writing Program focuses on writing in particular and communication in general as vehicles for learning. It does so through rhetoric and communication skills courses that are based on the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) model, a model that emphasizes written and oral communication throughout the university's curriculum.

The program makes several assumptions about students. First, we believe that students are capable, intelligent people who have been writing for years. They need challenging projects to strengthen the abilities they have already developed and to build new ones. Our communication courses skills courses enable students to participate in new academic discourse communities and interdisciplinary intellectual situations, and to explore the habits of mind and writing and speaking strategies demanded by writing at the university level in a variety of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary contexts.

We assume that writing with meaningful feedback teaches writing and as a result, many of us incorporate revision, peer review, and writing workshops in our courses. Students are required to write formally and informally in our courses. They are exposed to a range of composition genres and encouraged to develop their own writerly identities through the act of frequent, daily composing.

Course Offerings

Writing 101 (Communication Skills)	Writing 305 (Advanced Communication Skills)	Writing 301 (Advanced Communication Skills)	Writing & Communication Electives
Writing 101 (Communication Skills)	WRIT 305 (Writing the Body)	WRIT 301 (Environmental Studies)	WRIT 313 (Experimental Critical Writing)
WRIT 305 (The Rhetoric of Performance)	WRIT 305 (Writing Borderlands)	WRIT 301 (Humanities)	WRIT 314 (Writing for New Media)
WRIT 305 (Rhetoric and Representation of 9/11)	WRIT 305 (The Politics of Visual Rhetoric)	WRIT 301 (International Studies)	WRIT 315 (Intro. to Creative Writing)
WRIT 305 (Writing About Travel)	WRIT 305 (The Idea of California)	WRIT 301 (Social and Behavioral Sciences)	WRIT 335 (Writing About Film)
WRIT 305 (Women in Media)			WRIT 350 (Intro. to Classical Rhetoric)

Faculty Perspectives on Writing and Communication

“My curricula enact my belief that rhetoric and composition can function not only to enable composers to become cognizant of a variety of discursive practices and conventions, but also to prompt composers to investigate the various analytical frameworks and discourses that critique hegemonic ways of making sense of the world, analyze structural sources of power on both material and discursive levels, and pose alternative ways of living and of understanding lives and histories. Keeping in mind Susan Griffin’s insistence that “the form of the essay circumscribes imagination. At its edges many other imagined possibilities are hovering,” I seek to open up writing and imagination, to encourage composers to envision what else is possible here, now, in this multimodal age, to take “advantage of the resources of a full range of media,” as Andrea A. Lunsford and Marvin Diogenes advocate, as well as to consider what writing/composing as decolonial practice entails.”

(Aneil Rallin, Associate Professor of Composition and Rhetoric)

“I strive to apply my interdisciplinary background in ancient Greek and Latin drama, literature, and philosophy, cultural studies, humanities and rhetoric, as well as my experience as an instructor in a variety of composition and rhetoric programs to the classroom. Given the rapid pace of social and environmental changes in the world, I believe that preparing students for a dynamic future entails

bolstering their communication toolkits and nurturing their writerly interests across cultures and academic disciplines. Andrea Lunsford's famous adage that "everything is an argument" applies to our classroom explorations of a range of argumentative texts, whether they be academic essays, documentary films, or creative compositions. I also believe that students come to the classroom with their own perception skills that can be incorporated into composition workshops and peer review contexts in order to engage with, challenge, and expand normative conceptions of knowledge production."

(Kristi M. Wilson, Associate Professor of Composition and Rhetoric, Director of the Writing Program)

Science and Mathematics at SUA

The Science and Mathematics Area at SUA offers exciting courses in three sub-areas: *Biological Science, Physical Science, and Mathematics*. Each student must take one course from each sub-area but these courses may be taken in any order. Additional Science and Mathematics courses may be taken as electives. Students taking courses in the Science and Mathematics Area will learn to:

1. Understand the nature of mathematical and/or scientific inquiry.
2. Understand the relevance of mathematical and/or scientific inquiry to contemporary society.
3. Read mathematical and/or scientific texts with comprehension.
4. Solve problems using mathematical and/or scientific skills.
5. Effectively communicate mathematical and/or scientific principles.

Descriptions from a select sample of courses from the Science and Mathematics Area are provided below to highlight the variety of Science and Mathematics courses offered at SUA as well as a sense of the unique teaching styles exhibited by our talented Science and Mathematics faculty. SUA offers more advanced courses in science and mathematics and to see a full list of course descriptions, please see our catalog. Courses are organized here by each of the three sub-areas described above.

Biological Science

Biology 110, Nature and Humanity by Robert Hamersley

Professor Robert Hamersley's *Nature and Humanity* course takes students on a journey demonstrating that humans can't live well without a healthy and protected environment. The Amazon rainforest is home to a stunning biological diversity, but it also provides a home for farmers and loggers. Student teams play these roles in an exercise on the role of ecosystem services in economic decision-making. In the remaining sections of the course students begin to see their own role in the consumerist culture that externalizes the costs of the products we buy onto the world's poor in order to enhance our own wealth. But the ultimate externalization of the costs of our lifestyle is the impoverishment of the future through climate change. Student teams simulate decision-making by countries in developing technological solutions to prevent dangerous changes to the climate. In a final two-day design exercise, student teams redesign the Aliso Viejo Towne Center shopping plaza as a sustainable community, demonstrating that environmental sustainability benefits us in enhanced lifestyles now as well as a sustainable future.

Biology 120, Human Body in a Modern World by Lisa Crummett

This course explores the amazing form and function of the human body and further, it examines how environmental stressors or exposures can negatively impact the workings of the human body to cause illness or disease. For example, we explore how air pollution damages the respiratory system, how an industrial diet devoid of fiber and rich in processed carbohydrates can damage the circulatory system and metabolic function, how exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals in our environment can interfere with our endocrine system and increase the likelihood of certain cancers, how stress interferes with multiple physiological pathways, and how our microbiome (microbial organisms that live in and on our bodies) keeps us healthy. In addition to observing lectures and engaging in classroom discussions, students perform laboratory experiments, monitor and analyze their own food intake, review documentaries, work together on case studies, and give oral presentations on an environmentally-induced disease. My hope is that after taking this course, students will be equipped with knowledge that will guide them in making wise lifestyle choices that result in a long and healthy life.

Biology 130, Genetics and Evolution by Lisa Crummett

Have you ever wondered what exactly DNA is? What does DNA look like and how have slight alterations to a universal genetic code produced the amazing variety of life forms that inhabit our planet? This course explores exciting questions in both genetics and evolutionary theory such as: how can specific mutations turn normal cells into cancer cells; how is DNA altered in the process of genetically modifying crops and why is this topic so controversial; how has the field of epigenetics turned the “Nature vs. Nurture” argument on its head; how do the processes of natural selection and genetic drift operate in natural populations of organisms; and how can slight modifications in the regulatory regions of DNA turn a hand into a wing or a flipper? This course explores these questions and other exciting topics in genetics and evolution. In addition to observing lectures and engaging in classroom discussions, students perform inquiry-based laboratory experiments, work on case studies, watch documentaries and give an oral presentation on a topic of their choice for their final project.

Physical Science

Chemistry 112, Chemistry for Life by Zahra Afrasiabi

Chemistry for Life is chemistry for non-science majors that teaches students chemistry in the context of their own lives and examines world issues through a science lens. We, humans have a special responsibility to take care of our planet. This course highlights issues of interest such as air

and water quality, energy, climate change, polymers, or nutrition. For each, we work on two related tasks: (1) learning about the issue and (2) finding ways to act constructively. A knowledge of chemistry can help. The global problems that we face—and their solutions—are intimately linked with chemical expertise and good old human ingenuity.

Astronomy 120, The Earth's Cosmic Context by Bryan Penprase

The Earth's Cosmic Context is structured in two parts which place the earth and its sun in context in the larger cosmos. These two sections also function as “case studies” of how astronomy has unraveled the origins of earth, its location within the universe, and the vast scales of time and space that astrophysics has revealed about our physical universe. The first section explores the properties of the Earth as a planet among other planets within our solar system and galaxy and how astronomers are discovering thousands of other solar systems - several of which have “earth-like” planets. Using the latest NASA databases and remotely operated telescopes in Chile and Utah, students design their own research projects and conduct observations and data analysis of stellar systems and nebulae in which protostars and new planets are being formed. The second part of the course explores how astronomers have mapped the origins of the universe, the first stars and elements, and how those cosmic origins shape the universe and planet we inhabit. This part of the course places our sun in the context of the hundreds of billions of stars of our galaxies, and the larger context of the Big Bang.

Physics 150, Heaven and Earth by Phat Vu

Heaven and Earth uses the first great synthesis in physics (uniting motion on earth with motion in the heavens) and literacy with modern/contemporary physics to address enduring questions of humanity such as the nature of reality and truth. By emphasizing the bigger picture and pursuing how different aspects of life are connected, the course helps students, in their search for meaning, to notice cycles and patterns that comprise beauty and wisdom.

Mathematics

Math 101, Statistics by Anna Varvak

In my introductory Statistics course, students learn widely-used methods of descriptive and inferential statistics with lots of hands-on experience of datasets with real-world data. Students confront the challenges inherent in real data: data collection and measurement methods that weaken any conclusion drawn from the data, outliers and skewness that undermines the validity of results from widely-used methods of statistical inference, the fact that many “statistically significant” results are also quite weak, and that sometimes one may even reach different conclusions depending on one’s choice of statistical tools.

Math 121, Computer Science by Anna Varvak

In my introduction to Computer Science (Math121), students learn to think and approach challenges algorithmically, developing unambiguous step-by-step instructions that meet the requirements of the challenge. Using Python to implement their programs, students learn that it is not enough to develop an algorithmic solution that works in principle; making the computer perform those step-by-step instructions requires flawless mastery in syntax and vocabulary of the programming language.

Math 111, Symbolic Logic by Jon Merzel

In this course, we think about thinking, or at least certain types of thinking. Logic in the large is the formal study of the correctness of arguments, that is, of how to tell good arguments from bad. “Argument” here does not mean a disagreement, rather an attempt to extract new information from other known or assumed information. By “formal” we mean that it is the form that arguments take that we wish to study. For example, the following arguments have the same form: All A’s are B’s; Some A’s are C’s. Therefore, some B’s are C’s:

1. *All cats are animals. Some cats are hungry. Therefore, some animals are hungry.*
2. *All coffee mugs are functional things. Some coffee mugs are cracked. Therefore, some functional things are cracked.*
3. *All computers are machines. Some computers are old. Therefore, some machines are old.*

The structure of the arguments is clearer once we introduce symbols. We analyze arguments such as these by casting them into more formal, precise symbolic languages.

The Creative Arts Program at SUA

Program Overview

The Creative Arts Program (CARTS) at SUA is focused on the “hands-on” creation of artistic works in a range of media, which are described below. Our program is linked and contributes to the mission of the university in two specific ways:

- Through direct experience of the artistic process, students engage in a mode of human behavior which is universal across cultures and as ancient as our species itself, and this common experience can help foster the empathy necessary for global citizenship.
- Through developing creative thinking and imagination and the skills or craft to actualize that imagination in artistic works, students gain confidence in their own capabilities as creative individuals who can contribute to fresh solutions to the problems of today’s and tomorrow’s world in any field of endeavor.

While we also offer advanced-level courses in most areas, there are CARTS courses available in each medium to all students regardless of prior experience. It is not uncommon in our classes to have complete beginners working next to students with extensive backgrounds and learning and developing their capabilities together. Some of our former students have gone on to obtain graduate degrees in the arts, or to begin professional careers as artists or arts educators, but our focus and mission as a program is seeing *all* our students grow through these creative experiences.

The CARTS Requirement

All SUA students are required to successfully complete at least one CARTS course, in one of the areas described below. Many of our students (on average over forty each year – 10% of our current student population) take additional courses in the arts, sometimes pursuing advanced study on one medium, sometimes exploring new ones.

The Creativity Forum supports the university’s goals of helping students develop creativity, but is not part of the CARTS program.

CARTS Courses

Courses are offered, at the time of this writing, in painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, photography, dance and music (improvisation and electronic and acoustic composition). One general aspect of creativity which we focus on in all our courses is perceptual skill; challenging our

preconceptions and limitations -- in seeing, hearing, touching, or proprioception -- is essential to fostering creative imagination.

- **Painting and Drawing:** Courses in these disciplines focus first on visual perception and imagination as the foundation for acquiring technical skill and developing creative expression. A series of exercises and projects involving organic and geometric forms, light, texture and perspective, and using various media, lay the foundation in craft for students' personal artistic vision.
- **Ceramics and sculpture:** Working in clay begins with getting to know the material with the hands. Students go on to learn pottery (using wheels), forms, glazes and various firing techniques through a series of assignments leading to their final projects.
- **Photography:** Our current photography program utilizes analog cameras, black-and-white film, and traditional darkroom techniques, so that students learn the fundamental principles and mechanics of capturing and shaping images. In addition to exploring a range of subjects (e.g., landscapes, portraits, patterns of light and shadow), students learn about visual rhetoric – how and what a photograph communicates.
- **Dance:** The focus of dance classes includes developing physical skills (balance, stamina, coordination), but is primarily on exploring choreography through developing basic techniques, vocabulary and improvisation skills, centering on freeing up students' imaginations.
- **Music:** CARTS music courses are focused on imagining and creating new music, including writing original songs, composing in both traditional and contemporary styles, creating music with computers, and improvisation. Key components of these courses include development of aural and technical skills, gaining awareness of principles of temporal organization, and exploring the range of musical languages available to composers today, all aimed at the successful creation of original music by our students.

We anticipate adding, in the not-too-distant future, courses in digital arts, such as 3D printing, digital graphics and design, animation, and multi-media production.

Music Ensemble Courses

The CARTS Program also offers Music Ensemble courses for students who want to learn or develop their abilities in music performance. These courses do not satisfy the CARTS graduation requirement, but can be taken as elective credits towards graduation. These courses as well are

open to students regardless of level of previous experience, as there is a Basic Musicianship course for those with no familiarity with Western music notation. Courses include individual or small-group instruction in voice, piano, jazz, conducting and strings, as well as performing ensembles ranging from chamber groups, jazz and percussion ensembles, chorus and concert band. All students have the opportunity to perform in recitals each semester, including on stage in the Soka Performing Arts Center.

Faculty Reflections on CARTS at SUA

“My piano and strings classes focus on personal growth. Each student receives one-on-one attention to address individual needs and interests. Students are assigned standard exercises and repertoires to develop technique and musical understanding; they are also encouraged to bring music they would like to learn to classes. Every student will share their accomplishments and joy of music making by performing in a concert hall at the end of semester.”

Wan-chin Chang, Adjunct Instructor, Music

“The beauty of learning traditional film based photography is that it employs non-interruptive technology. The camera does not think; it relies purely on the knowledge and creativity of the operator. I work with students to help them understand the optical principals found in both human eyesight and cameras. Students strengthen their visual perception and visual literacy with technical, creative and writing assignments. After a while, excitement can be heard in their voices, as they start seeing the world differently, finding beauty in places that earlier where not considered beautiful. Students also take pride in learning to craft prints in a traditional darkroom, which not only tests their creativity, but their patience and perseverance. “

Mark Kirchner, Adjunct Instructor, Photography

“All humans are instinctively musical; we listened to our mothers’ heartbeats 24/7 for many months before we were born. A sense of rhythm is etched in our DNA....A college student has 18+ years of listening to and living with music in all its various forms and styles. We are all musicians of one sort or another....Whether in basic musicianship or performing in band, small chamber group or percussion ensemble, it’s my responsibility to extract, educe, the inherent musicianship dwelling within each student and to expand their musical vocabulary and horizons in the process.”

Alfred Lang, Adjunct Instructor, Music

“In my beginning ceramics class, I often hear students say things like: ‘I’m not artistic’ or ‘I have no talent.’ I usually respond, ‘We are all artists, you just don’t realize it yet.’ What I mean is: Art takes practice, like anything else. When students start to understand that, and finish a project that looks pretty good, I see confidence building. I try to be encouraging and supportive because I feel at this level, there is no benefit in harsh criticism. With a little guidance, they are completing projects that are pretty impressive. At the beginning level it’s all about discovery and learning what’s possible. Teaching at Soka has been so rewarding because my students are from such diverse backgrounds and cultures and the classes are small so I can give a lot of attention to each student.”

Don Ryan, Adjunct Instructor, Ceramics and Sculpture

“Before coming to SUA, I had only taught in Schools or Departments of Music. At SUA, perhaps we don’t get as many students who are committed to advanced study or professional careers in the arts, but I am always amazed at the energy, enthusiasm, creative abilities, and desire to learn of those who choose to come here, and feel it is a joy and privilege to respond to and nurture those creative capacities.”

Michael Golden, Professor of Music Composition and Director, Creative Arts Program

Creativity Forum: Course Overview

Creativity Forum is a unique course that allows students an opportunity to reflect upon the creative process in the abstract, and to develop from readings and discussions an appreciation of how to foster creativity in themselves and others, and the ways in which individuals and groups in any field (from artists to scientists, entrepreneurs to civic leaders to parents) can bring entirely new ideas and perspectives to life. The course began as a supplement to the Creative Arts Program courses, but in recent years has been generalized to include readings in psychology, physics, music, and popular culture to enable a consideration of the broad outlines of creativity wherever it may arise. The course is interdisciplinary, and often engages teams of students in challenges to create new ideas and concepts and to present those to the class. Each instructor approaches the course differently, using their own perspectives from literature, psychology, arts and other fields to provide a base for exploring the general properties of creativity that are discipline independent.

Several of the instructors have commented on how the course is especially important in empowering students to take risks, and to explore topics where there is no “right answer.” By unleashing students to move away from argument and analysis as a primary mode of intellect, Creativity Forum allows students to open their minds to new possibilities and to create entirely new concepts. One instructor has described how he is regularly surprised with the exciting and novel projects created by teams of students in the course, while a second has developed a set of readings and exercises that enable students to develop their own inner creativity, and openly challenges the notion that only some people are “creative.” Yet another has developed the course with the assumption that “human beings are born creative” and sees the course as an antidote to an educational system that often squashes this creativity. The different approaches taken within Creativity Forum embody the diversity of ideas that arise when faculty and students are able to unleash their creativity. This exploration has additional benefits as well – as it enables students to reflect on their lives, the role of emotions in the creative process, and to develop strategies for taking the types of risks that are necessary to be creative. As summarized by one instructor, Seiji Takaku, being creative involves “embracing your vulnerability” and “letting go of who you think you should be for who you are.”

Faculty Reflections on the Creativity Forum

“Creativity has been described as the art of making unexpected connections. One important job of our minds, from infancy onward, is to establish patterns. But if we are governed completely by pre-established patterns we become stuck and inflexible, like a horse that will always return a sleeping rider to the barn. We need to be awake and aware!”

(Michael Golden, Professor of Music Composition & Theory & Director of Creative Arts Program)

“If I were a student – what would I want to learn in a creativity course? The main assumption on which I teach this class is that ‘creativity can be learned; but we need to be given many opportunities to practice various skills that foster creativity just like athletes must practice new skills through drills.’ To do this in my class, I provide not only the academic resources (i.e., books) to help them understand what creativity is and how to foster it, but also many in-class activities to hone their creative thinking skills (i.e., convergent, divergent, lateral, aesthetic, and emergent thinking skills) including, but not limited to:

1. Building remote associations (convergent thinking)
2. Finding hidden pictures (aesthetic thinking)
3. Improvisation acting (convergent)
4. Finding a predictably irrational human behavior and design an experiment to test it (emergent and divergent)
5. Coming up with a caption for a cartoon or write a copy/advertisement for a random product (convergent/divergent/lateral/aesthetic/emergent)
6. Coming up with a magic trick (convergent/divergent/lateral/aesthetic/emergent). I also invite a former capstone student of mine who studied under Prof. Mike Csikszentmihalyi at Claremont and is currently doing his post-doc at USC, to give a guest lecture on creativity in industrial/organizational psychology. He is also a talented magician and, as such, I ask him to serve as a judge of students’ magic tricks.
7. Predicting what can happen to the humanity in the future if the information and medical/biological technology continue to advance at today’s accelerating rate and what we can do now to prepare for it (convergent/divergent/lateral/emergent)”

(Seiji Takaku, Professor of Psychology & Director of Social & Behavioral Sciences)

“Students are trained to be responsive to pedagogical authority’s demand for insistent argumentation. They are often encouraged to be right, to guard themselves from error, rather than risk informed imaginative engagement with ideas and their relation to the world. Inevitably, creativity is not a self-protected (self-protective) universe. It is necessarily accompanied by surprise and uncertainty. Its self-satisfaction, simultaneously, is sometimes tinged with remorse. Regardless of creative “success,” more possibilities lie in wait to be discovered and articulated. No matter how satisfying creative energy’s outcome, every result suggests more and deeper accomplishments reside just beyond one’s grasp. The ineffable standard of one’s own genius encourages false victories. Art

needs to be received. Artists are responsible for their art offered to the world with sometimes over-determined, powerfully suggestive results. Regardless, an attitude of fun – a joyful experience.”

(Jim Merod, Professor of American Literature)

Health and Wellness: Course Overview

Wellness 100 is a required 2-unit course that includes basic concepts relating to personal health and wellness, and is intended for first-year students at SUA. Physical, mental-emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental dimensions of health will be explored. Topics include stress management, sexuality, nutrition, and drug use, among others. The focus of the course is on strategies for enhancing one's personal health. The emphasis of the Wellness class is to help students develop the knowledge and specific skill sets to aid in developing a life committed to maintaining their health and fitness. The goal of *Health & Wellness* is for students to value a healthy lifestyle so that they can be effective in their personal and professional lives.

The Wellness course is designed to meet these General Education learning outcomes to help students to:

1. Live, work, and provide leadership in a rapidly changing world
2. Think critically and creatively
3. Be effective at various modes of expression and communication
4. Interact with and appreciate other cultures and traditions
5. Take constructive action for a better society

In addition, the course-specific learning outcomes of Wellness include:

1. Acquiring health-related knowledge through the use of current, reliable, and valid sources of information.
2. Determining their health risks and protective factors through the use of personal assessments and thoughtful reflection.
3. Applying health-related concepts, theories, and information to their personal lives.

The course readings include the textbook *Core Concepts in Health* by Insel, Roth and Insel, and include readings and questionnaires on topics including personal reflection, time management and stress management, personal fitness, career planning, health behavior modification, and goal setting.

Within the course, students conduct a personal health inventory, and are also introduced to some of the support services at SUA, such as counseling and career services, and given a chance to discuss and learn more about important issues such as sexual misconduct and mental health. Workshops and guest lectures from faculty, student affairs staff and athletics staff enrich the course, and give students a chance to think broadly and deeply about factors that affect their health and well-being.

Faculty Reflections on the Health and Wellness Course

“Although knowledge is an important aspect to health promotion, it is insufficient for changing behavior. Consequently, my approach to teaching Wellness 100 goes beyond providing students with current health information. The course provides students with opportunities for personal assessment, self-reflection, application, and skill development. The academic component of the course is important; however, what I really want is for students to take the opportunity to apply the course concepts to their lives to make dramatic improvements in their personal health. The concepts from this course can be used immediately to make a positive difference in their lives.”

(Jill English, Health and Wellness Instructor)

Language and Culture Program

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.” – Ludwig Wittgenstein

“A different language is a different vision of life.” – Federico Fellini

“He who knows no foreign languages knows nothing of his own.” – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Program Overview

With people, information and capital crossing borders more freely than ever, the ability to engage in different cultures, to connect knowledge across different societies, and to understand and form connections with a variety of people internationally has never been more important. Studying a foreign language is an essential part of this endeavor. Given the university’s mission to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life, the Language and Culture Program (LCP) plays a vital role in the SUA’s undergraduate curriculum. A key task of LCP is to foster the development of the linguistic proficiency and cross-cultural awareness that are necessary to become well-educated global citizens.

SUA offers two Asian languages (Chinese, Japanese) and two European languages (French, Spanish). LCP collaborates closely with the Study Abroad Office to prepare students for their required semester-long study abroad that takes place in their junior year. SUA requires all students to take a minimum of four LCP language courses in the target language of the study-abroad destination. Language study begins in the first year, ensuring prolonged and intensive engagement with the languages and cultures studied. Upon completion of the required courses in the LCP, students are expected to have the linguistic proficiency to function appropriately in the target language and the cultural awareness to adapt to their study abroad environment. Upper-division courses are also available for students returning from Study Abroad as well as those with sufficient background in the target language. Upon completion of the upper-level courses, students are expected to further advance their linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness in any of the languages offered.

LCP faculty come from a variety of academic backgrounds, including anthropology, film studies, (applied) linguistics, and literature. Though they may approach the subject and courses differently, the underlying goals of the LCP faculty are to build communicative competence within a structured context and to strive for excellence in instruction through an eclectic yet integrated variety of pedagogical methods, including the innovative use of technology.

The rigorous requirement for language courses and study abroad is an integral part of SUA's commitment to global learning, the ability to understand and find interrelations among the world's communities. The four languages offered are all among the top 12 in terms of the number of speakers. Together with English, it gives SUA students access to significant portions of the world's populations. However, studying a foreign language is also a journey of coming to a better understanding of one's own language and culture, as Goethe's words above illustrate. We hope that language courses and study abroad experiences play a crucial role to help our students become global citizens with a solid understanding of their own cultural values.

Reflections from LCP Faculty

Chinese

"I am an anthropologist who mainly studies health care experiences of certain ethnic minorities in China. My teaching responsibilities at SUA are Chinese language and culture, which I love very much. I have taught all levels and almost all Chinese language courses offered at SUA. I use a combination of teaching methods such as grammar translation, communicative, and task-based learning depending on the level and the purpose of the course and the needs of the students. I pay special attention to observe students in why they study, how they study, what kind of stimulations work well in motivating certain students. When students are effectively motivated, they can really enjoy the learning process. I, just like my students, set my mind on study abroad while teaching 101 through 202. I help students build a solid foundation while also creating a relaxing environment for them to speak Chinese without fearing mistakes. Students have plenty of opportunities to work with their peers to practice sentence patterns, dialogues and narratives. The 300-level Chinese courses help students refine certain aspects of their language skill such as conversation, reading and writing. The 400-level courses encourage students to implement the skills they have learned in the past years to explore aspects of Chinese culture and society. In 415, 'Contemporary Issues of China,' students are given the responsibility to teach one or two issues that really interest them with the support of the instructor. Students are constantly reminded of the importance and practicality of their study abroad experiences. Along with the improvement of their language skills and cultural appreciation, students gradually realize what global citizenship means and how they can contribute to a diverse world."

(Xiaoxing Liu, Professor of Chinese Language and Culture)

Japanese

“I am a linguist who is interested in how languages change over time and how they can be similar to and different from each other. In particular, I investigate how grammatical elements such as personal pronouns (e.g. *I, you*), demonstratives (e.g. *this, that*), and honorifics (polite language) develop historically in Japanese and the languages of the world. I firmly believe that to study a foreign language is to touch the essence of culture where that language is spoken. Therefore, my teaching objective is to help students learn how to communicate in a socially and situationally appropriate manner in the target language and culture. In the 100/200-level, I aim for balanced instruction of four essential language skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing, but I also incorporate elements of Japanese culture in order to better prepare students for their study abroad. In 300/400-level courses, I place emphasis on the transition to become an independent learner. Thus, I seldom rely on one textbook and often employ a collection of edited/annotated authentic materials. It is truly rewarding to see the students’ progress over the four years. Many who started in 101 with Japanese *kana* letters are able to engage in class discussions, make presentations, and write substantial essays in Japanese in their junior and senior year.”

(Osamu Ishiyama, Associate Professor of Japanese Language and Culture, Director of Language and Culture Program)

“My specialty focuses on explaining and understanding the process of Japanese (as a second) language acquisition among American college/university students. My research publications (like my book examining the relationship between input and comprehension) intend to unleash the effects of important variables on student’s proficiency (both linguistic and cultural). I have been teaching various levels of Japanese language/culture courses, as well as Japanese linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA), for more than ten years now at SUA, but am making my best efforts each day to teach each class session with a sense of refreshed mindset, so that I can help new students and their new needs each school year.

The most important things I keep in mind in teaching classes are three-fold, as follows: i) each student has her/his own unique learning styles and needs. Thus, I try to use various teaching methods best helpful for addressing various learning styles and needs, especially a method called ‘multiple intelligences;’ ii) I also want to help each student become a genuine ‘global citizen’ by showing how Japanese language and culture are so interestingly intertwined. For example, if you may have practiced Japanese sports like Judo or Kendo before, you must have learned to bow before and after the match, regardless whether you win or lose. Such mindset (named “*wa*”) to show respect to other people and thus try to avoid open confrontation is reflected into Japanese language also, through, for instance, “*keigo*” (honorific language) and some pragmatic feature (for

example, for making a request or refusing a request indirectly/subtly). Throughout JPN101-202, I would like to help American college/university students start their life-long journey of not only looking at another language but also reexamining their own culture and identity; iii) For the advanced Japanese classes (JPN401 and JPN415), students and I examine cultural history of Japan in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. I try to help them broaden their perspective as global citizens and also come to think in Japanese.”

(Hiroshi Matsumoto, Associate Professor of Japanese Language and Culture)

French

“I am a literary comparatist specializing in Francophone literature of North Africa, postcolonialism and critical theory, as well as literary translation. I am interested in studying how Francophone authors articulate decoloniality in their texts. In my teaching of Introductory and Intermediate French classes, I make sure to incorporate contemporary French culture into the language classroom, in order to familiarize students with French society. I particularly emphasize listening and oral skills in second year to help students be more at ease in the language to enjoy their study-abroad experience. In third-year French classes, students work on perfecting their oral and written skills. They are able to hold meaningful conversations in French, discussing culture, literature, and even politics. Fourth-year French classes offer a variety of topics that enable students to critically think and write about French and Francophone cinema, literature, culture, and current issues. In these classes, students write research papers and prepare rich oral presentations that reflect a meaningful intellectual engagement with French and Francophone cultures. As a literary translator, I also help students to pay particular attention to the idioms, the slangs, and subtleties of language, while drawing their attention to the dynamic interaction between culture and language. As a postcolonialist, I make sure to present to my students a multi-layered and multi-angled perspective on what it means to be French within the European Union as well as in the Francophone world.”

(Ghada Mourad, Instructor of French Language and Culture)

“The language classroom is an inspiring *locus* where I share the elegance and the relevance of French studies with my students. My pedagogic principles derive from the understanding that each course brings a set of students with mixed skills, interests and backgrounds, and who think, learn and communicate in different ways. Accordingly, when teaching language, I adopt a multimodal pedagogy to introduce various assignment forms to accommodate diverse learning styles. Through collaborative digital projects, students share cultural material, expanding on knowledge surveyed in class. Incorporating virtual instructional strategies fosters interactions and helps lower the

affective filter under a model of social media students are well accustomed to, softening the often-daunting nature of expressing complex thoughts in French.

Since my scholarship focuses on the filming and broadcasting of theater, I have assessed the pedagogical values of film-theater. Examining a staged performance is a way to access literary and cultural fields via an alternative object of study that also eases learning diversities as students may apply skills not limited to textual analysis. Film-theater is thus a comprehensive pedagogical tool and a fitting component of French studies to reach several learning and interdisciplinary goals. It familiarizes students with the specialized vocabularies and fundamental concepts of written, filmic and cultural texts, exposing them to diverse modes of expression. It helps communicate complexities occurring when several academic disciplines meet: how can these modes of inquiry communicate cultural awareness of one's own cultural assumptions, and lead students to think critically and creatively? These goals in turn fulfill the overarching objective to develop cultural understanding and linguistic proficiency while instilling an appreciation for other cultures and traditions necessary to experience French Studies.”

(Sandrine Siméon, Assistant Professor of French Language and Culture)

Spanish

“I am a linguist who is passionate about how adults learn a second language, and its complexities and challenges. I love learning other languages, and teaching my own first language, Spanish. My research focus on second language acquisition and teaching methodologies so my goal is to always bring state-of-the-art research and findings to the classroom. Both my research and ‘hands-on’ experience teaching has made aware of the importance of making students conscious of the responsibility for their own learning experience, and transition from a passive to an active role in the classroom.

When I teach 100-200 courses, I always try to create a stimulating and cooperative environment in which they feel comfortable to practice Spanish from day one. I usually start with some ‘off-topic’ questions to put students at ease and to reduce any anxiety. Then, I continue with a variety of activities that focus on the target structure and encourage pair and group work, rewarding the use of the target language at all times. I always to bring real materials to the classroom, which vary from newspaper article, Television/YouTube videos or Social Media, which include content related to local costumes, social issues and language use. When I teach 300-400 courses, classroom time is mostly devoted to discussion, practice and collaboration in a friendly atmosphere in order to promote critical thinking. In addition, I always looking for innovative ways to bring cultural insights into the Spanish-speaking world at all levels. We discuss novels, movies, documentaries,

essays and short stories. Topics are geared toward meaningful discussion and debate on current issues that ranges from political matters, economy, social justice, environment, history and art.

Overall, I am certain one single approach to teaching Spanish and I am always ready to adapt and reinvent myself to meet my students' needs.”

(Pablo Camus, Assistant Professor of Spanish Language and Culture)

“Throughout my teaching career I have always looked at my job not solely as an instructor, but more as a guide who strives to conduct students toward the appreciation of the language and the acceptance of different cultural aspects. It is not only a language I want my students to take home, but a discipline that involves thinking critically about the world we inhabit.

My main approach to teaching language at the introductory levels (101-201) is communicative, considering interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. However, considering all classes are different and every student learns differently, I integrate different approaches to accommodate the needs and strengths of my students. I make every effort to design and plan different interactive activities—whether it be the lyrics to a song, a task-based activity or comprehension questions to a podcast— to engage students in a communicative process which incorporates the four language skills and culture in a positive and relaxed academic environment.

For upper-level and literature courses (300-400), I follow a similar approach, I alternate class-time between lectures, task-based activities and group discussions. I assign presentations which I use as a point of departure for a general class discussion and debate or organize students into groups and give each a different question or topic to discuss. My goal is to give students all the necessary tools to prepare them to analyze, interpret and argue critically about the Spanish-speaking world's literary works and cultural productions.”

(Verónica Quezada, Assistant Professor of Spanish Language and Culture)

LCP Course Offerings

Chinese	Japanese
CHI 101 (First-year Chinese I)	JPN 101 (First-year Japanese I)
CHI 102 (First-year Chinese II)	JPN 102 (First-year Japanese II)
CHI 201 (Second-year Chinese I)	JPN 201 (Second-year Japanese I)

CHI 202 (Second-year Chinese II)	JPN 202 (Second-year Japanese II)
CHI 306 (Intermediate Chinese conversation)	JPN 306 (Intermediate Japanese conversation)
CHI 310 (Advanced Chinese conversation)	JPN 310 (Advanced Japanese conversation)
CHI 312 (Advanced reading and writing in Chinese)	JPN 311 (Intermediate reading and writing in Japanese)
CHI 313 (Classical Chinese Poem and Text Appreciation)	JPN 312 (Advanced reading and writing in Japanese)
CHI 401 (Cultural history of China)	JPN 401 (Cultural history of Japan)
CHI 410 (Chinese literature & film)	JPN 410 (Japanese literature & film)
CHI 412 (Classical Chinese Texts)	JPN 411 (Introduction to practical Japanese linguistics)
CHI 415 (Contemporary Issues in China [Modern China])	JPN 415 (Modern Japanese culture and contemporary issues)

French	Spanish
FRN 101 (First-year French I)	SPA 101 (First-year Spanish I)
FRN 102 (First-year French II)	SPA 102 (First-year Spanish II)
FRN 201 (Second-year French I)	SPA 201 (Second-year Spanish I)
FRN 202 (Second-year French II)	SPA 202 (Second-year Spanish II)
FRN 310 (Advanced French conversation & composition)	SPA 307 (Intermediate Spanish conversation and pronunciation)
FRN 311 (Advanced French composition)	SPA 310 (Advanced Spanish conversation)
FRN 402 (Cultural history of the French-speaking world)	SPA 311 (Reading and writing in Spanish)
FRN 403 (Modern French culture and contemporary issues)	SPA 312 (Advanced Spanish grammar)
FRN 410 (Introduction to 19th century French literature)	SPA 401 (Cultural history of Spain)
FRN 411 (Women, space, and the image in Francophone contexts)	SPA 402 (Cultural history of Latin America)
FRN 412 (History of French cinema)	SPA 410 (Spanish peninsular literature)
FRN 413 (Introduction to the literature of the French-speaking world)	SPA 411 (Spanish American literature)
	SPA 412 (Literature & film: from the text to the lens)
	SPA 415 (Contemporary issues in Latin America)

Student Comments and Alumni Outcomes

“The course in advanced Chinese reading and writing was a great way for me to prevent my Chinese from getting rusty after study abroad. I also learnt lots of new vocab and got a sense of the fundamental literary works and icons, which is really important if one wants to understand the Chinese society well below the surface level.” CHI 312

“I liked this class a lot and I liked learning the topics that we discussed. It really helped change some perspectives I had.” JPN 311

“This was a great course! I really enjoyed the films that we watched and that I gained the capacity to talk about each one in a different language. I love that the focus of upper-level French classes is on being able to articulate oneself in an intellectual manner and really delve into provoking topics, rather than simply focusing on grammar and conversation skills. The structure of the class is clear - we watch a film for Tuesday and write a paper/discuss on Thursday. I really loved this course and cannot wait to take more upper-level French courses in the future!” FRN 412

“At first, this class was really difficult for me. It challenged me to stay up to date in my work and really work hard to understand everything. I really enjoyed taking this class and it helped me improve my Spanish dramatically.” SPA 402

Where our alumni are making use of their language skills

Associate Professor of Spanish, Wellesley College

Chinese language teacher (New York)

German management consultancy (Beijing)

JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program (Japanese government sponsored program for teaching English and working as a translator/interpreter in Japan)

Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, International Program (Japan), Japanese Guest Relations
Host/Hostess

Study Abroad at Soka University of America

Program Overview

In order to improve language skills and enhance intercultural understanding and awareness, Soka University of America (SUA) requires that all students participate in a block and semester of Study Abroad during their junior year, for which they receive academic credit equivalent to four courses. This requirement reflects SUA's educational philosophy of creating relevance for students between their classroom study and the world around them. SUA strives to add to a student's intellectual grasp of the world in all its diversity. Study abroad provides students with the opportunity to further acquire the habits and dispositions of a global citizen. Students return to the Soka campus with a network of new friends and associates with whom they may nurture deep bonds and lifelong relationships. SUA is nationally ranked as [#1 in Study Abroad](#) (tie) by US News & World Report.

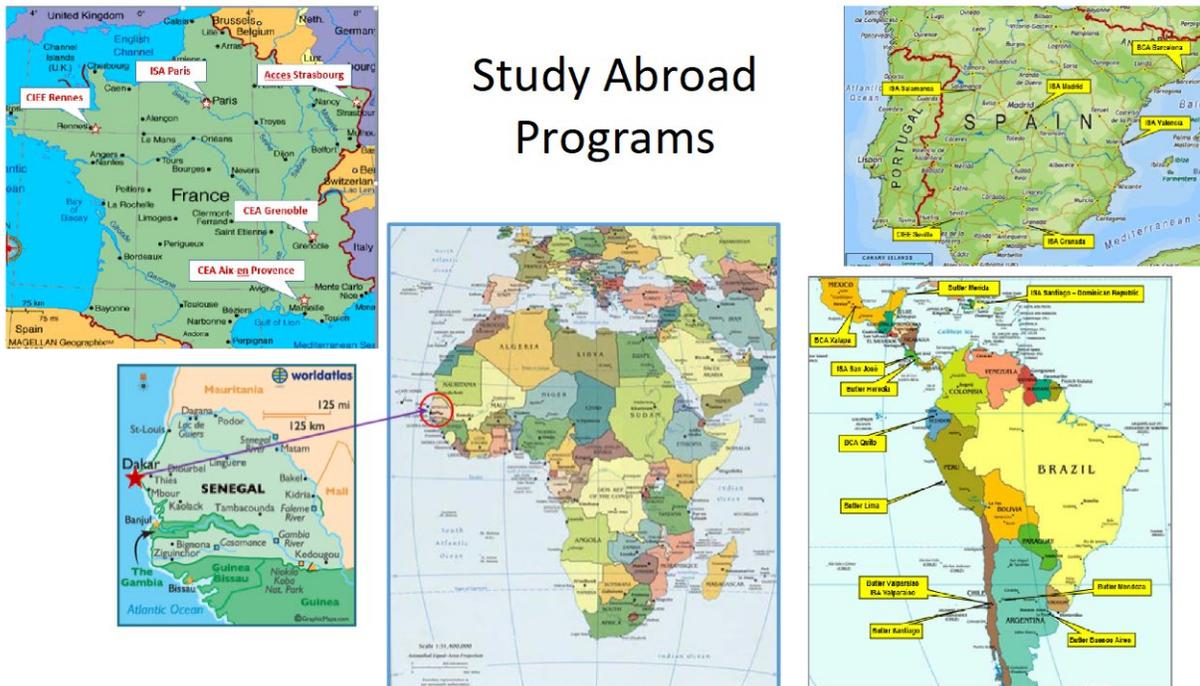
The SUA's mission is to "foster a steady stream of global citizens who will live a contributory life." To become a global citizen, one should gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world. By studying abroad, SUA students not only witness another culture, but they also experience the culture by adopting a new way of life. Students encounter people from all walks of life with whom they are able to make a connection, whether through similar interests, a shared laugh, or a long bus-ride. Many students comment they have gained a deeper cultural understanding and personal independence by living and studying in another country. Moreover, they agree they continue to reap the benefits of study abroad by encouraging cultural understanding in their own communities. We recognize that this enlightening experience is becoming an increasingly precious asset for students as we encourage them to become credible and sensitive members of today's expanding global community. As we look ahead, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles and values of SUA that guide this mission statement.

The Study Abroad experience occurs in a country in which the student's language of study at SUA is one of the principal languages spoken. Currently SUA offers a choice of Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and French language instruction. Utilizing their chosen foreign language, students immerse themselves in another culture for a semester of study abroad. In addition to taking courses in the target language, students also have the opportunity to experience internships for credit transfer. International internships provide students additional opportunities to meet, work closely and build networks with people of another culture and language. The General Goals and Objectives for Study Abroad at SUA include:

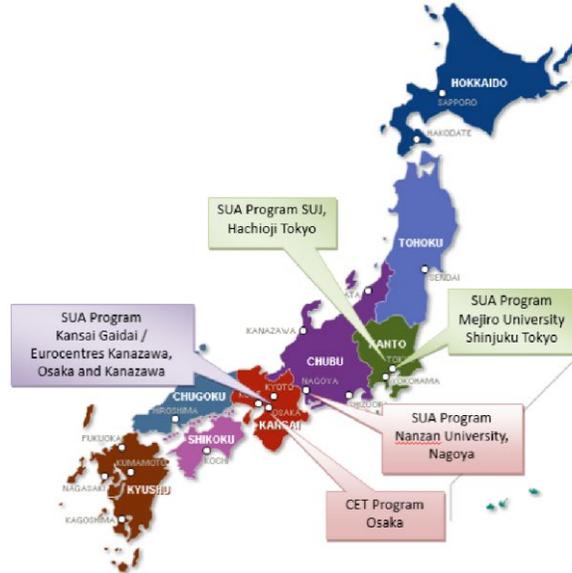
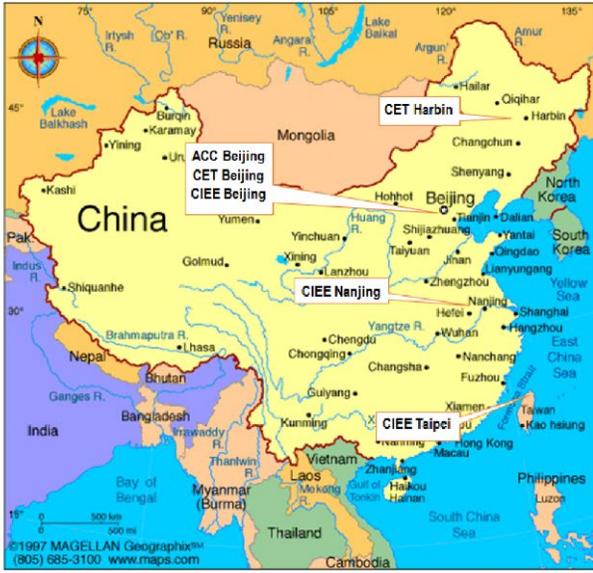
- Achieve competence in a foreign language by immersing in the life of the host country. Sharpen students' interpersonal and communication skills through interacting with people from backgrounds different than their own.
- Equip students with new skills, broader perspectives, and an appreciation of cultural differences.
- Foster a sense of global awareness by exploring the role students can play in the global community.
- Experience the increasing interdependence of the U.S. and other countries with an international dimension and a global perspective.

Soka University of America Study Abroad Programs

As of today, SUA, in accordance with the University's academic standards and guidelines, has run over 35 approved programs all around the world, including approved 30 outsourcing programs from eight organizations for SUA students. In addition to these sites, SUA has also established its own programs via direct relationships/agreements with host universities. Either through an outsourcing or an SUA program, a program may be (co-)sponsored by a foreign university, by other American colleges or universities, or by an independent organization. These program sponsors relieve the student of bureaucratic red tape by handling housing, registration arrangements, and securing the smooth transfer of credit back to SUA. In addition, students fluent in the language of the host country may enroll directly with certain universities. The SAI Office and SAI Committee reviews the approved programs annually based upon students' program evaluations. Due to both administrative and academic requirements, SUA students are selected to study abroad either in the fall or spring semesters of their junior year. The procedure for selection is based upon students' grades in their target language.



Study Abroad Programs (cont.)



Overview of Study Abroad Process

Below is the Study Abroad process for students to take from the beginning of their sophomore year.

Study Abroad Process	Orientations
	Introduction to Study Abroad – Part I
	Introduction to Study Abroad Programs
1. Semester Selection	Application Orientation
2. Choosing a Program	↓
3. Consulting with SAI Office	
4. Decision	
5. SAI Office and Program Application	
6. Program Acceptance Notification	↓
7. Visa Application	
8. Registration	

9. Travel Arrangements	Travel Booking Orientation
10. Pre-Departure Orientation	Country-Specific Sessions & Pre-Departure Orientation
11. Study Abroad On-Site	↓
12. Returning Orientation	Returning Orientation
	Study Abroad Fair

Student Testimonials on SUA Study Abroad

- **Erica Lim in Taipei, Taiwan**

I believe that the two best decisions I have made in my life are coming to SUA and going to Taiwan for study abroad.

- **Nicholas Peck at Soka University Japan**

I felt that painful loneliness when you are in a room full of native speakers and you don't know what's going on and no one bothers to slow down or explain it to you. As a result, I have learned the patience and compassion that comes with speaking with someone in their non-native tongue. I received nothing but sincerity and encouragement from the Japanese people I encountered.

- **Scott Bower in Lima, Peru**

The most meaningful experience I had in Peru was when I volunteered at a girl's shelter in the province of Cusco. As each day went by, I could sense that they started to open up to us because we all bonded over playing hours of volleyball. Our volunteer work consisted of doing English and building dignity workshops with both groups of girls. Although our stay was only a mere five days, I felt deep compassion and appreciation for them because they were so energetic and kind to us.

- **Luisa Madrid in Dakar, Senegal**

I will always have a special place for Senegal and especially for my friends, professors, and family over there. As cliché as it may sound, study abroad changed my life forever. I was never in my comfort zone. I was always pushed and I am a stronger person because of it. My French is less than perfect, but I managed. Most people in Dakar speak Wolof, and I came into the country not knowing a single word of it, and now I can bargain for clothes in Wolof.

*Join the growing stream of global citizens
committed to living a contributive life.*



1 University Drive | Aliso Viejo | California 92656 | www.soka.edu