

MAJORS

Find Your Future at the
College of Letters and Science

UCDAVIS

WHY STUDY HERE?

THE UC DAVIS ADVANTAGE

We live in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. At the UC Davis College of Letters and Science, we thrive at the intersections of art and science, technology and community, East and West. Where others may see distinctions and difference, we see opportunities for collaborative learning in the classroom and beyond.

Studying in the College of Letters and Science combines the best features of a liberal arts college with the academic advantages of a large research university. In addition to having access to our terrific teaching, research opportunities, and campus culture, you will attend a university that opens doors for its students and alumni over a lifetime.

Here, you can cross disciplinary boundaries to find your own educational path, pursuing and combining majors ranging from Art, Economics, Design, Statistics, American Studies, Geology, Cognitive Science, Physics, History, Music, Middle East and South Asia Studies, and dozens of other disciplines at the core of a UC Davis liberal arts and sciences education—all located within one of the largest and most beautiful University of California campuses.

Discover your passion, turn your ideas into reality, and join us in making a better world. It all starts with a major (or two) from the UC Davis College of Letters and Science.

OUR UNIVERSITY

The *New York Times* College Access Index ranked UC Davis third among all American universities for “doing the most for the American Dream.”

3rd

**TOP
10**

Washington Monthly magazine ranks UC Davis in the top 10 among American universities for promoting social mobility and public good.

The *Wall Street Journal/ Times Higher Education* ranks UC Davis fifth among public universities for doing the most for student outcomes and academic resources.

5th

OUR COLLEGE

The College of Letters and Science offers over half of all undergraduate majors at UC Davis.

55 majors

60 minors

More than **14,000** undergraduates have a major in our college

44% of our undergraduates are first-generation

37% of our undergraduates are underrepresented minorities

5:1 student to faculty/staff ratio

OUR FACULTY

The College of Letters and Science has more than **900 faculty**

18 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

39 Guggenheim Fellows

3 MacArthur “Genius” Fellows

13 UC Davis Undergraduate Teaching Prize recipients

50% of our students conduct independent research and creative projects beyond the classroom. Our instructors lead more than two dozen Study Abroad programs in more than 30 countries.

YOU CAN GO YOUR OWN WAY...

Look inside for a brief description of all 55 majors offered by the College. But if you haven't yet landed on a major, you're not alone. Many first-year applicants don't have it figured out yet. Check out these pathways for undecided students:

Undeclared

We offer undeclared options for first-year students in four broad areas: social sciences, physical sciences, humanities, and the arts. Choosing one of the College's undeclared options when you apply might be a great place to start at UC Davis, allowing you to explore many majors before landing on just the right one for you.

Individual Major

Students with academic interests not covered by an established major have the opportunity to create their own. Such a major requires the selection of interrelated courses totaling a minimum of 45 upper-division units from two or more areas of study. If you choose this option, you will work closely with faculty advisors to develop a coherent and rigorous academic program.



OUR MAJORS

African American and African Studies

African American and African Studies provides a deep engagement with African American, African Diaspora, and African cultures, societies, histories, and politics and their impact on the modern world. With a comparative understanding of the nature of African American, African Diaspora, and African societies, their struggles, and traditions of the past and present, graduates are prepared to work in situations requiring an appreciation of cultural diversity and awareness of social forces.



American Studies

American Studies examines cultural and ethnic diversity through national and transnational frameworks. In classes and small group seminars, majors study the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and other forms of social (in)justice through topics such as food, music, and the environment. Graduates are prepared for a broad range of careers, including journalism, law, medicine, environmental planning, library science, museum curatorship, and teaching.

Applied Chemistry

How we apply chemistry to our everyday lives is what sets applied chemistry apart from the study of pure chemistry. The Applied Chemistry major consists of two emphases. Forensic Chemistry involves the identification and quantitation of scientific evidence both in the natural environment and in urban settings. Environmental Chemistry provides students with tools to understand the processes governing chemical transformations in soil, air, and water; analyze key substances in the environment; and make meaningful predictions about the fates of these chemicals. (Major only)

Applied Mathematics

Learn how to use mathematics to answer questions integral to the advancement of knowledge in scientific fields such as engineering, physics, economics, biology, and statistics. Majors can focus their studies on how math relates to topics in a specific science of their choice. (Major only)

Applied Physics

A degree in Applied Physics provides a flexible set of skills applicable to a diverse array of careers, from oceanography and geology to law school, banking, and medicine. The major combines the principles of physics with practical expertise in one of seven specialties: atmospheric physics, chemical physics, computational physics, geophysics, materials science, physical electronics, or physical oceanography. (Major only)

Anthropology (A.B. or B.S.)

What makes humans human? The study of anthropology helps us learn about human biology, ecology, and social life—past and present—and provides a broad understanding of humans and societies. The anthropological perspective is excellent preparation for a wide range of occupations due to a growing need for critical thinking skills and people who can manage, evaluate, and interpret data on human behavior. Majors can choose from A.B. or B.S. degree options studying evolutionary anthropology, sociocultural anthropology, or a mix of both.

Art History

As the world becomes increasingly flooded with images, visual “reading” skills have become more important. A major in Art History develops critical thinking skills, providing an excellent grounding for professions as diverse as law, medicine, and business. The major draws on aspects of literature, history, critical theory, philosophy, anthropology, and cultural studies.

Art Studio

A major in Art Studio allows students to explore and expand their creative abilities, practice problem-solving, and cultivate aesthetic sensitivity and visual awareness. These skills and traits broaden students’ perspectives for success in any career requiring creativity, artistic knowledge, and skill. Many alumni are professional visual artists, while others have built careers in teaching, arts management, marketing, and advertising.

Asian American Studies

Asian American Studies examines the diverse and complex experiences of Asian Americans through literature, culture, history, sociology, politics, religion, and psychology. Drawing on multiple disciplines, this program develops skills in research, critical thinking, public speaking, and writing, while deepening an understanding of the richness and diversity of our nation. The major also offers opportunities to work directly with local and greater California Asian American communities.

Chemical Physics

Graduates will gain an in-depth understanding of the fundamentals of chemistry, focusing on areas at the interface of chemistry and physics, such as the experimental measurement and theoretical calculation of the behavior of atoms and molecules. Students will access important experimental tools like spectroscopy, which uses conventional or laser light to probe the atomic and molecular properties of matter. (Major only)

Chemistry (A.B. or B.S.)

From the twitch of a muscle fiber to the silent explosion of a supernova, every happening in the universe is linked at an atomic level by the principles of chemistry. The A.B. degree offers students a substantive program in chemistry with the freedom to pursue a broad liberal arts education. The B.S. degree is certified by the American Chemical Society, and provides a strong foundation in experimental processes, instrumentation, and quantitative analysis. Students will be prepared to successfully pursue graduate training and careers in government, industry, and teaching.



Chicana and Chicano Studies

The Chicana/o Studies major explores the Chicana/Latinx experience through an analysis of class, race-ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and cultural expression. The major offers two tracks. The Cultural Studies track integrates literature, culture, and artistic expression. The Social/Policy Studies track emphasizes social theory, research methods, and studies in community and health issues. Students are expected to read, write, and speak Spanish.

Chinese

A major in Chinese is the gateway to the world's most widely spoken language and to the modern culture of almost one-fourth of the world's population. By studying in small classes with highly skilled instructors and advanced educational technology, students will develop competency in written and spoken Mandarin, even with no prior knowledge of Chinese. Students can also further their knowledge of China's literary and cultural heritage through study abroad in China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong.

Cinema and Digital Media

The interdisciplinary major in Cinema and Digital Media examines what happens when music, performance, literature, media arts, and the visual arts meet science and technology. Exploring perspectives from the history of the arts, politics, poetics and aesthetics, cultural history, and theory, students also access hands-on tools for independent and experimental approaches to digital cinema, community media, sound, soundtrack and new music, web-based work, video games, and installations. (Major only)

Classical Civilization

Classics is the study of the language, literature, and culture of the peoples surrounding the Mediterranean from roughly 1500 BCE to 300 CE, with ancient Greek and Latin as the two primary languages of investigation and instruction. The discipline tackles issues of truth, beauty, identity, morality, gender, sexuality, democracy, race, and religion. It examines how the modern world still structures itself on myths from the past, and it asks how we deal with the legacies handed down to us. Students develop skills for careers in academia, journalism, television, publishing, museum work, teaching, and law.

Cognitive Science (A.B. or B.S.)

Understanding human behavior is a core strength in many professions, providing a wide range of career paths for the Cognitive Science degree-holder. Classes draw from psychology, biology, computer science, linguistics, neuroscience, and philosophy to examine how the mind determines behavior. Students interested in artificial intelligence, linguistics, education, and brain and health sciences careers will want to explore this major. (Major only)

Communication

Communication majors study communication processes at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels. They analyze message delivery systems, the role of the media, and the effectiveness of public education campaigns. A special focus of the program is research into bridging cross-cultural communication gaps.

Comparative Literature

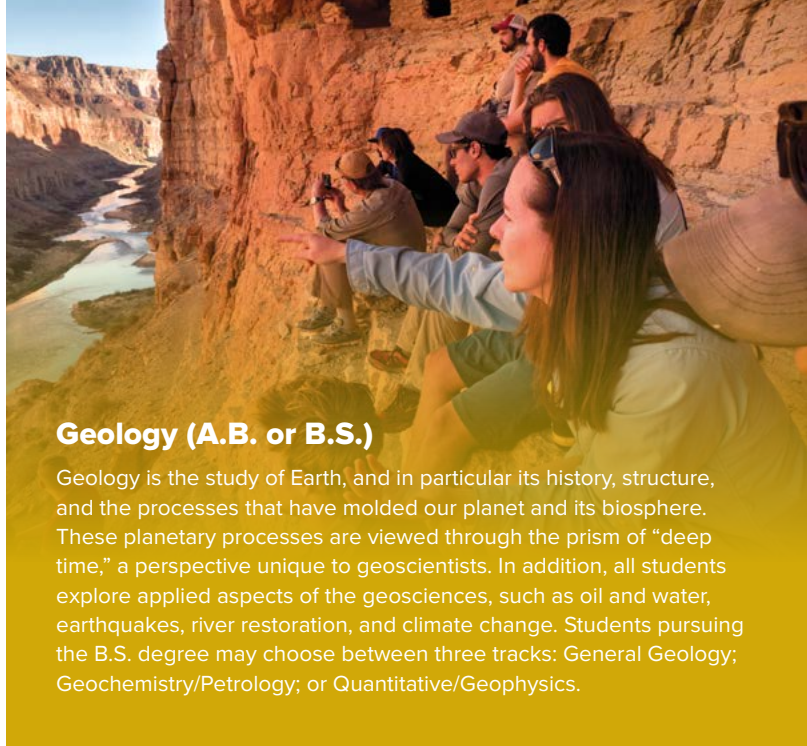
From Aesop's Fables and Lady Murasaki's early Japanese novels to the contemporary work of writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, comparative literature majors explore a broad range of genres, styles, and themes. This major sharpens analytical and writing skills as students focus on the national literatures of their choice. Students may choose to specialize in a particular genre, historical period, or movement.

Computer Science

Computer Science majors focus on designing systems for application in science, industry, and management. The emphasis in this program is on software, although students will also master essential concepts of hardware. Throughout their studies, students are encouraged to put their coursework into practice with internships and private sector employment.

East Asian Studies

East Asian countries play important roles in today's global culture and economy. Majors in East Asian Studies gain an understanding of this region through interdisciplinary studies that combine work in an East Asian language with courses exploring aspects of the culture and societies of East Asia. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Study Abroad Program to gain firsthand experience in China and Japan.



Geology (A.B. or B.S.)

Geology is the study of Earth, and in particular its history, structure, and the processes that have molded our planet and its biosphere. These planetary processes are viewed through the prism of "deep time," a perspective unique to geoscientists. In addition, all students explore applied aspects of the geosciences, such as oil and water, earthquakes, river restoration, and climate change. Students pursuing the B.S. degree may choose between three tracks: General Geology; Geochemistry/Petrology; or Quantitative/Geophysics.

Economics

Economics majors are well prepared to succeed in careers requiring both knowledge of financial concepts and keen analytical abilities. The curriculum encompasses instruction in deductive reasoning and analysis of models to help understand economic theory, strategies, tactics, policies, and consequences. At the same time, students are trained in modern methods of empirical and data analysis that are needed in the business and professional world.

English

Students who major in English have unlimited career options. English majors develop an excellent background in critical thinking, and learn to conduct research, analyze information, and deliver effective arguments in writing. The flexibility of the major accommodates individual interests, with students focusing on critical histories and methods, creative writing, ethnic and multicultural literature, or the relation of literature to disciplines such as environmental humanities or game studies.

French

The French major cultivates critical thinking, historical awareness, effective written and oral expression, and sensitivity to cultural difference. The curriculum in French encompasses a wide array of courses in literature from the Middle Ages through the 21st century, as well as theoretical and applied linguistics, and the history and culture of nearly all geographic regions of the French-speaking world. French majors pursue careers in fields such as teaching, law, journalism, medicine, government, translation services, and the travel industry.

Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies draws on elements of several disciplines to examine how factors of gender, sexuality, race, and class affect society on multiple levels. The program introduces students to relevant social issues; fosters critical thinking; develops strong verbal, writing, and research skills; and encourages social advocacy. The major is ideal for careers in counseling, clinical psychology, social services, education, media, or politics, and establishes a useful foundation for graduate school.

Design

The Design major combines artistic skill and training with experience in practical and commercial applications. The Design program is the only comprehensive academic design unit in the University of California system, delivering a research-focused curriculum that fully integrates design history, theory, and criticism with design thinking, making, writing, visual literacy, and creative practice. (Major only)



German

From Marx, Nietzsche, Brecht, and Kafka to Beethoven and Mozart, the influence of German language and culture reaches far beyond the boundaries of Germany itself. German majors explore the myriad aspects of the German-speaking world in courses designed to cultivate a deep understanding of society and institutions beyond the language. Opportunities abound for internships and study abroad.

Italian

Italian majors study the people, culture, history, linguistics, film, and literature of Italy, as well as its contemporary society, and explore how these influences have shaped our view of the world. Most classes are small and provide individual attention from instructors. An Italian major can lead to careers in medicine, law, business, international relations, teaching, or graduate work in almost any field.

Japanese

A major in Japanese gives students the chance to learn a different language, explore cultures in depth, and think critically and creatively about the world around you, all while acquiring skills and knowledge for a successful career in the global arena. Students gain a firm grounding in both spoken and written Japanese and can explore a diverse range of literature and culture courses taught in English—everything from traditional poetry to modern fiction and contemporary popular culture.

Linguistics

Language is one of the most important factors separating humans from other animals. It both unites and divides us culturally, ethnically, socially, and personally. Linguists study the structure, variation, and use of language among different cultural groups. Linguistics draws on many disciplines, including psychology, anthropology, computer science, literature, neuroscience, and education. Many graduates pursue advanced degrees or careers in computer science, teaching, lexicography, bilingual-bicultural education, and curriculum development.

Marine and Coastal Science

The interdisciplinary Marine and Coastal Science major highlights the terrestrial-marine interface, coastal issues, and human impacts on the marine environment. The emphasis of Oceans and the Earth System concentrates on our changing oceans in the context of Earth history, including climate change, paleoceanography, ecological shifts, conservation, and marine policy. (Major only)

Mathematical Analytics and Operations Research

A major in Mathematical Analytics and Operations Research is ideally suited to students with an interest in business or economics. Businesses have a critical need for scientifically trained analysts who can use mathematical models to interpret big data, analyze markets, and forecast trends. Majors gain skills in developing reliable models for forecasting, decision-making, and long-term planning. Careers in this field can be found in virtually every industry, from finance to entertainment to education. (Major only)

Mathematical and Scientific Computation

Mathematical and Scientific Computation majors attain advanced knowledge of computer science, specifically programming, as well as a solid foundation in mathematics. Students learn how to model or analyze complicated systems or problems in areas such as earthquakes, economics, and biology. The major has two emphases: Computational and Mathematical Biology, and Computation and Mathematics. This major provides entry to many careers, including teaching, operations research, systems analysis, computing, actuarial work, insurance, and financial services. (Major only)

Mathematics (A.B. or B.S.)

Mathematics is the study of abstract structures, space, change, and the interrelations of these concepts. Mathematicians work to address some of science's and society's most pressing questions, bridging gaps between disciplines and considering problems in their purest, most theoretical form. Mathematics alumni have pursued careers in operations research, systems analysis, computing, actuarial work, insurance, financial services, and education. Others have entered graduate study in mathematics or in fields such as law, engineering, and economics.

International Relations

International Relations majors draw from a variety of academic disciplines to gain a more complete picture of the factors that shape regions and nations. Students can choose between one of four tracks: World Trade and Development; Peace and Security; Global Environment, Health, and Natural Resources; and Peoples and Nationalities. International Relations majors embark on exciting careers in the federal government, international or nongovernmental organizations, and companies conducting business internationally. (Major only)



Medieval and Early Modern Studies

The centuries between 300 and 1500 CE are called the Middle Ages. Many of our social institutions and cultural practices have their roots in this period. Majors examine the medieval origins of our political, legal, and religious systems, trace the development of artistic and literary styles, and explore the impact of non-Europeans on medieval Europe. Preliminary courses include medieval history, art history, religion, and philosophy, along with a three-course sequence on medieval culture. Later, students may select from courses in dramatic art, music, and political science.

Middle East/South Asia Studies

The Middle East/South Asia Studies major focuses on the comparative study of these two critical regions and their historically intertwined cultures and economies. Students take courses within a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to: anthropology, art, comparative literature, film, history, music, political science, and religious studies. Students will receive a strong foundation in the regional languages, with at least two years required in Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi/Urdu, Persian, or another approved regional language. This major provides an excellent background for careers in business, government, international development, teaching, and translation.

Music

A major in Music explores history, theory, and performance. Professors and lecturers are active researchers and musicians who regularly have works performed, published, and recorded internationally. Students work closely with prominent artists-in-residence and may perform with the symphony orchestra, band, chorus, world music ensembles, or a variety of smaller ensembles. Facilities include an extensive collection of historical and modern European musical instruments, non-Western instruments, an excellent CD and video library, and a state-of-the-art performance venue.

Native American Studies

Native American Studies offers the opportunity to understand and learn from the history and traditions of the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America. Drawing from the philosophy, politics, social values, and arts of native cultures, the major provides insight into a diverse population of people. Native American Studies provides excellent preparation for graduate studies in fields such as teaching, law, business, human services, health, tribal administration, social work, and human resources management. (Major only)

History

Historians know that modern culture and conflict can only be understood by turning to its historical roots. The events, people, triumphs, and mistakes of the past are key to understanding the forces and factions at work today. History majors work with some of the country's foremost historical researchers and writers, whose areas of expertise span the ages and the globe.



Philosophy

Philosophy majors address questions about life and values that recur in every cultural setting and in every area of human thought. How does one determine right from wrong? What does it mean to be a “good person” or to live a “good life”? Many philosophy majors have entered graduate or professional school in medicine, philosophy, law, and business. Students in philosophy often consider careers in education, government, ministry, and technology and engineering.

Physics (A.B. or B.S.)

From subatomic particles to galaxies with billions of stars, Physics majors study what the universe is made of and how it works. Students learn about our present understanding of the universe and join faculty in research that ranges from the very smallest distances associated with elementary particle physics, to nanophysics and superconductivity, and on to the structure and evolution of the entire universe. Students may choose a B.S. with astrophysics specialization.

Political Science

Political scientists study the complex, intertwined forms of government and their effects on citizens, businesses, and institutions. Majors develop research, analytic, and communication skills valuable in careers such as teaching, law, management, government, urban planning, journalism, politics, and administration. Political Science majors at UC Davis are only minutes from California’s state capital. Internships in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., provide firsthand experience in government agencies and other political organizations.

Political Science – Public Service

Majors in Political Science – Public Service focus on how policy is formulated, implemented, evaluated, and interpreted. Students may also focus on a specific area of policy, such as urban or environmental policy. Every student in this major must complete an internship with a political, governmental, or nonprofit organization. (Major only)

Psychology (A.B. or B.S.)

Psychology examines both the social and scientific bases of behavior. UC Davis is home to many leading researchers in the field of psychology. Students can choose an A.B. or B.S. degree and take classes in five core areas: Social/Personality Psychology; Psychobiology; Perception/Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience; Developmental Psychology; and Quantitative Psychology. Many psychology majors have entered graduate or professional school in medicine, psychology, and social work. Graduates also pursue careers in counseling, business, education, health sciences, research, and technology.

Russian

A major in Russian provides instruction in speaking and understanding the Russian language and exposes students to the richness of Russian literature and culture. Writers like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Nabokov, composers such as Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, and painters including Chagall and Kandinsky have all come from the great Russian tradition. At UC Davis, Russian classes are small group sessions taught by internationally known professors. Alumni often pursue careers in education abroad and international business and relations.

Science and Technology Studies

The Science and Technology Studies major examines science and technology as they shape and are shaped by their social, political, economic, and cultural contexts. The program draws upon faculty from a wide range of disciplines, including American studies, anthropology, economics, environmental science and policy, history, philosophy, political science, digital media, and sociology. The major offers students a broad understanding of science, preparing students to interpret science, technology, and medicine as part of society and culture. (Major only)

Sociology

Sociologists study how globalization, labor markets, educational systems, political institutions, and culture are embedded in and shape everyday life. Sociologists analyze how cooperation and conflict, action, and interaction are differentiated by social stratification; seek to discover the forces that unite and separate social groups; determine conditions that lead to a transformation of social life; and examine forces for social change. Alumni often pursue careers in law, business and nonprofit management, and social services.

Sociology – Organizational Studies

The Organizational Studies emphasis within the Sociology major provides a broad understanding of the political, social, and economic organizations that make up modern society. Whether thinking about the structure of government bureaucracies, legal systems, economic markets, educational systems, or workplaces, Organizational Studies offers an interdisciplinary vantage from which to understand the contemporary world. (Major only)



Pharmaceutical Chemistry

The demand for pharmaceutical chemists is high and is anticipated to grow. The major in Pharmaceutical Chemistry provides students with an in-depth understanding of the processes and societal issues surrounding the design and development of pharmaceuticals. Students in this major will learn how drugs work; study drug synthesis, design, and delivery; and explore ethical issues surrounding pharmaceutical development. Graduates are prepared for careers in industry and also gain a solid foundation to pursue professional or graduate programs in the health fields. (Major only)

Spanish

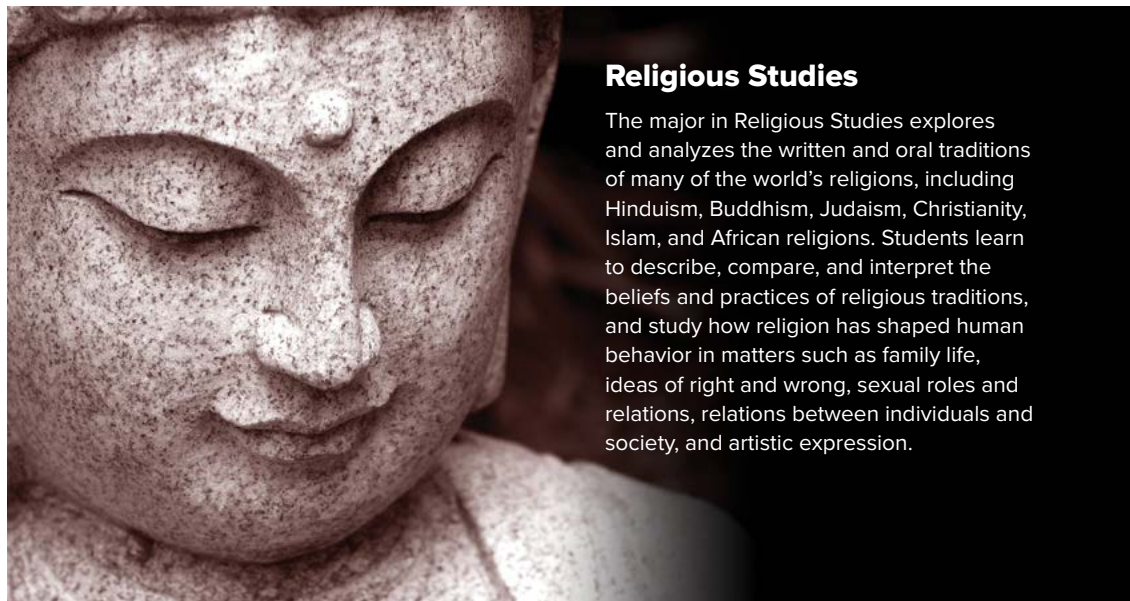
Spanish majors study Hispanic, Latinx, and Chicana literatures and cultures in Spanish. Many Spanish majors are native speakers of Spanish; majoring in Spanish expands their knowledge of the language’s global impact. Other majors learn Spanish as a second language because they know that by 2050 the U.S. will be the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Alumni enjoy careers in many fields, including business, government, teaching, medicine, and law.

Statistics (A.B. or B.S.)

Statistics provides majors with the skills needed to address quantitative, data-based problems. Statistics majors learn some of the most exciting and relevant uses of statistical data today, applying their knowledge to fields such as the biological and social sciences, engineering and technology, business and finance, law, health, and education.

Theatre and Dance

Participation is a unique focus of the Theatre and Dance major. Majors focus their studies on acting, directing, stagecraft, or dance, and gain experience planning, producing, and bringing performance to the stage. Alumni are stage-managing Broadway plays, acting in Hollywood films and commercials, and performing voiceovers for animated movies and TV shows. Others are pursuing advanced degrees or teaching. Many have entered fields such as arts management and marketing.



Religious Studies

The major in Religious Studies explores and analyzes the written and oral traditions of many of the world’s religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and African religions. Students learn to describe, compare, and interpret the beliefs and practices of religious traditions, and study how religion has shaped human behavior in matters such as family life, ideas of right and wrong, sexual roles and relations, relations between individuals and society, and artistic expression.

Minors

Most of the College's majors can also be pursued as a minor. In addition, the College offers an array of subjects available as minors only.

- Arab Studies
- Arabic
- Coaching Principles and Methods – Physical Education
- Environmental Geology
- Film Studies
- Geophysics
- Global and International Studies
- Greek
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Human Rights
- India and South Asia Studies
- Iran and Persian Studies
- Jewish Studies
- Latin American and Hemispheric Studies
- Latin
- Linguistics for Language Teachers
- Luso-Brazilian Studies
- Oceanography
- Professional Writing
- Sexuality Studies
- Social and Ethnic Relations
- War-Peace Studies

Meet Our Student Ambassadors

Ambassadors of Letters and Science (ALAS) is a group of exceptional student leaders who are enthusiastic about sharing their experiences at UC Davis and representing the College. They host visitors to campus, facilitate informational sessions, and lead tours. They are eager to answer your questions and tell you more about life as an Aggie. Learn more at lettersandscience.ucdavis.edu/ambassadors.

Get to Know Us






UC Davis College of Letters and Science: lettersandscience.ucdavis.edu

Majors and Minors: lettersandscience.ucdavis.edu/majors-minors

UC Davis Majors Blog: ucdavis.edu/majors/blog

How to Apply: ucdavis.edu/admissions/undergraduate/apply

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