



## Advising Information Packet

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Version: September 4, 2023

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## I. Overview of Graduation Degree Requirements

36 credits (including 30 course credits) are required to graduate from COA. Within these credits, the courses and requirements are outlined in the current Course Catalog (see [coa.edu/registrar](http://coa.edu/registrar) for a digital copy).

- 18 of 36 credits used for graduation must be earned at COA.
- A minimum of 6 terms must be spent (part- or full-time) enrolled on campus.
- Internships, residencies, and senior projects count as on-campus although internships must physically be off-campus.
- A typical courseload for students is 9 credits per academic year, or 3 classes per term. Students are advised not to take more than 3 classes in a term.

### **Graduation Requirements for students with the equivalent of less than 9 COA credits\*:**

- *Human Ecology Core Course* offered every fall term. Transfer students may choose to select this course. Generally required during the student's first term of their first year.
- One writing course (Writing Seminar or College Seminar) or two "writing focused" courses. This must be completed after the student's second year, or by the time they have earned 18 credits.
- Writing Portfolio: required after 6 terms or 18 credits. Transfers must submit their portfolio after three terms on campus. For guidance, see Blake Cass, Writing Center Director.
- History (HY) course. For guidance, see Todd Little-Siebold or Gray Cox. Recommended within first two years of attendance.
- Quantitative Reasoning/Math (QR) course. For guidance see Dave Feldman. Recommended within the first two years of attendance.

*\*Transfer students should meet with their advisor and registrar.*

### **Continuing requirements for all students:**

- At least two (2) courses in each of the college's three **resource areas**, taught by two different full-time faculty in each respective area (may include some approved visiting courses), are required to graduate.
  - Resource Areas: Human Studies (HS), Arts and Design (AD/S), and Environmental Sciences (ES). One AD course must meet the criteria of a studio-based visual arts course, denoted as ADS.
- An **internship** (3 credits or non-credit) of at least one term in a field related to the student's academic interest or occupational goals (typically completed during the student's third year). It is strongly recommended that students follow up their internship with at least one term at COA completing coursework or their senior project. For guidance, contact Jeffry Neuhouser.
- **Human Ecology Essay** (draft due fall term of senior year with final signed copy submitted by winter term of senior year). Contact Barbara Carter in Academic Services with questions.
- **Senior Project** (3 credits), a major piece of independent work reflecting the student's primary field of interest—usually during final term or spread out over their fourth year. Contact Barbara Carter.
- **Community Service**. 40 hours total, which can be fulfilled on- or off-campus. Student participation in campus committees or the organizing of student activities may count toward the community service requirement. Contact Jeffry Neuhouser.

Transfer students with more than nine COA credits: Requirements differ slightly. Check with the Registrar's Office about transfer student requirements on a case-by-case basis.

### **Optional Credit-bearing Studies:**

**Independent Study:** An independent study allows a student the opportunity to design their own course. Restrictions apply for first year students. See course catalog for additional information, or contact the Registrar's Office.

**Group Study:** The group study is a student-initiated, one-credit course that provides an opportunity for collective pursuit of specific academic problems, topics, or issues which are not offered in the regular curriculum. Refer questions to Lothar Holzke on behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee. Proposals must be approved the term prior.

**Tutorial:** Tutorials are faculty-initiated studies for one to five students which cover specialized material not available within the regular curriculum. For guidance, seek a faculty member in the resource area of interest.

**Residency:** A residency is a three-credit, term-long, educational experience designed by a student, the equivalent of 3 classes. It offers advanced students the opportunity to put together their own cohesive program of study in order to explore areas which may not be provided in

either the content or structure of the regular academic curriculum. For more information see the current Course Catalog. Proposals must be approved and on record the term prior. Contact Barbara Carter, Co-Chair of Review and Appeals.

**Study Away:** Academic Study elsewhere, study abroad, or study at other institutions (consortium, EcoLeague, etc.). For more information, contact the Internships & Career Development Office. For information about EcoLeague, contact Sarah Hall (shall@coa.edu).

**Teacher Education Program and Certification:** Contact Linda Fuller at lfuller@coa.edu or at extension x5685.

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## II. Questions Frequently Asked by Students (FAQ)

**Q: What classes should I take?**

A: (For first year students): Plan to complete several of the first year requirements (e.g., HY, Core Course, QR, WR, and then a variety of other courses from AD, HS, and ES). Many of these are prerequisites for other courses. (For second year + students): Talk to your advisor and faculty about your career goals and plan accordingly. It's important to take at least one course each term that is purely out of interest.

**Q: Can the same course meet 2 requirements?** For example, can the "Our Public Lands: Past, Present and Future" be used for both HS (Human Studies) and HY (History) since it is marked as both?

A: Yes. This course may fulfill two different requirements.

**Q: Do I really have to take HY, QR, and the required writing course(s)?**

A: Yes. Any course that is a requirement must be taken or have a transfer equivalent approved by the Registrar's Office.

**Q: How will COA credits transfer to other schools?**

A: 1 COA credit = 3.3 credits at other colleges.

**Q: Two classes that I really want to take are offered at the same time in the same term, what should I do?**

A: Look to see if either course will be offered again in the future (make sure neither is a one-time listing). Next, check the class rotation schedule in the course catalog or on the Registrar's site (coa.edu/registrar) for a list of courses offered for the entire year (for example, is one course offered every year, and the other, every third year?). Usually there is a solution that will allow the student to take one of these classes now and the other at a later point in time. If you find that such a solution is not possible, you should prioritize a choice with your advisor. You could approach the professors from either course to see if they would offer the course at a different time or an independent study for that topic in a later term.

**Q: Should I choose letter grades or the Credit/Non-Credit (Pass/Fail) option?**

A: This is really an individual choice. Some students have to take grades for certain scholarships (you should check with the Financial Aid Director, to see if this is the case). Generally speaking, it depends on what the student intends to do once they graduate from COA. Some graduate schools require grades (again for funding) while others don't. Some courses are only offered P/F and need special arrangement with the instructor to get a letter grade. Pass/Fail where Pass equals a C or better. A C- or D does not count for credit under Pass/Fail. For more information check with Krystal Poulin in the Registrar's Office. Note that GPA is calculated only by student request, and CR/NCR classes are not included in GPA calculations.

**Q: What should I do for my internship? Senior Project? Community Service?**

A: In terms of placements or projects, ask your advisor and other students about their ideas, and talk to the following people: Internships and/or community service, Jeffry Neuhouser; senior projects, Barbara Carter.

**Q: Can my mother check on my grades while I am a student?**

A: Yes and No. College of the Atlantic requires your consent to share your education records with your parent/guardian, or anyone else in most circumstances.

*The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. ' 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Student records must be kept confidential and should not be discussed in any open settings. For more information: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco/ferpalist.html>*

**Q: Can I take more than 3 credits in a term?**

A: In most cases, this is not a good idea. Each COA course is very demanding, and three courses will take a lot of time and commitment. Potential exceptions include one-credit courses that span two or more terms in the academic year.

**Q: What does the term "in good academic standing" mean?**

A: A COA student's progress toward the degree is measured in credit units; to be considered in good standing a student must be earning credits in satisfactory proportion to the number attempted. Students with extensions may not be considered in good standing until work is complete. Check with your advisor and/or Ken Hill, Provost.

**Q: Should I talk to my advisor about personal issues? (i.e., family/relationship problems, mental health issues, physical problems, etc.).**

A: Remember, your academic advisor is not a counselor. Serious issues include, but are not limited to, severe depression, suicidal intent or ideation, wanting to harm self or others, substance abuse, and physical health issues. Professional counselors are on campus regularly. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Contact Barbara Conry, Director of Student Support and Wellness ([bconry@coa.edu](mailto:bconry@coa.edu)).

Having said that, not all non-academic issues may require a counselor. You should expect that your academic advisor may refer you to another resource on campus if a “personal issue” would benefit from a counselor or other resource.

