

PHILOSOPHY (BA)

College of Arts and Sciences

Program Website (<https://www.philosophy.cornell.edu>)

CIP: 38.0101 | HEGIS: 1509.00 | NYSED: 05717

Program Description

The study of philosophy introduces students to a wide variety of fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, mind, language, reason, and value, from the abstract to the applied, as well as to texts from various philosophical traditions; our courses help students develop skills in analytical thinking and writing that are valuable both in academia and beyond.

Studying philosophy affords the excitement and satisfaction that come from understanding and working toward solutions of intellectual problems.

The curriculum includes offerings in the history of philosophy, logic, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind and language, ethics, social and political philosophy, metaphysics, and theory of knowledge. Any philosophy course numbered in the 1000s or 2000s is suitable for beginning study in the field.

Students expecting to major in philosophy should begin their study of it in their first or second undergraduate year. Admission to the major is granted by the Director of Undergraduate Studies on the basis of a student's work during the first two years. Normally the student must have completed two philosophy courses with grades of B or better, and a minimum of three credits for each.

Honors in Philosophy

Honors in the philosophy major are awarded on the basis of an assessment of the student's overall performance in the major, taking into account their grades in philosophy classes, and also their oral performance in class and their departmental citizenship. A primary factor will be the faculty's assessment of the student's philosophical writing, as evidenced by the production of one or more substantial pieces of writing, such as seminar term papers, an (optional) senior thesis, or the equivalent.

Eligibility

Students interested in being considered for honors should be philosophy majors and normally, by the time they graduate:

- will have a GPA (Grade Point Average) of at least 3.5 in the major, and a minimum overall GPA in all courses taken at Cornell of 2.7 (B-);
- must have taken at least ten philosophy courses (these must be courses of at least 3 credits and may not include any PHIL courses with a 9 in the second digit, with the exception of PHIL 4900 Informal Study for Honors I and PHIL 4901 Informal Study for Honors II—the senior thesis);
- will have taken at least two such courses at the 4000/6000 level, with the aim of producing substantial pieces of philosophical writing (e.g. seminar term papers), or the equivalent; this requirement can, but need not be, satisfied by undertaking the (optional) senior thesis (see below);
- will have taken at least four such courses at the 3000 level or above.

Meeting these criteria is necessary but not sufficient for honors in philosophy. The faculty will consider all eligible students for honors, so there is no need for students to declare themselves interested in being considered for honors. However, we recommend that you speak with your faculty advisor about course selection, particularly with regard to upper-level seminars or the senior thesis, at the start of your junior and senior years, to ensure that your coursework will provide you with sorts of samples of written work that could form the basis of an award of honors.

The Senior Thesis

Students who wish to undertake a substantial, specialized, in-depth independent research project under the supervision of a member of the Sage School faculty may choose to enroll in the optional senior thesis. Students typically devote two courses (PHIL 4900 Informal Study for Honors I /PHIL 4901 Informal Study for Honors II) in consecutive terms of their senior year to writing a satisfactory thesis (although some students have completed a thesis in a single term). Neither PHIL 4900 Informal Study for Honors I nor PHIL 4901 Informal Study for Honors II counts towards the eight philosophy courses required for the major, though they can count towards the ten courses required for honors. Enrollment in the thesis project is dependent on finding a suitable faculty advisor. The senior thesis is one route, but not the only route, to producing the substantial pieces of philosophical writing needed for honors consideration. (Candidates whose theses are judged by the faculty not to merit the award of honors may nonetheless, at the discretion of the faculty, be awarded a passing grade for PHIL 4900 Informal Study for Honors I/PHIL 4901 Informal Study for Honors II.

Note: The senior thesis is no longer required for honors in philosophy, and in many cases, students may find it preferable to enroll in two upper level or graduate seminars, and benefit from the greater structure and philosophical community such seminars offer, rather than undertaking the thesis project.

Honors Awards

The decision to award a degree in philosophy with honors is made by the faculty of the Sage School. Every spring, the faculty will hold a meeting to review each of the graduating majors (including multiple majors) who meet the numerical criteria in order to consider whether they should be awarded departmental honors. No student will be awarded honors unless at least two faculty members are willing to advocate for the honors on the basis of their assessment of at least one substantial piece of work such as a seminar paper or the equivalent. As noted, students will be considered for honors without needing to put themselves forward for consideration. It will fall to the faculty to recruit second readers for seminar papers and theses as necessary.

Through August 2026, the department will continue to award Latin honors at three levels: honors (cum laude), high honors (magna cum laude), and highest honors (summa cum laude). High and highest honors are reserved for those students whose philosophy coursework record stands out as especially and unusually impressive and whose written work is exceptional in its originality, creativity, elegance and/or sophistication. Highest honors, in particular, are rare, and not even awarded every year. Receiving honors at any level is an achievement.

Beginning with the 2026-27 academic year, Latin Honors will be awarded at the College level, and the department will award only one level of Honors in Philosophy.

Program Information

- Instruction Mode: In Person
- Location: Ithaca, NY
- Minimum Credits for Degree: 120

Program Requirements

A minimum of eight philosophy courses taken for a letter grade and a minimum of 24 total credit hours, as well as six additional credits (generally two courses) in philosophy or other philosophy-adjacent courses (approved by the major advisor), for a total of ten classes (30 credit hours).

Code	Title	Hours
Eight Core Philosophy Courses ¹		24
Including:		
6 Philosophy courses at the 2000-level or higher. Of these six courses, at least three must be at the 3000-level or higher. Including:		
²		
PHIL 2200	Greek and Roman Philosophy (or an ancient philosophy course with with a large component on Plato or Aristotle)	
PHIL 2220	Modern Philosophy (or one course on the history of modern philosophy before 1900)	
2 Philosophy courses at any level		
Philosophy Electives		6
Two courses in Philosophy or related subjects ³		
Total Hours		30

¹ The eight Philosophy courses satisfying the major may not include:

- any first-Year Writing Seminar (PHIL 1110 FWS: Philosophy in Practice, PHIL 1111 FWS: Philosophical Problems, PHIL 1112 FWS: Philosophical Conversations)
- any PHIL course with a catalog number X9XX. (e.g. PHIL 2990 Foundations of Law and Society, PHIL 4900 Informal Study for Honors I, PHIL 4901 Informal Study for Honors II, etc.)
- more than four courses completed at other institutions

² PHIL 2310 Introduction to Deductive Logic is recommended for majors or prospective majors, but not required.

³

1. Philosophy Electives must be approved by the student’s major advisor if not offered by the Philosophy Department.
2. a grade of B- or better is required for any course to count as a Philosophy Elective.

University Graduation Requirements Requirements for All Students

In order to receive a Cornell degree, a student must satisfy academic and non-academic requirements.

Academic Requirements

A student’s college determines degree requirements such as residency, number of credits, distribution of credits, and grade averages. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the specific major, degree, distribution, college, and graduation requirements for completing their chosen program of study. See the individual requirements listed by each college or school or contact the college registrar’s office (<https://>

registrar.cornell.edu/service-resources/college-registrar-directory/) for more information.

Non-academic Requirements

Conduct Matters. Students must satisfy any outstanding sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed or agreed to under the Student Code of Conduct (Code) or Policy 6.4. Where a formal complaint under the Code or Policy 6.4 is pending, the University will withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the adjudication process set forth in those procedures is complete, including the satisfaction of any sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed.

Financial Obligations. Outstanding financial obligations will not impact the awarding of a degree otherwise earned or a student’s ability to access their official transcript. However, the University may withhold issuing a diploma until any outstanding financial obligations owing to the University are satisfied.

Additional Requirements for Undergraduate Students

The University has two requirements for graduation that must be fulfilled by all undergraduate students: the swim requirement, and completion of two physical education courses. For additional information about fulfilling University Graduation Requirements, see the Physical Education website (<https://scl.cornell.edu/pe/>).

Physical Education

All incoming undergraduate students are required to take two credits (two courses) of Physical Education prior to graduation. It is recommended they complete the two courses during their first year at Cornell. Credit in Physical Education may be earned by participating in courses offered by the Department of Athletics and Physical Education (https://courses.cornell.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=60&poid=30232) and Cornell Outdoor Education, by being a registered participant on a varsity athletic team, or performing in the marching band.

Students with medical concerns should contact the Office of Student Disability Services (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>).

Swim Requirement

The Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education has established a basic swimming and water safety competency requirement for all undergraduate students. Normally, the requirement is taken during the Fall Orientation process at Helen Newman Hall or Teagle Hall pools. The requirement consists of the following: jump or step feet-first into the deep end of the pool, float or tread for one minute, turn around in a full circle, swim 25 yards using any stroke(s) of choice without touching the bottom or holding on to the sides (there is no time limit) and exit from the water. Students who do not complete the swim requirement during their first year, during a PE swim class or during orientation subsequent years, will have to pay a \$100 fee. Any student who cannot meet this requirement must register for PE 1100 Beginning Swimming as their physical education course before electives can be chosen.

If a student does not pass the swim requirement in their first Beginning Swimming PE class, then the student must take a second Beginning Swimming PE class (PE 1100 or PE 1101). Successful completion of two Beginning Swimming classes (based on attendance requirements) with the instructor’s recommendation will fulfill the University’s swim requirement.

Students unable to meet the swim requirement because of medical reasons should contact the Office of Student Disability Services (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>). When a waiver is granted by the Faculty Committee on Physical Education, an alternate requirement is imposed. The alternate requirement substitute is set by the Director of Physical Education.

College of Arts and Sciences Graduation Requirements

Undergraduate Degrees

Graduation Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree

Credit Requirement: 120 academic credits are required, 100 of which must be taken in the College of Arts & Sciences. 100 credits in Arts & Sciences is a minimum number, as is the 120 credit total. A minimum of 80 credits must be in courses for which a letter grade was received. AP, IB, CASE and A-Level credits count toward the 120 total credits but not toward the 100 A&S credits. Transfer credits for non-transfer students cannot count towards the 100 A&S credits. (See list of courses (<https://as.cornell.edu/registrar/courses-that-dont-count/>) that do not count as academic credit.)

Residency Requirement: eight full-time semesters in residence (in person) are expected to complete degree requirements with a minimum of six full-time semesters being required. External transfer students must complete a minimum of four full-time residence semesters.

First-year Writing Seminar (FWS) Requirement: two courses are required. A 5 on either the AP English Composition or Literature exam, or a 7 on the IB HL English Literature or Language exam will count towards one of these seminars. First-year students should take an FWS during their first semester at Cornell and are required to complete two by the end of their sophomore year.

Foreign Language Requirement: a student must either pass an intermediate Cornell language course at the 2000-level or above (Option 1) or complete at least 11 credits in a single foreign language at Cornell (Option 2). AP and IB credits cannot complete this requirement, but usually indicate that a student can place into a higher level course. Note: Native speakers of a foreign language may be exempted from this requirement. For a list of language offerings and placement, see Language Study at Cornell.

Distribution Requirement: Must take a minimum of 8 courses of at least 3 credits to fulfill 10 distribution categories. How an individual course is categorized is indicated with the appropriate abbreviation in its course description. It is important to recognize that only courses with the proper designation in the catalog can be used toward fulfilling the distribution requirements in Arts and Sciences. Unless otherwise specified, variable credit courses, including independent study courses, may not be used for distribution credit.

Arts & Sciences Distribution Requirement Categories:

- Arts, Literature, and Culture (ALC-AS)
- Biological Sciences (BIO-AS)
- Ethics and the Mind (ETM-AS)
- Global Citizenship (GLC-AS)
- Historical Analysis (HST-AS)
- Physical Sciences (PHS-AS)
- Social Difference (SCD-AS)
- Social Sciences (SSC-AS)

- Statistics and Data Science (SDS-AS)
- Symbolic and Mathematical Reasoning (SMR-AS)

Distribution Requirement Definitions

Arts, Literature, and Culture (ALC-AS)

Courses in this area examine arts, literature, and culture in various contexts. Students gain insights into the interplay of individual or collaborative creativity and social practice, and understand the complexities of the expression of the human condition. Topics include the analysis of artworks and literary texts, and the belief systems of social groups, cultures, and civilizations; they also focus on artistic expression itself (in creative writing, performing arts, and media such as film and video).

Biological Sciences (BIO-AS)

Courses in this area focus on understanding a wide range of life forms, from single cells to plants, animals, and their ecosystems. Topics include the molecular and biochemical makeup of life, the sub-cellular, cellular and organismal structures of life, and the evolutionary relatedness of all life forms. Students learn to describe how organisms are connected to each other and to their physical environment. Many courses address how genetic information is expressed from DNA, and how this expression leads to complex function and behavior.

Ethics and the Mind (ETM-AS)

Courses in this area investigate the human mind and its capacities, ranging from cognitive faculties shared by humans and animals such as perception, to language and abstract reasoning, to the ability to form and justify ethical values. Courses investigating the mind may use the methodologies of psychology, linguistics, or philosophy. Those focusing on ethics explore ways of reflecting on questions that concern the nature of justice, the good life, or human values in general. Many courses combine these topics and methodologies.

Global Citizenship (GLC-AS)

Courses in this area examine the history, culture, politics, religion, and social relations of peoples in different parts of the world, as well as their interactions. They encourage students to think broadly about the global community and their place within it, beyond the boundaries of their particular national or cultural group, and cultivate skills of intercultural engagement that are vital to their role as global citizens. These courses introduce students to global challenges such as war and peace, social and economic inequalities, international migration, and environmental sustainability, and encourage students to think critically about international responses to these challenges.

Historical Analysis (HST-AS)

Courses in this area train students in the analysis of documentary, material, and oral evidence about social phenomena, institutions, events and ideas of the past. Students learn to evaluate and critically assess differing analyses and interpretations of former times so that they may acquire a better understanding of the origins and evolution of the present. Questions addressed in HA courses include why and under what circumstances changes have occurred in how people have interacted with one another and with the environments in which they live.

Physical Sciences (PHS-AS)

Courses satisfying this requirement provide an appreciation of how science generates and categorizes enduring knowledge of our physical world. This includes the physics, chemistry, and technology involved, of everything from light to atoms, DNA molecules, Earth science, our Solar system, and to the Cosmos. These courses expose students to both the process and some of the substance of science. By learning the universal

aspects of scientific enquiry, students will be better equipped to form opinions on scientific issues that affect the world.

Social Difference (SCD-AS)

Courses in this area examine social differences relevant to the human experience. Social categories include class, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, nationality, language, religion, gender, sexuality, and ability as objects of study. Students develop a deeper understanding of these categories and their intersections. Topics may include: how hierarchies in power and status shape social differences; how social, economic and political systems can impact the interpretation of social differences; and how differences attributed to various groups are explained.

Social Sciences (SSC-AS)

Courses in this area examine social, economic, political, psychological, demographic, linguistic, and relational processes. Topics include understanding how different social contexts, for example neighborhoods, families, markets, networks, or political organizations, shape social life. Students learn to identify, describe, and explain the causes and consequences of social phenomena using quantitative and/or qualitative evidence based on systematic observation of the social world. They also learn to link evidence to theory through rigorous and transparent reasoning, and/or reflect critically on the concepts through which people make sense of the social world.

Statistics and Data Science (SDS-AS)

Courses in this area develop data literacy, essential to be an informed citizen in today's world. Students learn and apply statistical and computational techniques to effectively collect, visualize, analyze and interpret data, and present conclusions. Applications span a wide variety of contexts: providing a better understanding of the communities in which we live, guiding and enriching our lives, and driving forward scientific inquiry. Students gain an appreciation of how to ask the right questions, and how statistics can depend on the context, assumptions, and limitations of data.

Symbolic and Mathematical Reasoning (SMR-AS)

Courses satisfying this requirement help students develop the skills to solve problems through understanding abstract, logical relationships. Such skills include mathematical analysis of patterns and phenomena, modeling natural and technological systems, and creating algorithms essential to computation. These courses explore specific quantitative and symbolic methods, strategies for applying logical reasoning in diverse areas, and the intrinsic elegance of mathematics.

Major Requirement: students must complete the requirements for at least one major in A&S. See individual major listings for major requirements.

Physical Education Requirement: completion of the university requirement of two PE courses and passing the swim test. Note: physical education credit is not academic credit and does not count toward the 120 credits needed to graduate.

Policies on Applying Cornell and Non-Cornell Courses and Credits to Distribution Requirements

Restrictions on Applying AP/Test Credit and Courses from Other Institutions to the Distribution Requirements

- Students may not apply AP/test credit or transfer credit from another institution to the distribution requirements.
- Students who transfer to the college from another institution are under the above rules for advanced placement credit, but are eligible to have credit for post-high school course work taken during regular full-time semesters (not summer terms) at their previous institution

count toward all distribution requirements. Transfer students receive a detailed credit evaluation when they are accepted for admission.

Restrictions on Applying Cornell Courses to the Distribution Requirements

- First-year writing seminars and ENGL 2880 Expository Writing or ENGL 2890 taken to satisfy a first-year writing seminar requirement may not count toward any other college or major requirement.
- Only courses with the proper designation in the Courses of Study can be used toward fulfilling the distribution requirements in Arts and Sciences.
- Students may not petition to change the category of any given course, nor may any faculty member change the category of a course for an individual student. Faculty members wishing to change the category for a course in which they are the primary instructor must petition the Educational Policy Committee for a change in category. If granted, the new category must be applied to the course as a whole and not for an individual student.

Courses That May Fulfill More Than One Requirement

- A course may fulfill more than one college requirement in any of the following situations:
- A course may be used to fulfill distribution and a major requirement (except if prohibited by one of the restrictions noted on applying AP/test credit, transfer credit, and Cornell courses to distribution requirements).
- A course may satisfy a maximum of two distribution categories. Students can only double-count distribution requirements on a maximum of two courses.
- A one-semester course in foreign literature (not language) or culture that is acceptable for certifying option 1 in that language may also be applied to the relevant distribution requirement.
- Courses may count toward any other requirement except first-year writing seminars.

Credit Requirement

Credits and Courses: Students must earn a minimum of 120 academic credits (which may include AP/test credits). Of the 120, a minimum of 100 must be from courses taken in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell.

Courses that do not count toward the 120 credits required for the degree. The College of Arts and Sciences does not grant credit toward the degree for every course offered by the university. Courses in military training, service as a teaching assistant, physical education, remedial or developmental training, precalculus mathematics, supplemental science and mathematics, offered by the Learning Strategies Center, and English as a second language are among those for which degree credit is not awarded. Students can view the list of courses that do not count for academic credit here (<https://as.cornell.edu/registrar/courses-that-dont-count/>).

Other cases in which a course may not receive credit include the following:

- A course identified as a prerequisite for a subsequent course may not be taken for credit once a student completes that subsequent course.
- A repeated course. (For more information, see "Repeating courses," below.)

- A "forbidden overlap," that is, a course with material that significantly overlaps with material in a course a student has already taken. Students should consult the list of Forbidden Overlaps for more information.

Courses that count toward the 100 required Arts and Sciences

credits may include liberal arts courses approved for study abroad during a semester or academic year of full-time study (not summer abroad study), courses taken in certain off-campus Cornell residential programs, and a maximum of three courses that majors may accept from other colleges at Cornell as fulfilling major requirements. A&S courses taken in Cornell's summer session may count towards the 100 A&S credits.

Courses that do not count toward the 100 required Arts and Sciences

credits include credits earned in other colleges at Cornell (except in the cases specifically noted in this section), transfer credits earned in any subject at institutions other than Cornell, and advanced placement/test credits. AP/test credits count as part of the 120 credits required for the degree but not as part of the 100 Arts and Sciences credits and may not be applied to distribution requirements. AP credits are posted on the transcript. If, subsequently, a student takes the course out of which they had placed, the AP credit will be removed because of the overlap in content.

Repeating Courses

Students occasionally need to repeat courses. Some courses, such as independent study, some music and performance courses, and specific topical seminars, in which content is significantly different, do grant credit when the course is taken more than once. For all repeated courses, both grades appear on the transcript and are included in both the term and cumulative GPA. For repeated courses that do not grant credit more than once, only one instance counts toward degree credits and requirements.

Residency Requirement

The College of Arts & Sciences is a residential community and students typically spend eight semesters of full-time study in residence to earn the B.A. degree.

The completion of a fall or spring term as a full-time registered student at Cornell counts as a semester in residence. Summer and winter terms at Cornell, study in Cornell's School of Continuing Education and at other institutions do not count as semesters of residence.

The residency requirement has two components: a minimum number of semesters in residence and a requirement to spend the last full-time semester of study in residence.

Students matriculating into the College of Arts & Sciences as first-year students must have a minimum of six semesters in residence before graduating. First-year matriculants into A&S can count up to two semesters in an approved off-campus program as semesters in residence. Approved off-campus programs include A&S approved study abroad programs, Cornell in Washington, Cornell in Rome, and the Cornell-China & Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) Program.

Students who transfer into the College of Arts & Sciences after matriculating in their first-year in another Cornell college (internal transfers) must have a minimum of six semesters in residence, and a minimum of two semesters in the College of Arts and Sciences before graduating. Internal transfers can count up to two semesters in an approved off-campus program as semesters in residence.

Students who transfer into Cornell from another institution (external transfers) must have a minimum of four semesters in residence, and a minimum of two semesters in the College of Arts & Sciences, before graduating. External transfers can count up to one semester in an approved off-campus program as a semester in residence.

In addition to the minimum number of semesters in residence, all students must complete their final full-time semester of study (i.e., the last semester in which at least 9 academic credits are needed to meet graduation requirements) in residence. Students who have fewer than 9 credits to complete degree requirements, and have met the minimum number of semesters residency requirement, may elect to complete their degree requirements during Cornell summer and winter terms registered as an A&S student or at another institution with approved transfer credit. Students cannot meet final degree requirements registered as an extramural student at Cornell.

Exceptions to the residence requirement are not petitionable.

Foreign Language Requirement

The faculty considers competence in a foreign language essential for an educated person. Studying a language other than one's own helps students understand the dynamics of language, our fundamental intellectual tool, and enables students to understand another culture. The sooner a student acquires this competence, the sooner it will be useful. Hence, work toward the foreign language requirement should be undertaken in the first two years. Students postponing the language requirement for junior and senior years risk not graduating on time. Courses in foreign languages and/or literature are taught in the College of Arts and Sciences by the following departments: Africana Studies and Research Center, Asian Studies, Classics, Comparative Literature, German Studies, Linguistics, Near Eastern Studies, and Romance Studies. For a list of languages and placement see Language Study at Cornell.

The language requirement may be satisfied in one of the following ways:

Option 1 (FLOPI): Passing (a) a non-introductory foreign language course of 3 or more credits at Cornell at the 2000-level or above or (b) any other non-introductory course at the 2000-level or above conducted in a foreign language at Cornell. OR

Option 2: Passing at least 11 credits of study in a single foreign language (taken in the appropriate sequence) at Cornell.

Any exceptions to these rules will be noted elsewhere in individual department descriptions.

Students whose speaking, reading, and writing competence in a language other than English is at the same level we would expect our entering first-year students to have in English (as shown by completing high school in that language or by special examination during their first year here at Cornell) are exempt from the college's language requirement.

Major Requirement

Most departments and programs specify certain prerequisites for admission to the major; they are found on the pages for each department and program available at Degree Programs.

Students may apply for acceptance into the major as soon as they have completed the prerequisites and are confident of their choice. This may be as early as the second semester of their first year, and must be no later than the end of the second semester of sophomore year. A student without a major at the beginning of the junior year is not making satisfactory progress toward the degree and risks not being allowed to

continue in the college. Undeclared first-term juniors must file a Late Declaration of Major form with Student Services and may be placed on a leave of absence during their junior year if they have not yet declared a major.

Double Majors

Completion of one major is required for graduation. Some students choose to complete more than one major. No special permission or procedure is required; students simply become accepted into multiple majors and are assigned to an advisor in each department. All completed majors are posted on the official transcript. Students are not allowed to continue their studies past their eighth semester to complete additional majors.

Early and Delayed Graduation

Graduating Early

A student may elect to graduate early if they are able to complete all graduation requirements in fewer than eight semesters.

Students must still satisfy the college's residency requirement as part of the graduation requirements. This residency requirement requires that students who are first-year matriculants into Cornell spend a minimum of six semesters in residence, external transfers must spend a minimum of four. To request an early graduation, students must notify the A&S Registrar's Office in KG 17 Klarman Hall or at as-studentservices@cornell.edu (as-studentservices@cornell.edu?subject=Early%20Graduation%20Request).

The earliest a student can request to graduate early and officially change their graduation date is immediately following the pre-enrollment period for their anticipated final semester. The student should have pre-enrolled in the classes required to meet the graduation requirements by the requested graduation date. The student must then complete Part I in DUST and have Part II completed by their major advisor.

Graduating Late: Ninth Term Enrollment

The Bachelor of Arts degree is expected to be completed in eight terms. If degree requirements cannot be completed in eight terms, students may seek permission to continue their studies. Requests will only be granted for students who have found themselves in emergent circumstances beyond their control which have prevented them from completing the degree in eight terms. Requests cannot be made until a student's final expected graduation term and will not be reviewed and approved until after the university drop deadline for that semester. Study beyond the eighth term is not automatically granted for the purposes of changing a major. Such requests must be discussed with a college academic advisor and require registrar approval. Requests to add an additional major or minor will not be approved for study beyond the eighth term.

If approved, students in the ninth and tenth term will be on a conditional status and will have restrictions placed on their enrollment to ensure successful completion of their degree. To request a ninth term, students must have their faculty advisor update Part II for any remaining major requirements. They will also need to submit a study plan to their college advisor listing the specific courses that will meet degree requirements for one major.

Student may elect to prorate credits if enrolling in 9 or fewer credits or take a full-time load if they desire. However, enrollment will be limited to 18 credits for the term so students can focus on their remaining required courses. In the rare case where a student may need to enroll in a tenth term to complete their degree, they will be required to prorate tuition and their enrollment will be limited to only the courses/credits needed for

successful completion of one major. Additional enrollments will not be allowed.

Graduation Procedures

Application to Graduate

In the first semester of their senior year, students are prompted by Arts & Sciences Student Services to complete an online application to graduate. The application is intended to help seniors identify problems early enough in the final year to make any necessary changes in course selection to satisfy those requirements. Nonetheless, ensuring graduation requirements are fully met is the student's responsibility and any problems that are discovered, even late in the final semester, must be resolved by the student before the degree can be granted. Students are responsible for checking their DUST (https://data.arts.cornell.edu/as-stus/degree_reqts.cfm) reports and transcripts each term and alerting Student Services of any problems with their academic record. To check on their progress in the major, students should consult with their major advisors.

Degree Dates

Cornell has three official degree conferral dates in the year: December, May, and August. Students who plan to graduate in August may attend commencement ceremonies in the preceding or subsequent May. Students graduating in December are invited to a special recognition ceremony in December and may also attend Commencement the following May. All academic work must be complete by the official conferral date in order to receive a degree on that date. Incomplete academic work will result in a later conferral date.

Honors

Notice: beginning with the December 2026 conferral date, Cornell University will institute a standardized Latin Honors system based solely on final cumulative undergraduate GPA. The Latin Honors categories include: Summa Cum Laude (top 5%), Magna Cum Laude (next 10%), and Cum Laude (next 15%).

The student's cumulative undergraduate GPA percentile at the time of degree conferral will be computed with respect to the student's particular college. Existing college-specific Latin Honors systems not based upon the new standardized criteria will be discontinued at the end of Summer 2026. This will apply to all major honors in Arts & Sciences as they will no longer use Latin Honors and will award "Honors in X" (e.g. Honors in Chemistry, Honors in English, etc.) Please see Graduation and Academic Honors for more information.

Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Almost all departments offer honors programs for students who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishment in the major and succeeded in research. The conferring of honors, and the requirements for conferral (cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude) are set by the departments for each major, the Independent Major Program, or the College Scholar Program. Minors do not offer honors programs. Students should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies (<https://as.cornell.edu/about/directors-undergraduate-study/>) with questions about honors in the respective program.

Bachelor of Arts with Distinction

The degree of Bachelor of Arts with distinction in all subjects will be conferred on students who have completed the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, if they have met the following requirements by the end of their final semester.

1. completed at least 60 credits while registered in regular sessions at Cornell;
2. achieved a GPA in the upper 30 percent of their class at the end of the seventh semester, or next-to-last semester for transfers and accelerants;
3. received a grade below C– in no more than one course;
4. received no failing grade (excluding PE);
5. have no frozen Incompletes on their records; and
6. maintained good academic standing, including completing a full schedule of at least 12 academic credits, in each of their last four semesters. (Students who have been approved to have prorated tuition for their final semester are considered to be in good academic standing).