

College of Arts and Letters

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Mission Statement

The College of Arts and Letters serves multiple vital needs of JMU students. First, it offers high-quality programs of specialized study in the social sciences, humanities, communication and the arts, and in several pre-professional and interdisciplinary areas. Second, the college provides a challenging array of courses designed to promote lifelong learning by sharpening analytical abilities; improving computational and communications skills; cultivating a facility with written expression; enhancing cultural awareness, intensifying moral and aesthetic sensitivity and fostering awareness of the contingent nature of knowledge. Linking these two missions is a college-wide commitment to free but rigorous and controlled inquiry into human nature.

Goals

In addition to the special goals of each major, all programs in the college are committed to helping the student achieve the following common objectives.

- Improve foundational skills fostered by general education courses: writing, critical thinking, information access through technology and, where appropriate, foreign languages.
- Develop the ability to use writing to acquire knowledge and to communicate ideas effectively through writing-intensive courses required in the major.
- Enrich cultural perspectives essential to effective citizenship in the 21st century; global awareness and appreciation of American cultural diversity.
- Provide significant active-learning experiences through field courses, research projects, internships, studies abroad and simulations.

Majors and Minors

Students may select from a broad spectrum of major and minor programs in the eight departments, two schools and an institute. The departments, schools and institute fully describe their programs in the Academic Units section beginning on Page 133.

Interdisciplinary Activities

In addition to departmental majors and minors, the college offers a wide array of interdepartmental majors, minors, pre-professional programs, general education courses, annual events and supporting services, some of which reach out to the regional community. Information on interdisciplinary programs offered by the College of Arts and Letters may be found in the "Interdisciplinary Programs" section, beginning on Page 95.

Pre-professional Programs

Pre-law

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Students who plan to apply to law school may select their major from a wide range of fields, depending upon their interests. The scope of the law is broad and offers room for individuals of varied educational and intellectual backgrounds. Students should choose courses that provide them with broad informational and cultural preparation and develop their reasoning abilities.

Especially valuable to a pre-law program are courses in

- Communication, including composition, language and speech, which enable students to express themselves well
- The humanities and social sciences, which help students to appreciate and perform effectively in their culture and society
- Logic, mathematics and the natural sciences, which develop skills of fact discrimination, analysis and synthesis
- Accounting

Also important to the pre-law program is the Pre-law Society and Phi Alpha Delta, student organizations which organize law related activities.

For more information about the pre-law program, please contact the coordinator.

Pre-theology

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The pre-theology program prepares students to enter professional schools of religion (divinity schools, seminaries, theological schools). These professional schools prepare the student for a variety of careers, such as ministry, religious education and religious work with youth and others. The program at JMU will provide excellent preparation not only for acceptance at these schools but also for enriched professional training. A student in this program may major in any field he or she chooses, although the American Association for Theological Schools recommends substantial pre-professional training in philosophy and religion. This professional accrediting agency also recommends a broad background in English language and literature; history (American and European); both the physical and the life sciences; the social sciences (particularly psychology, anthropology and sociology); biblical and modern languages and, of course, religion, including the Bible, history of religious traditions and theology.

Resource and Service Centers

Archaeology Collection

The archaeology collection contains prehistoric and historic material excavated at numerous Virginia archaeological sites as well as an extensive library collection of site reports, artifact identification guides and maps. Artifact study collections spanning the 12,000 year occupation of Virginia's Ridge and Valley Province are also being developed for teaching and research purposes. For further information, contact Dr. Clarence Geier, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, (540) 568-6171.

Center for Public Broadcasting/ WMRA-WMRL-WMRY

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The Center for Public Broadcasting's mission is to foster informed, engaged and culturally-enriched communities. It serves over 50,000 listeners in the Shenandoah Valley, Charlottesville and Farmville areas.

The Center comprises four non-commercial public radio stations, serving Harrisonburg at 90.7 FM, Charlottesville at 103.5 FM, Lexington at 89.9 FM and Winchester at 94.5 FM. All stations carry the same programming and are licensed to the James Madison University Board of Visitors. Much of WMRA's programming is rebroadcast by WMLU 91.3 FM, the station owned by Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. WMRA is a member of National Public Radio, and is affiliated with Public Radio International and American Public Media. The stations broadcast 24 hours per day year-round, offering extensive in-depth news coverage and classical, folk and blues music. WMRA also operates Valley Voice Radio Reading Service for the print-impaired. Listeners and local businesses contribute two-thirds of the Center's annual budget.

Annual Events

History Day

Each spring JMU hosts the regional competition for National History Day. The contest is open to students in grades six through 12, with categories including media presentations, performances and historical papers. Judging and comments are provided by professional historians. Winners at the state level participate in the National History Day Competition at the University of Maryland in June. For further information contact Dr. Steven Guerrier in the Department of History at (540) 568-6523.

Visiting Scholars Program

The Visiting Scholars Committee organizes campus visits during the year by 12-15 people who have made significant contributions in their fields. The scholars, who represent a wide variety of disciplines, expose students and faculty members to different perspectives and encourage intellectual exploration. During a visit, a scholar meets with at least one group of students in a class or informal setting and gives a public presentation and discussion of his or her work. For further information, contact Dr. David K. Jeffrey, (540) 568-6472.