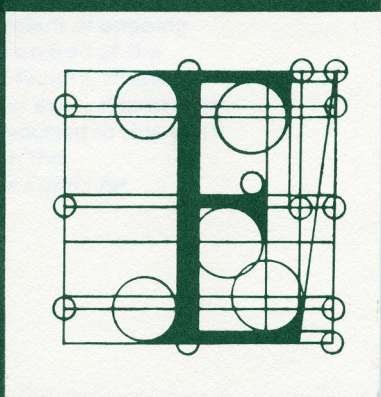
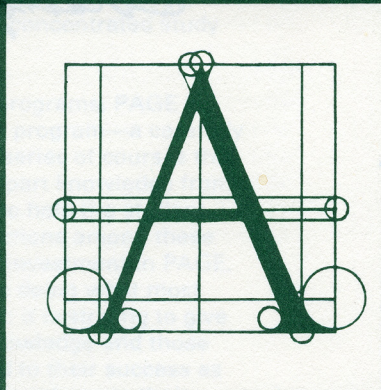
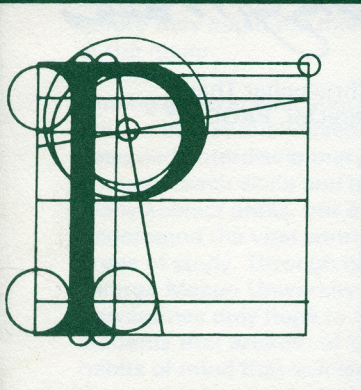


PAGE

Plan for Alternative
General Education

George Mason University

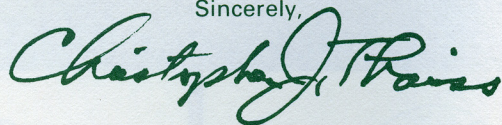


To Prospective George Mason Students:

Background: PAGE and General Education

This booklet introduces you to *PAGE: the George Mason University Plan for Alternative General Education*. If you have further questions, or if you are interested in applying to the PAGE program, please contact our office at 323-2044 or visit us in 222 Thompson Hall. Our faculty and staff will be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,



Christopher Thaiss
Director, PAGE

All freshmen at George Mason, as at nearly all other American universities, are required to select courses from a number of different academic areas in order to develop important skills and to sample a variety of ways of thinking and learning. These are part of graduation requirements. Generally, from one third to one half of all the courses a student takes in college are those that make up the general education requirement. Most students fulfill this requirement in the first two years of college, before they begin the more concentrated study of the major.

Among general education programs, PAGE is unique in that it is indeed a program—a carefully designed, interdisciplinary series of courses that not only teach skills and impart knowledge from many subject areas, but also help the student understand the vital connections among these areas of study. Through its investment in PAGE, George Mason University is doing what most universities only hope to do: it is striving to give students that breadth of knowledge and those habits of mind that will lead to their success as critical thinkers and problem solvers in their chosen fields. PAGE is the result of ongoing collaboration by some one hundred of the University's most respected faculty, these teachers representing almost every department. These faculty have been supported in this work by two generous grants from the *Commonwealth of Virginia's Funds for Excellence*.

The PAGE Alternative

A four-year college program is traditionally made up of two years of general education, followed by two years of more concentrated and specialized study in one academic field. The purpose of general education is to help students learn some important skills and to provide them with a sampling of the ways knowledge is developed and problems are solved in different academic areas—in the sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities. Because of what is called the “knowledge explosion,” it is no longer possible to study all academic areas, so students are expected to pick and choose samples from required areas such as math, physical sciences, humanities, and social sciences. Universities call this “cafeteria style” education: the departments present their offerings in general education, and the student selects a set number of courses in each academic area.

To solve the problem of the “knowledge explosion” the faculty members who designed PAGE have taken a different approach. Instead of the cafeteria method, they chose the idea of integration. For example, instead of having students select one course from several different science offerings, PAGE faculty members from Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, and Physics worked together to design a course that would emphasize ideas common to all the sciences and would help students learn how scientists look at the world and how they go about solving problems. The science course in PAGE, instead of being a sample, is an integration or a synthesis of the sciences. The arts, the humanities, and the social sciences have also been integrated in the PAGE courses. PAGE has aimed at overall integration by having all courses complement and build on one another. In addition, special series of lectures have been designed to help bring together the material taught each semester in the separate PAGE courses.

PAGE and Interdisciplinary Study

Another result of the "knowledge explosion" has been that academic areas, called "disciplines," have become more and more separate. Recently, there has been a movement in the other direction, toward bringing the disciplines together. This is the principal idea behind PAGE. Each course in the program has been developed by a team of faculty from a wide variety of academic disciplines. For example, the PAGE course called "Conceptions of Self" was developed by faculty members in Philosophy, Psychology, English, History, American Studies, Theater, Anthropology, Education, and Sociology. The faculty team from PAGE's "Computers in Contemporary Society" consisted of professors from Computer Science, Mathematics, Engineering, Physics, Decision Sciences, and Nursing. As a result of this interdisciplinary approach, PAGE students study problems and look at the world from a variety of points of view.

PAGE and the Importance of Literacy:

Writing, Speaking,
Problem Solving, and
Computers

Recently, the term "literacy" has been extended beyond reading and writing skills. In the PAGE program students will develop additional "literacies" in analytic thinking and in the computer. Starting in the first semester, students learn to use computers in a variety of ways, and in later courses apply the computer to different kinds of problems. In the broadest sense of the term "literacy," PAGE enables its students to become familiar with ways of thinking, seeing, and learning in the arts, the humanities, the sciences and the social sciences.

Besides the program's emphasis on computer literacy and analytical problem solving, PAGE is attentive in every course to students' development as writers, readers, and speakers. Course assignments and teaching methods emphasize the students' practice and improvement of these abilities.

PAGE and Community

One major goal of the PAGE program is to create a sense of community among the students. This has been likened to the creation of a small college within a large urban university. This sense of community is fostered in many ways including lecture series for PAGE students and faculty, small group projects in course work, and the establishment of a PAGE student association.

Some Questions and Answers about PAGE

Who are the PAGE Faculty?

The PAGE Faculty is made up of some one hundred George Mason scholar-teachers from virtually every academic discipline. They have been selected for their accomplishments as teachers and scholars and for their commitment to undergraduate teaching.

Who is eligible for PAGE?

All new full-time freshmen are eligible to join PAGE.

Is PAGE an Honors Program?

No. PAGE students are not selected by grades or test scores, and all full-time freshmen are eligible to apply for PAGE.

How Does PAGE Fit the Requirements of Different Majors?

Each department has prepared sample schedules for PAGE students. PAGE prepares students for any major.

How Long Does it Take to Complete PAGE?

The PAGE program is designed to be completed in two years of full-time study.

Will PAGE Cover All General Education Requirements?

Yes, except for the foreign language requirement which must be fulfilled by students earning the Bachelor of Arts degree.

What Other Courses Can be Taken Along with PAGE?

Typically, students will enroll in one additional course in the first semester, and one or two in the following three semesters of PAGE.

Can Students With no Declared Major Enter PAGE?

Yes. Since the integrated courses in PAGE allow students a broad view of academic disciplines, the program should assist students in the selection of a major.

Will PAGE Courses be Accepted for Transfer Credit?

The complete PAGE program meets the general education requirements at other universities. As

in all transfer situations, of course, the general education credits from one institution may not precisely match those at another.

Can Students Enter PAGE After the First Semester?

No. The integrated nature of the program means that the courses build on one another and are tightly interwoven.

Can Students Drop Out of PAGE and Enter the Traditional Program?

Yes. PAGE courses, however, do not correspond exactly to the general education courses in the traditional program; therefore, students who do not complete PAGE may have to take additional courses to meet general education requirements.

Can Students Sign Up for Individual PAGE Courses?

No. Since PAGE has been designed as an integrated program, the courses are reserved for students enrolled in the PAGE program.

Does PAGE Accept AP (Advanced Placement) credit?

AP credit is not given for PAGE courses. AP credit, if applicable, can be used for courses required for your chosen major.



Dictionary of PAGE Courses

PAGE 120: Computers in Contemporary Society (4 credits)--Provides computer literacy through hands on programming and information processing as well as appreciation of the computer's roles in modern society.

PAGE 122: Reading the Arts (3 credits)--Explores the relationship of the parts to the whole in works of art, the connections among different art forms, and the links between art and the outside world.

PAGE 123: Reading Cultural Signs (3 credits)--Uses techniques developed in PAGE 122 and new methods introduced from sociology, economics, history, anthropology, and psychology to explore ways in which various media (art, architecture, movies, literature, and music) reflect and shape personal and social values.

PAGE 125,225: Analysis & Solution of Quantitative Problems I, II (3 credits each)--Discusses real world modeling and problem solving techniques and, in conjunction with the computer and tools introduced from the mathematical sciences, applies these to the analysis and solution of a variety of quantitative problems in the natural and social sciences as well as to the business environment.

PAGE 130: Conceptions of Self (3 credits)--Examines, drawing from appropriate works in the social sciences, arts and humanities, different conceptions of the self, characteristics of different cultures and historical eras.

PAGE 131: Contemporary Society in Multiple Perspectives (3 credits)--Explores methods and perspectives in the social sciences and humanities to evaluate the contribution of different disciplines to an understanding of significant social issues and their global ramifications.

PAGE 150,152,250: Symbols, Codes & Information (1 credit each)--Provides a synthesis of the PAGE courses emphasizing the various ways in which people communicate ideas to one another--through language, mathematics, the graphic and musical arts. Lectures by PAGE faculty and guest speakers.

PAGE 151,153,251: Values, Themes & Cultural Problems (1 credit each)--Integrates the material treated in the PAGE courses dealing with the interrelationship of the self and society as seen through the various social sciences, humanities and arts.

PAGE 227,228: Scientific Thought & Processes I,II (4 credits each)--Explores and integrates the principles of classical and modern science through the study of such topics as cosmology, evolution, ecology, mechanics, relativity, and quantum physics.

PAGE 230: Cross-cultural Perspectives (3 credits)--Enables students to broaden cultural horizons and to understand human behavior by studying in depth a society different from our own.

PAGE 252: The Decision Making Process & The Choice of Technologies (3 credits)--Examines decision making in large organizations, its effects on the choice of technologies, and the impact of these choices on values.

PAGE 253: The Contemporary United States (3 credits)--Studies specific aspects of contemporary United States society in their historical, sociological, political, economic, cultural and global perspectives.

PAGE Course Schedule

Semester 1	Cr.	Semester 2	Cr.
PAGE 120	4	PAGE 125	3
PAGE 122	3	PAGE 123	3
PAGE 130	3	PAGE 131	3
PAGE 150	1	PAGE 152	1
PAGE 151	1	PAGE 153	1
Elective	3/4	Electives	3/6
TOTAL	15/16	TOTAL	14/17

Semester 3	Cr.	Semester 4	Cr.
PAGE 225	3		
PAGE 227	4	PAGE 228	4
PAGE 230	3		
PAGE 250	1	PAGE 252	3
PAGE 251	1	PAGE 253	3
Elective	3/4	Electives	6/7
TOTAL	15/16	TOTAL	16/17

Applying to the PAGE Program

If you are interested in being considered for participation in PAGE, mark the appropriate box on the George Mason University application form.

If You Have Other Questions...

If you have other questions, please call the PAGE Office (323-2044) or drop in at the PAGE Lounge (Thompson Hall, Room 222). The Executive Assistant to PAGE will be happy to answer questions, to make appointments for you to talk with PAGE faculty, to introduce you to PAGE students, and to make arrangements for you to visit PAGE courses.

**The State University
in Northern Virginia
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030**

George Mason University

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