

CREDIT HOUR

Credit Hour Policy

Since 1957, most Washington College undergraduate courses have been designed and delivered as four-credit courses:

- 45 hours of in-class instructional time
- 15 or more hours of labs or additional structured learning outside the classroom tied to the course
- Structured learning varies by course, subject, and instructor, and may consist of laboratory work, guided study, final examination or other final assignment, mandatory individual or group work with faculty members, independent research, additional reading and writing, creative projects, peer mentoring, mandatory academic support tied to the course, as well as service-learning opportunities and participation in the many cultural events hosted by the College.
 - Structured learning activities are delineated in course syllabi and major requirements.

During Fall and Spring semesters, students normally enroll in four courses, worth four credit hours each, for a total of 16 credits per semester. This equals 32 credits per academic year and 128 credits over four years. Each four-credit course in Fall and Spring is taught over 15 weeks, with 45 hours of classroom instruction and 15 hours out-of-class structured learning.

Summer courses consist of four weeks, with five three-hour classes a week (Monday through Friday), for a total of 60 hours.

Other configurations that adhere to the credit framework:

- 2-credit courses, requires half the expectations of time, student contact hours, and student and faculty workload as a 4-credit course. Some 2-credit courses meet for 22.5 hours of class time, and 7.5 hours of structured learning over the course of an entire semester, while others meet for either the first half or second half of the semester;
- 8-credit courses;
- 16-credit courses are limited to full-immersion, semester-long courses such as Chesapeake Semester, which count for the whole of a student's semester schedule;
- Internships; and
- Half-semester courses.

The College's small student-to-faculty ratio enables a course design philosophy and faculty workload model that stresses intensive ongoing interaction between faculty and student, not only during formal class instructional hours, but in structured learning, office hours, informal advising, and co-curricular activities beyond the formal framework.