

CONNECTIONARY

A how-to guide
for making Connections
at Connecticut College



An aerial photograph of a college campus during autumn. In the foreground, a large stone church with a tall, pointed steeple stands on a hill. To its left is a wide, paved road. Further left is a large, open green field. In the background, a dense forest of trees with yellow and orange foliage surrounds the campus. Beyond the trees, a city is visible across a body of water, with a bridge spanning the water. The sky is clear and blue.

CONNECTIONS

is Conn College's reinvention of liberal arts education. It's a new kind of curriculum that lets you integrate your interests into a meaningful educational pathway, to carry you through college and into a fulfilling, effective career and life.

WITH CONNECTIONS, YOU WILL:



Orchestrate your education

with the support
of a team of advisers.

PG. 13



Learn for life beyond college.

You'll learn to collaborate,
innovate and solve new
problems for a complex world.

PG. 17



Put the world together in new ways.

With interdisciplinary study,
a relevant internship, a world
language and an interconnected
outlook, you'll synthesize
a compelling education with
powerful results.

PG. 23

CONNECTIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

Say goodbye to arbitrary
checklists of required classes.
Say hello to an educational
experience that's engaging
and invaluable.

Prepare to be challenged.
Get ready to go places.
Anticipate insight. Meet
CONNECTIONS.

On the next page is a little lexicon to get you started. Note that a few of the entries include page numbers, where you'll find a bit more explanation.

CONNECTIONS: LEXICON

All-Campus Symposium

At this major senior-year event, you'll share with the entire Conn College community what you've studied and learned through Connections.

Animating Question - PG. 14

The central, broad query that ties together your journey through the curriculum.

ConnCourses

You'll take one of these interdisciplinary classes during your first three semesters and discover connections between your studies and real-world issues.

First-Year Seminar - PG. 11

So much happens in this specially designed course, which is held in the fall of your first year. You'll learn about Conn and Connections, and discover how engaging and interdisciplinary a class can be. You'll get to know your advising team. And you'll learn how to thrive in college.

Gateway/Thematic Inquiry Courses - PG. 19

These take place in the spring of your sophomore year and will help you plan out your educational journey for the next two years. Gateway courses happen within interdisciplinary centers; thematic inquiry courses are built into pathways.

Integrative Pathways - PG. 18

Much in the way our centers for interdisciplinary scholarship tie together and focus studies, an integrative pathway is a central intellectual theme that will guide your learning once you select it during your sophomore year.

Interdisciplinary Centers

For more than 20 years, Conn's four student-focused centers for interdisciplinary scholarship have offered selected candidates an intensive integrative study experience. The centers were the inspiration for our integrative pathways, each with a different focus: The Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA), the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment, the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology, and the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy.

World Languages and Cultures

Studying other languages and cultures helps us navigate our interconnected world. So your Connections curriculum includes two full semesters of language study, ideally taken no later than your sophomore year. Your advisers will help you incorporate your language into co-curricular experiences, such as internships, study away, research, student teaching and volunteering.

Modes of Inquiry

Think of these as five angles of exploration: creative expression, critical interpretation and analysis, quantitative and formal reasoning, scientific inquiry and analysis, and social and historical inquiry. By incorporating at least four of them into your pathway or center, you will expand and deepen your knowledge.

Team Advising - PG. 21

From the outset of your first year, your team will give you support, guidance, and yes, a sense of connection.

CONNECTIONS



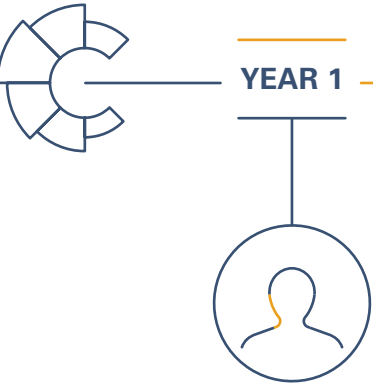
A TIMELINE

First-year seminar - PG. 11
ConnCourses - PG. 6

You'll start out with compelling introductory courses that prepare you to succeed over the next four years. In both your seminar and your ConnCourse, you'll find unexpected connections across the curriculum, and discover how your studies can apply to real-world problems.

A team of advisers - PG. 21

Your team is here for the sole purpose of helping you learn the ropes and get the most out of your Conn College experience.



WHAT YOU'LL GET

Confidence, capability and a sense of ownership of your education.

World languages and cultures

Start learning to navigate our interconnected world with a language course.

WHAT YOU'LL GET

Integration of your interests, focus in your studies and a multitude of perspectives.



YEAR 2

Starting on your path

Working with your team, you will apply to a center or declare a pathway (see **PG. 18**).

Declare your major

By second semester, declare your academic major.

Shaping a question

In your gateway course or thematic inquiry course, you will work with faculty and peers to orchestrate your education and develop a personally meaningful question (see **PG. 14**) to investigate over the next 2 1/2 years.

Global/local engagement

During or after your junior year, you'll hone your intellectual inquiry with expanded work beyond the classroom. You might study abroad, work in a summer internship or undertake an off-campus project. You might conduct research in the community or elsewhere in the world. You're going to get out there and do things.

YEAR 3



WHAT YOU'LL GET

Real-world experience and opportunities to learn in different ways.

WHAT YOU'LL GET

Contemplation of what you've learned in college and the ability to articulate it clearly as you pursue your career or graduate studies.



YEAR 4

Reflection seminar

Here, you'll get ready to present to the campus what you've learned by pursuing your animating question. Look back, synthesize and prepare to share.

Senior-year capstone

This is where you'll pull it all together. You might take an advanced seminar or do an individual study, honors thesis, portfolio or performance.

All-college symposium

Time to put your knowledge out in the world. Anticipate pride, gratification, and yes, fun.

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

This is where it all starts.

There are many seminars to choose from, and they all look fascinating. You might like the one about genetic engineering. Or art crimes. Or stress. Tell us which three topics call your name the loudest, and we'll place you in a class. Now, your journey begins.

Your seminar will be small—at most 16 students. Your instructor will serve as your adviser from now until you declare your major in your sophomore year. Of course, you'll have a whole team of advisers—see **PG. 21** for more on that.

This is a jam-packed class that we predict you're going to love. You'll learn all about Conn College—its mission, core values and commitments. You'll get the nitty-gritty on the Connections curriculum. You'll find out how to conduct top-notch research, how to give a persuasive presentation and how to enhance your writing skills. And you're going to explore your seminar topic from every angle imaginable.





ORCHESTRATE YOUR EDUCATION

Suzuko Knott

Assistant Professor of German

In high school, many students are used to doing what they're told. Take these classes. Take the SAT. Apply to college.

But now you're going to change the paradigm—for the better. Instead of doing things because you're *supposed* to, now you can do things because you *want* to. Study what interests you. Discover what compels you. Try to solve what mystifies you. Once you begin to make this shift, everything will change. Instead of merely pursuing credits, you'll be pursuing answers. And instead of taking disconnected required classes, you can acquire meaningful, cohesive, powerful knowledge.

You'll be able to contemplate: "What are my core interests? What am I really excited by? How can I craft my journey through college in order to explore my interests more deeply?"

Discover your passion. Find your voice. Make your way forward. You're going to love this experience. And you won't do it alone. At your side, every step of the way, are the finest faculty and peers you would ever want on your team.



WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION?



At the core of your Connections curriculum will be what we call your “animating question.” This is the crux of your curiosity. The thing you wonder most. And the idea that will inspire—and yes, animate—your intellectual journey.

But... how am I supposed to come up with a question like that? That's a lot of pressure!

It will all work out. Connections is a very deliberate step-by-step process, and there are many stages that lead to your animating question. You'll have time. Illuminating classes. And a team of advisers who will help you identify a question that captivates you.

Does my question need to fall within my major? Does it replace my major?

No, and no. Connections does not replace majors. On the contrary, Connections in general and your animating question in particular will inform your major and deepen your study of it. You'll gain more perspectives and resources with which to pursue your major, double major and/or minor. Your question can be major-focused, but it doesn't have to be. It's up to you.

What kind of questions do students come up with?

They're all different; a few follow. *What is the effect on children who are diagnosed as HIV positive in Africa? What can the halal restaurant scene in Spain teach us about Muslim immigrant identity? Could a mobile robot imitate the brain's neural network to navigate its way through obstacles?*

Your question will not be set in stone. As you begin to pursue answers and gain insights, your question will likely become more specific and nuanced. It will evolve, just as you will.

How will I find the answer to my question?

Now, *this* is an exciting question. You might look at primary historical sources like newspapers, letters or diaries. You might interview people. You may need to travel. Or translate from another language. You might aggregate and analyze data. We've identified five modes of inquiry (see **PG. 7**), and you're going to be using most or all of them.

Will my question affect the classes I take?

Absolutely. It might also inform your study-away experience, your internship and your special projects. Inevitably, this question will inform and affect how you think about and pursue your major.

Once I figure out my question, what then?

That's when the real adventure begins. You'll be a detective on a trail. An explorer on an expedition. A scholar on a mission.

LEARN FOR LIFE BEYOND COLLEGE

Catherine M. Stock

Barbara Zaccheo Kohn '72

Professor of History

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

You might do better to ask, "What do you want to accomplish?" Or "What work would be most compelling or meaningful to you?" Or "How do you want to make a difference in the world?"

The fact is that the job you'll have in 10 years probably doesn't even exist right now. And you're not going to remain in one job throughout your adult life. Change is the new constant.

So how can you prepare for a career-scape that's in constant flux, or a profession that's yet to be created? Go through Connections. Here, you'll become adaptive and adept. You'll get the skills you need for whichever career path pulls you in. You'll learn to integrate information, work productively with a team and express yourself. You'll gain a global language and greater perspective.

You're going to tap into new interests here, and stretch yourself in unprecedented ways. Internships, summer work, research with professors. Everything you do here will add up. You're going to shine.



PATHWAYS / INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTERS

Connections means cohesion. Our interdisciplinary centers help achieve this, as do their counterpart, our integrative pathways. Whichever route you take, you'll be deliberately pulling together your intellectual pursuits: your classes, your major, your internship, your projects.

There are currently nine intriguing pathways to choose from:

1. Bodies/Embodiment
2. Cities and Schools
3. Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation Value and Change
4. Eye of the Mind: Interrogating the Liberal Arts
5. Global Capitalism
6. Peace and Conflict
7. Power/Knowledge
8. Public Health
9. Social Justice and Sustainability

There are four interdisciplinary centers to choose from:

1. Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology
2. The Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment
3. Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy
4. Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts

Your pathway or interdisciplinary center will enrich your studies by connecting you with a tribe of scholars. You'll work alongside students and faculty who share the same broad interest as you, but who study it from different—sometimes even radically different—perspectives.



GATEWAY/THEMATIC INQUIRY COURSES

These are classes you take during the spring of your sophomore year that will usher you into a particular interdisciplinary center or pathway.

TEAM ADVISING

Being a first-year student in college can feel a little overwhelming. You're living in a new place, among new people, learning new things in new ways. Navigating all this novelty can be a real challenge. We have an excellent solution at Conn College: your own advising team. Why a whole team? You get more support, more perspectives and more guidance. Your team will help you throughout your first year and into your second—when you select your major.



Your faculty adviser

is the instructor of your first-year seminar. This person will get to know you well and help you in countless ways, especially with your academic vision.

Your staff adviser

partners with your first-year seminar instructor. He or she will assist you with orientation and your schedule, and be your eyes and ears not only to Conn, but also to the larger New London community.

Student advisers, too

You'll have at least two of these—maybe three. Because they were first-years themselves not so long ago, they have great insight. They'll escort your class to various events, help you register for classes, and show you the way around the academic landscape. They'll be there for you all year long and beyond. Grab lunch or a coffee; go for a walk with them. They're ready to help.

Also, a career adviser

will help focus your interests into professional possibilities; connect you to career workshops and networking events with our alumni; and prep you for internships, job interviews, grad school applications or whatever else lies ahead.



PUT THE WORLD TOGETHER IN NEW WAYS

David Jaffe

Professor of Theater

Chair of the Theater Department

“Silo thinking” is a thing of the past. The world doesn’t fit into neat little discrete compartments. On the contrary, the world is interwoven, and it needs contributors and changemakers who understand this. Not-for-profits, art institutions, educational institutions, NGOs, corporations—both here and abroad. All of these organizations demand people who can think outside of narrow confines and make connections across disciplines, across groups of people, across borders.

When you go through Connections, you become aware of the multiple links among academic subjects, professions and ways of solving problems. Your eyes are opened.

In traditional curricula, you’re something of a passenger on your educational journey, and you might not take any notice of the guideposts and landmarks along the way. But when you’re the one behind the wheel, you’re going to pay acute attention to everything around you, and use it to your advantage. You’ll recognize what you’re working with, and pull the pieces together.



EXPLORE

GROW

DISCOVER

EXPERIENCE

CONNECT

CONNECT WITH US
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