

Stage 3 of the BELL Core “Key” Experiences: The Junior Cornerstone Seminar (JCS)

After you have completed First-Year Seminar and the Linked Cohort Courses and have entered into your third year of university studies, you will embark on stage 3 of the “key experiences” within the BELL Core Curriculum: The Junior Cornerstone Seminar.

Once you are well-launched in your major, the Junior Cornerstone Seminar will call you back to the broader academic program of your university education, offering another enriched learning experience that will encourage you to connect the parts of your education—and to construct knowledge, understanding, and meaning through your own initiative, and in collaboration with your classmates.

In fact, a unique feature of the JCS is its emphasis on Problem-Based Learning, defined as: “. . . an instructional method whereby students collaborate with each other in activating prior knowledge, constructing new knowledge, and in developing a plan for further study.”

Through engaged learning and collaboration, students will:

- ❖ Apply knowledge by conducting active, “hands-on” investigation.
- ❖ Recognize the ways in which a variety of disciplines and perspectives may come together to arrive at solutions to problems.
- ❖ Gain experience working as part of a team and to develop an appreciation for the importance of collaboration.
- ❖ Sharpen research and writing skills.
- ❖ Develop quantitative and critical reasoning skills and apply them to the problem at hand.
- ❖ Become a more effective communicator through the presentation of results to a broader public.

This course emulates the environment of a workplace; thus, there are both individual and group expectations that you will aspire to meet. The individual expectations will be determined by your professor; the group expectations include:

- ❖ Self-directed learning/knowledge
- ❖ Reasoning
- ❖ Group/interpersonal skills.

By definition, the JCS carries Experiential Learning (EL) credit in one of the following categories:

- ❖ undergraduate research
- ❖ community-based research
- ❖ service learning
- ❖ study abroad