

2024-2025 Year-End Report Curriculum Committee

The Committee this year operated on a distributed leadership model, without a formal chair. Committee members included (by alphabetical last name): Dustin Albert (Associate Professor and Chair of Psychology, Fall 2024 only), Michael Allen (Professor of Political Science, *ex officio* representative from the Provost's Office, Fall 2024 only), Alison Cook-Sather (Professor of Education and Director of the Peace, Conflict and Social Justice Studies), Richard Gebauer (Dean of Student Success, *ex officio* representative from Academic Affairs), Marley Gerhart (BMC '27, *ex officio* representative from Student Curriculum Committee), Tim Harte (Provost, *ex officio*), Selby Hearsh (Associate Professor of Geology), Lisa Kolonay (Academic Administrative Assistant, office of the Provost, *ex officio*), Rudy Le Menthéour (Professor and Chair of French and Francophone Studies and Co-Director of Health Studies, Spring 2025 only), Veronica Montes (Associate Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of Latin American, Iberian, and Latina/o Studies), and Kirsten O'Beirne (Registrar, *ex officio*).

Summary:

This year, Curriculum Committee discussed the following:

Question	Short answer (longer discussions below)
How does a department change their major?	Curriculum has prepared an FAQ and a form.
Is the culminating senior experience an integral part of what it means to have a Bryn Mawr education?	Yes. We think so, and the faculty voted so also, but we have not yet brought a proposal to change the Curricular Rules to reflect this.
Has there been a change in the trajectory of grades after last year's discussion of grade inflation/improvement?	No. The average grade given last year was 3.554, and the median was 3.7.
Can there be a grade cut-off for majoring?	No. However, there might be exceptions. This topic warrants further discussion given the institution's commitment to equity and inclusion.
Can the first year of language instruction be included in a language major?	No. All the language departments would have to endorse this approach for it to be considered.
Can a major only have 8 required courses?	No. However, there might be exceptions.
Can a major have tracks listed on the transcript?	No. However, students can mark their tracks on the Major Plan.
Are the Curricular Rules up to date?	No. They need to be reviewed. We have a sub-committee working on it.

Longer answers for each of these are below:

Is the culminating senior experience an integral part of what it means to have a Bryn Mawr education?

Short answer: Yes. We think so, and the faculty voted so also, but we have not yet brought a proposal to change the Curricular Rules to reflect this.

Background:

- The Curricular Rules lay out the requirements for a major (among other things). The Rules are determined by the faculty.
- October '24: Curriculum Committee realized that **nowhere do the Curricular Rules specify that a major must include a senior experience (thesis, seminar, etc.).**
- November '24 faculty meeting, Curriculum proposed that we add a requirement that every major have a senior experience to the Curricular Rules Section II, Part B.4.b.
 - We held a straw poll asking: **"Should we add a requirement for a senior experience to the Curricular Rules?"** The result was mixed: slightly more hands for YES, but still a significant number of hands for NO.

Curriculum Committee's problem:

- If a department comes to Curriculum right now, and says: "We want to drop our senior experience," Curriculum has no guidance on what to do.
 - On the one hand: **there is no rule saying a major needs one.**
 - On the other hand: **it has been our long-standing practice at Bryn Mawr that every major has one.**
- The faculty needs to decide if every major needs a senior experience.

January 2025 faculty meeting: Curriculum led a deeper discussion on the broader question: **Should every Bryn Mawr student have a culminating senior experience? Is that an integral part of what it means to have a Bryn Mawr education?**

At the end of our presentation, we had a vote (non-binding, just a sense of the faculty): **How much do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Every Bryn Mawr student should have a culminating senior experience."**

There were 75 votes and the result was as follows:

- A. Strongly Agree 39
- B. Agree 25
- C. Neutral 5
- D. Disagree 3
- E. Strongly Disagree 3

Below is the information Curriculum presented for this discussion:

Definitions

- **Senior Experience:** A means of reflecting upon and synthesizing the main perspectives, concepts, methods of inquiry, and/or debates in the field covered by the major.
 - **Senior Capstone:** one type of Senior Experience. Theses, laboratory or archival research, portfolios of work, papers, or other projects.
 - **Senior Seminar:** one type of Senior Experience. Seniors meet together as a group, with faculty, and a syllabus.

History of the Senior Experience at Bryn Mawr

- From 1885 - 1937, Bryn Mawr did not require a senior experience. Seniors had to take final language exams, but that was it.
- In 1934, the faculty voted to require “Final Examinations in the Major Field.” These were put into effect for the class of 1937.
 - The faculty were influenced by our peer institutions in adoption this: “Such an examination has been introduced in many of the leading American colleges, and the [Curriculum] committee in reaching its conclusions was guided by the experience of Harvard and of Radcliffe, of Smith and of Swarthmore Colleges” (1935 Report of the Dean of the College to the Board, page 27)
 - These exams were intended to be a culminating experience:
 - “... the Final Examination at Bryn Mawr will not really be a ‘comprehensive examination,’ as that term is generally used...”
 - Instead the purpose was:
 - “...to give unity and integration to the work of the junior and senior years, at least in the major field...”
 - “...to link together all branches of the major subject...”
 - “...to give the student an opportunity to take a broader or a better grounded view of the major field which she had elected...”
 - (1935 Report of the Dean of the College to the Board, page 27)
 - To implement these, the faculty required departments “to assign extensive reading and to hold conferences with the seniors either individually or in groups in order to make that reading more profitable” → this is when we started having the **Senior Conference** (1935 Report of the Dean of the College to the Board, page 27)
- Over time, some of these “exams” morphed into research projects and papers that we might today call a thesis:

FINAL EXAMINATION: This is in three parts:

1. An examination in General Geology.
2. An examination in some special field in Geology.
3. *One* of the following:
 - a. An additional special examination in Geology
 - b. A general examination in an allied field
 - c. A written report on a piece of individual work

Bryn Mawr Course Calendar, 1963, page 71

- 1969: Faculty voted to shift to Senior Conferences
 - Still required for a student to graduate
 - Some Departments still had Senior Exams in addition to Senior Conferences (Physics, Art History, Econ, most of the languages)
 - Some Departments' "Senior Conference" include thesis-style projects:

399. *Senior Conference* shall consist of:

1. "Topics in Geology," led by members of the Department.
2. A written report on an independent project in the field, laboratory or library.

Bryn Mawr Course Calendar, 1978, page 94

- 1978-1981 - President McPherson asked Curriculum Committee to conduct a review of the curriculum. In their final report, they recommended removing the college-wide requirement for Senior Conferences, noting that it "seems without purpose in many departments."
 - BUT: all departments still chose to require a Senior Conference for their major
 - A few departments introduced a required Senior Thesis in addition to Senior Conference
 - Art History, Econ, Classical Studies, French, German, Greek, Latin, Spanish continued Senior Exams for a long time
- 1990s - 2010s - Growing body of scholarship showing that capstone projects for seniors are effective tools for synthesis, reflection, and application.
 - 2010: American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) carried out a review of pedagogy literature in search of the most "high-impact" practices in higher education
 - Ranked "capstones" as one of the most high-impact practices
 - <https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact>
- 2010: Curricular Renewal Working Group recommended that Senior Capstones be required.

- “The CRWG recommends that the senior capstone be a central and required part of the Bryn Mawr experience for all graduating students.” (Curricular Renewal Working Group final report, June 2010, page 13)
- But, we never voted on this!
- References: Check out Bryn Mawr’s old course catalogs!
<https://archive.org/search?query=creator%3A%22Bryn+Mawr+College%22>

Middle States Accreditation

- The only external source of requirements for our curriculum is the Middle States Commission that issues Bryn Mawr accreditation.
 - We asked the Assessment Office if we need senior experiences for Middlestates: they say **No, Middle States does not require any kind of senior experience.**
 - But, Middlestates does want to see equity across the majors and evidence of synthesis.

Summary Graph: Our Senior Experiences

Almost half of our major’s Senior Experiences are a thesis AND seminar



Table: Senior Experiences at Bryn Mawr

Thesis? Or project of comparable scale?	Seminar? (Meets regularly as a class)
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Major		
Anthropology	Required. Produced as part of Senior Conference.	Required. Senior Conference (ANTH 398 - ANTH 399)
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology	Option 1: Two semesters of laboratory research (either Biology 400 or Chemistry 398/399), resulting in a thesis	Option 2: a capstone-eligible biochemical/molecular-related course at the 300 level OR at the 200 level if it also has a laboratory component + a formal written reflection on their journey through the major
Biology	Option 1: Two semesters of laboratory research (BIOL 400), resulting in a thesis	Option 2: An additional 300-level, Senior Capstone-Eligible course, with final literature review + a formal written reflection on their journey through the major
Chemistry	Required (CHEM 398-399) to graduate with an ACS-degree; optional for a non-ACS degree. The vast majority of their students do this.	Required two 300-level Chemistry courses focused on synthesis and higher-level evaluative work. Chemistry doesn't call these "Capstones," but they fulfill the functions that we think of as capstone work.
Classical & Near-Eastern Archeology	Optional additional thesis, but the Senior Seminar produces two final papers that are comparable in size to a thesis	Required Senior Seminar (ARCH 398 - 399)
Comparative Literature	Required. Produced as part of COML 399	Required Theories and Methods in Comparative Literature (COML 398)
Computer Science	Optional Senior Thesis (CMSC 400)	Required Senior Conference (CMSC 399)
Creative Writing	Required written creative project. Senior Thesis (400)	No.
East Asian Languages & Cultures	Required thesis. Produced as a part of Senior Thesis (EALC 398)	Required. Senior Thesis (EALC 398)
Economics	Required thesis. Produced as part of the thesis seminar	Required. Seminar based on specialization: ECON 390-399
Education	Required portfolio. Produced as part of the capstone seminar(s)	Required. Seminar options vary by specialization, but include at least 1 capstone seminar
Environmental Studies	Required project. Produced as part of the senior seminar	Required. Senior Seminar (ENVS 397)

French & Francophone Studies	Required Senior Thesis or Senior Essay.	Required. Senior Seminar (FREN 398), followed by either Senior Thesis (FREN 400) or another 300-level French course
Geology	Required project. Produced as part of the senior seminar.	Required. Senior Seminar (GEOL 399-400)
German & German Studies	Required thesis (GERM 400). For double majors, they can choose: 1) normal thesis, 2) a combined thesis in a related discipline with a strong German Studies component, 3) a senior essay + an additional 300-level seminar, OR 4) a creative project or portfolio equivalent to a thesis.	No.
Growth & Structure of Cities	Option 1 (most students): thesis growing out of CITY 398 seminar.	Option 1 (most students): CITY 398 seminar. Option 2 (fewer students, mostly double-majors): an additional 300-level course
Greek, Latin & Classical Studies	Required thesis. Produced as part of the senior seminar.	Required. Senior Seminar (CSTS 398 and CSTS 399)
History	Required final project. Produced as part of HIST 398.	Required. Approaches to Historical Praxis (HIST 398)
History of Art	Required thesis. Produced in conjunction with the conference.	Required. Senior Conference (HART 398-399)
International Studies	Required essay produced as part of INST 398. Optional expanded thesis produced as part of INST 399.	Required. Senior Seminar (INST 398) + either Senior Project (INST 399) or an additional 300 level course.
Literatures in English	Required Senior Essay. Produced as part of ENGL 399.	Required. Senior Seminar (ENGL 398) + Senior Essay (ENGL 399)
Math	Optional thesis. Required for Honors.	Required. Senior Conference MATH B398-399.
Neuroscience	Option 1: 2-semester laboratory thesis that produces a final paper.	Option 2: 1-semester capstone seminar (NEUR 399) that produces a final paper
Philosophy	Required thesis. Produced as part of Senior Seminar.	Required. Senior Seminar (PHL 398 and PHIL 399)
Physics	Optional additional thesis required for Honors; a final article is also produced as part of the advanced lab.	Required. Senior Seminar (PHYS 398) + one of the advanced physics labs (PHYS 331 or PHYS 305)

Political Science	Required. Either 2 Senior Field Essays (POLS 399) or 1 Senior Thesis.	None.
Psychology	Option 1: two semesters of Senior Thesis (PSYC 400)	Option 2: Senior Seminar (PSYC 399)
Russian	Required. Senior Essay (RUSS 398)	None.
Sociology	Optional	Required. Senior Conference (SOCL 398)
Spanish	Optional. Required for Honors (SPAN 400)	Required. Senior Seminar (SPAN 398)
Italian	Optional. Required for Honors (ITAL 398 and 399)	Required. At least three 300-level capstone seminars.

NOTE: Independent Majors at Bryn Mawr are required to do a thesis.

Summary Graph: Peer Institution Senior Experiences

Almost half require a thesis-scale project to graduate

Require thesis-scale project to graduate



Left up to departments (many departments require a seminar or thesis)



Thesis only required for honors



*Note: this includes 2 institutions that require a thesis for honors, but also have individual department capstones for some majors. Those institutions were counted as both "Left Up to Departments" and as "Required for Honors." That's why these numbers add up to 25, not 23.

Table: Senior Experience Requirements at Our Peer Institutions

Institution	Senior Experience Requirements
Haverford College	Required thesis
Swarthmore College	Required senior comprehensive experience
Wellesley College	Thesis required for honors; however, some departments also require capstones. For example: Neuroscience requires a capstone seminar.
Barnard College	Required thesis
Smith College	Only for honors
Mount Holyoke College	Only for honors
Vassar College	Left up to departments; however, many departments require seminars or theses. For example: Psychology offers an optional thesis, but does not require one. Art History requires a Senior Project.
Skidmore College	Required Senior Experience Coda
Amherst College	Required capstone
Carlton College	Required capstone project
Bates College	Required thesis or equivalent capstone
Bowdoin College	"Honors project" required for honors; some departments require a capstone seminar. For example: Biology only offers an Honors thesis (no seminar). Geology requires a senior seminar.
Reed College	Required thesis
Scripps College	Required thesis
Union College	Only for honors
Beloit College	Required capstone project
Davidson College	Thesis required honors; some departments require a seminar. For example: Latin American Studies requires a senior seminar that also produces a thesis. Psychology majors must complete either a thesis or a senior seminar.
Dickinson College	Left up to departments; many departments require seminar or a thesis
Middlebury College	Left up to departments; many departments require seminar or a thesis
Oberlin College	Left up to departments; many departments require seminar or a thesis
Grinnell College	Left up to departments; many departments require seminar or a thesis
Hamilton College	Required senior project
Pomona College	Required senior exercise

Has there been a change in the trajectory of grades after last year's discussion of grade inflation/improvement?

Short answer: No. The average grade given last year was 3.554, and the median was 3.7.

Context:

- At the March 22, 2023, faculty meeting, the faculty voted for Curriculum to lead “a broader conversation on Latin Honors and grade inflation.”
- March 2023 - January 2024: Curriculum gathered information.
- February 2024: Curriculum presented material on grade improvement trends: the median grade given has crept up from a 3.3 in 1998 to a 3.7 now.
- The faculty asked Curriculum to present – at the start of every academic year – the average and median grades given from the previous year, as a way of keeping an eye on grading practices.

For this year's update, the Registrar prepared the following numbers:

2023-2024 Grade averages for the College and by Academic Division

Term	Average	Mean	Median	Total number of units and courses
Fall 2023	3.554	3.555	3.7	5335.5 units / 5421 courses
Spring 2024	3.562	3.565	3.7	5097.5 units / 5193 courses
2023-2024 total	3.554	3.555	3.7	10671.0 units / 10842 courses

Division	Average	Mean	Median	Total number of units
Emily Balch Seminars	3.594	3.594	3.7	360.0 units and courses
Humanities	3.599	3.601	3.7	3715.5 units / 3718 courses
Natural Science	3.475	3.483	3.7	3829.0 units / 4002 courses
Social Science	3.570	3.570	3.7	1939.5 units / 1942 courses
Interdisciplinary	3.775	3.775	4.0	589.0 units / 591 courses

In summary: the median grade given last year was a 3.7, and the average was a 3.554.

We put these into context of the previous years' grade trends:

start of AY	Average Grade Given	Median Grade Given
1988	3.18	3.3
1989	3.26	3.3
1990	3.24	3.3
1991	3.25	3.3
1992	3.23	3.3
1993	3.25	3.3
1994	3.26	3.3

1995	3.31	3.3
1996	3.30	3.3
1997	3.31	3.3
1998	3.25	3.3
1999	3.32	3.3
2012	3.41	3.7
2021	3.56	3.7
2022	3.556	3.7
2023	3.554	3.7

In conclusion: the 2023-2024 academic year grades continue to be higher than those of previous decades.

Can there be a grade cut-off for majoring?

Short answer: “No. However, there might be exceptions. This topic warrants further discussion given the institution’s commitment to equity and inclusion.”

With the agreement of the Computer Science (CS) Department, the Undergraduate Dean’s Office suggested a change to the course catalog. Previously, the CS Major description in the Course Catalog included: “...students who earn a grade below 2.7 in B151/H106 or B/H231 are not advised to declare a CS major.”

The CS Department included this phrase because they noticed that students who received below a 2.7 in these foundational CS courses struggled and failed courses at the more advanced level. However, students have found this phrase ultimately too ambiguous, and so, with the agreement of the CS Department, the Undergraduate Dean’s Office suggested to Curriculum Committee that the Course Catalog language be changed to: “All requirements must be completed with merit grades while some requirements must be completed with a minimum grade of 2.7. In particular, **grades of 2.7 or above in B151/H106 and B/H231 are required to declare a CS major.**”

Curriculum Committee has concerns about this requirement, and we discussed these at length. In particular, our concerns are: 1) the Curricular Rules dictate that if a student receives a 2.0 in a course required for a major, then that course can count toward the major; and 2) the Bryn Mawr ethos is to intellectually engage students from a wide range of backgrounds and with wide-ranging goals; as a faculty, we reject gatekeeping.

However, we recognize that the Computer Science Department is facing practical challenges. The skills built in a CS Major are sequential, each building on the previous class; therefore, a student who struggles in the foundational courses will struggle in subsequent courses that build on those foundational skills.

The Academic Affairs office is also in favor of the changed language. They believe it helps them advise students better for the realities of a CS major.

Ultimately, Curriculum Committee voted to approve this change to the course catalog; however, we reiterate that this change should be considered an unusual exception. **For the vast majority of Bryn Mawr courses, a grade of 2.0 in a major-required course should allow that course to count toward the major.**

Can the first year of language instruction be included in a language major?

Short answer: "No. All the language departments would have to endorse this for it to be considered."

The Italian Department proposed to Curriculum Committee that their major be changed to allow students to count the first year of language instruction in the major. Their argument was that students do not usually arrive at Bryn Mawr with previous training in Italian; therefore, all Italian majors start with no Italian proficiency. They contrasted this with other languages: students often arrive at Bryn Mawr with Spanish or French proficiencies, allowing them to start taking higher-level Spanish and French courses immediately. The Italian Department argued that this difference makes it more difficult for students to accomplish an Italian major.

As part of our deliberations on this, we produced the following table showing how our peer institutions approach this:

College	Major	The first ____ semesters of language instruction DO NOT count toward the major
Bi-Co	East Asian Languages	4
Bryn Mawr	French	4
Bryn Mawr	Russian	4
Bryn Mawr	Spanish	4
Haverford	Spanish	4
Bard	Italian	4*
Vassar	Spanish	4
Bowdoin	Hispanic Studies	4
Bowdoin	French	4
Vassar	Chinese	4
Swarthmore	French	3
Swarthmore	Russian	3
Bowdoin	German	3
Colby	French	3
Dartmouth	Italian	3

Colorado	Italian	3
Middlebury	Italian	3
Mount Holyoke	Italian	3
Dartmouth	Italian Studies	3
Bryn Mawr	Classical Languages	2
Bi-Co	German	2
Bryn Mawr	Italian - Letters	2
Bryn Mawr	Italian - Intercultural	2
Swarthmore	Chinese	2
Swarthmore	German	2
Smith	Italian	2
Vassar	French	1
Bowdoin	Italian	1
Haverford	French	0
Swarthmore	Japanese	0
Vassar	Russian	0
Bowdoin	Russian	0
Vassar	Italian	0

**Note: Bard's Italian major only requires 1 semester of Intro-Italian; however, that 1 semester is an intensive that covers one year of Italian in one semester, and is followed by a mandatory summer in Italy that covers an additional year. Even though it is only a 1-semester-long course, it covers 4 semesters of material.*

From our assessment of peer institution practices, we see that some language departments *do* include the early years of language instruction in the major. However, these are the exceptions. Nearly 80% of the language departments at our peer institutions omit at least the first year of language instruction from their major, and nearly a third omit the first full two years.

We do note that Haverford's French Department *does* count the early semesters of language instruction toward the French major. They are the only department in the Bi-Co to do this, and it has caused significant turmoil in the Bi-Co language departments.

Additionally, we note that many majors have prerequisite courses that must be taken, but don't count toward the major. For example, Physics requires 12 courses, but, once invisible prereqs are taken into account, that number rises to 16. Chemistry requires 15, but, with invisible prereqs, it rises to 16. It is not unusual for early skill-building classes to not count toward a major.

Ultimately, Curriculum Committee voted not to approve this change. If such a change were to be implemented, we believe **it would need to be endorsed by all the language departments at Bryn Mawr – in consultation with Haverford language departments – and it would need to represent a fundamental change in how languages are taught here.**

Can a major only have 8 required courses?

Short answer: “No. However, there might be occasional exceptions.”

The Italian Department proposed reducing the number of courses in their majors to 8. They note that the Curricular Rules state that a major must have at least 8 courses. Their rationale is: because the first year of language instruction cannot count toward the major, Italian majors are currently doing more classes than it would appear in their major. They argued that this makes it more difficult to accomplish the major, and they are looking for ways to streamline the major:

Current	Proposed Change
Letters in Italian/ Track A • ITAL 101 • ITAL 102 • five courses (or more) conducted in Italian in the department • three courses in English within the department Total required classes: 10 Total including prereqs: 12	Letters in Italian/ Track A • ITAL 101 • ITAL 102 • three 200-level courses, only 1 of which can be in English • three 300-level courses, only 1 of which can be in English Total required classes: 8 Total including prereqs: 10
Intercultural Italian Studies/Track B • ITAL 101 • ITAL 102 • three 300 level courses conducted in Italian • four related courses in English within our department at the 200 or 300 level. Total required classes: 9 Total including prereqs: 11	Intercultural Italian Studies/Track B • ITAL 101 • ITAL 102 • three 200-level courses. At least 1 must be in Italian. • three 300-level courses. At least 2 must be in Italian. Total required classes: 8 Total including prereqs: 10

In considering this change, Curriculum Committee made the following table of practices at our peer institutions. It is sorted from **highest to lowest total courses required** for the major (including prereq courses):

	College	Major	Courses in the Major	Total including prereqs	Notes
	Bi-Co	East Asian Languages	12	16	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.

	Bard	Italian	11	14	One of the 11 required classes is an intensive (equivalent of a full year of Italian in 1 semester, followed by a summer of intensive Italian in Italy -- this brings the student up to having completed 2 years of Italian in 1 semester + 1 summer). This makes the "11" courses needed for this major comparable to 14 at Bryn Mawr.
	Bryn Mawr	French	10	14	First two years of language training don't count toward the major (non-intensive track).
	Bryn Mawr	Russian	10	14	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Vassar	Spanish	10	14	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Bryn Mawr	Classical Languages	11	13	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
	Bowdoin	German	10	13	1.5 years don't count. second semester of second year does count. total classes after two years of language instruction = 9
	Colby	French	10	13	First three semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.
	Dartmouth	Italian	10	13	First three semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.
	Bryn Mawr	Spanish	9	13	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Bowdoin	Hispanic Studies	9	13	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Bowdoin	French	9	13	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Vassar	Chinese	9	13	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Vassar	French	11	12	First semester of language training does not count; subsequent ones do.
	Bi-Co	German	10	12	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
Now	Bryn Mawr	Italian - Letters	10	12	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
	Smith	Italian	10	12	First two semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.
	Colorado	Italian	9	12	First three semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.
	Middlebury	Italian	9	12	First three semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.
	Haverford	Spanish	8	12	First two years of language training don't count toward the major.
	Vassar	Russian	11.5	11.5	Early language instruction can count toward major
	Haverford	French	11	11	10 courses + the required senior project = 11
Now	Bryn Mawr	Italian - Intercultural	9	11	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.

	Swarthmore	Chinese	9	11	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
	Swarthmore	French	8	11	First 1.5 years of language training don't count toward major.
	Swarthmore	Russian	8	11	First 1.5 years of language training don't count toward major.
	Mount Holyoke	Italian	8	11	First three semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.
	Swarthmore	Japanese	10	10	
	Bowdoin	Russian	10	10	Early language instruction can count toward major
	Vassar	Italian	10	10	Early language instruction can count toward major
	Bowdoin	Italian	9	10	First semester of language training does not count; subsequent ones do.
Proposed	Bryn Mawr	Italian - Letters	8	10	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
Proposed	Bryn Mawr	Italian - Intercultural	8	10	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
	Swarthmore	German	8	10	First one year of language training doesn't count toward major.
	Dartmouth	Italian Studies	7	10	First three semesters of language instruction don't count toward major.

Looking at the practices of our peer institutions, we see that there *are* a few language departments that require only 8 courses (10 total after prereqs), but these are the minority. The majority of these majors require at least 10 courses (12 total after prereqs). Importantly, no Bryn Mawr language major requires fewer than 11 total courses (after prereqs): the median number of courses required for Bryn Mawr languages is 10 (without prereqs) and 13 (with prereqs).

Curriculum Committee notes that the Curricular Rules do say that a major must have at least 8 courses; however, we reiterate that this cut-off was only lowered to allow the Tri-Co Linguistics major to count at Bryn Mawr. The 8 course requirement for Linguistics is a one-time exception – no other major at Bryn Mawr requires such a low number of courses. Indeed, some Bryn Mawr *minors* have more than that – the Physics minor requires 9 courses, in addition to 2 semesters of intro physics and 2 semesters of intro math that are required as prereqs – a total of 13 courses.

Ultimately, Curriculum Committee voted not to approve this requested change, because it would put this department's majors significantly out of step with other Bryn Mawr language majors and most of our peer institutions. If such a change were to be implemented, we believe **it would need to be endorsed by all the language departments at Bryn Mawr – in consultation with Haverford language departments – and it would need to represent a fundamental change in how languages are taught here.**

Can a major have tracks listed on the transcript?

Short answer: "No. However, students can mark their tracks on the Major Plan."

The Italian Department proposed that the Romance Languages and Comparative Literature majors have tracks added to them so a student can note on their transcript which languages they were focused on for those two majors. They suggested that this might make it easier for language departments to track which students in those majors are using their particular department.

Curriculum Committee discussed this with the Registrar, who finds that establishing such a tracking system would present significant technical challenges. However, the Registrar noted that students can right now mark their tracks on their Major plan, and she says she's available to work with departments to show them how this works.

Ultimately, Curriculum Committee voted not to approve this proposal, and we instead direct departments who are interested in this kind of tracking to consult with the Registrar about including it in student Major Plans.

Cross-Campus Conversations

In addition to proposals we considered, Curriculum Committee met with people across campus to further communication. We twice with President Cadge (12/13/2024 and 4/10/2025). In the first meeting, the goal was to acquaint President Cadge with the committee and its functions. In the second meeting, we discussed broad possibilities related to the future of Bryn Mawr's curriculum. For clarity: there is currently no plan to review the curriculum, though such a review might be called for at some point. The 2010 Curricular Renewal Working Group envisioned their 2008-2010 review as focusing on the Bryn Mawr education from 2010 to 2025; this would suggest that a review of the undergraduate curriculum could be appropriate.

Curriculum met twice (10/29/2024 and 4/1/2025) with the Rebalancing Faculty Workload Committee to discuss their ongoing plan for moving the tenured and tenure-track faculty to a 2+2 teaching load. We discussed possible impacts to campus curriculum that such a transition might cause. We were also in frequent email contact with them.

Curriculum met twice (10/7/2024 and 4/28/2025) with CAP to discuss coordination, communication, and priority-setting. We also discussed coordination with Haverford's ECC (Existing Curriculum Committee) and SCPC (Strategic Curriculum and Personnel Committee).