

Blount Student Manual

Blount: A Minor in Liberal Arts

From the Latin, *liberālis* (befitting or worthy of a free person), the liberal arts are those subjects and skills that since classical antiquity have been considered essential for citizens to know in order to take an active part in civic life. In the contemporary university, the liberal arts comprise the disciplines in the Natural Sciences, Arts, Humanities, Mathematics, and Social Sciences. The irony in play with the term: the intension was freedom from the bondage, limitation, and, therefore, circumscribed agency attending ignorance; the extension was literally free men—no slaves or women.

Original Seven Liberal Arts

- Quadrivium – Astronomy, Music, Geometry, Arithmetic
- Trivium – Rhetoric, Grammar, Logic
- These pursuits and the descendant disciplines are often defined by distinguishing them from the applied disciplines (engineering, law, nursing, etc.), a messy and inadequate distinction, particularly since many of the original subjects were conceived in resolutely applied terms. Clearly subject matter alone will not give us the requisite definitional clarity.
- An alternate, or better, supplementary, means of defining the liberal arts: dispositionally. They share a posture—both a belief in and ease with pursuing questions that *prima facie* don't promise utility or application.

Blount's Mission

Our objects of knowledge and our methods are interdisciplinary, but the following activities are the mainstays of our curriculum:

- Interpretation of texts (where text is understood as any production of meaning)
- Interpretation of culture and the natural world
- The relation between these two activities

The Blount Community

The Blount Scholars Program is a diverse and inclusive group of students, faculty, and staff who are welcoming to all people. We accept students from any college or program throughout the University of Alabama. Blount students are able to join any other campus academic or social group. Our community does not tolerate discrimination against any individual or group.

The Blount Curriculum

To earn the Blount Liberal Arts Minor, Students must take eight courses (20 hours: 6 three-hour seminars and 2 one-hour convocations). Some Blount coursework may be applied toward another major or minor.

First-year students take four hours of courses each semester. In the fall semester, they take BUI 101 (3 hours) with BUI 100 (1 hour). In the spring, they take BUI 102 (3 hours) with BUI 100 (1 hour).

Sophomore and Junior students must take three BUI 301 seminars. Each seminar is a 3-credit-hour course, for a total of 9 credit hours. The student may take the seminars during any semester in those two years, and may take more than one per semester. They may take more than 3 seminars if they wish, but should consult their advisor to determine how that fits into their overall graduation plan.

Senior students must take BUI 401 (3 hours) during either the fall or spring semester. You may take a BUI 301 during your senior year if choose.

Blount Courses

Students must officially declare the Blount Minor before registering for classes.

BUI 100 – Convocation is on Monday from 4:00-4:50. A different speaker is featured each week. The class grade is pass or fail and is determined by attendance. All Blount Scholars must take this class for two semesters.

BUI 101- Foundations: Origins and BUI 102 Foundations: Possibilities sections are on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Although each section is taught by a different instructor, all sections follow the same syllabus and have the same assignments. These classes are reading- and writing-intensive. Each section has both a senior and a junior fellow in order to provide individual help with all aspects of the course.

BUI 301- Seminars are offered on various days and at various times. Each section is an independent course. A list of the upcoming seminars will be published on the Blount website the semester preceding the semester in which the courses are offered.

BUI 401 – Worldviews is offered on various days and various times. Although each section is taught by a different instructor, all sections follow the same syllabus and have the same assignments. Each student will need to complete a final project in order to pass the class.

You may view any current or past class syllabus [here](#).

Blount Buildings

The Blount Scholars Program is extremely fortunate to have three buildings. These spaces are a signal benefit of being in the program and constitute a resource that many other students do not enjoy. With that benefit comes responsibility. The first is the responsibility to frequent the spaces whenever possible and use them for collective and individual studying. Beyond that, every member of the community is responsible for helping to maintain this infrastructure. That means the big things, like not damaging walls, carpets, and furniture, but also smaller acts, like being sure to always put your trash in the bin and leaving common areas clean.

The Blount Living-Learning Center is the residential building for all first-year students. There are four classrooms on the first floor where the Foundations classes are held. There is a computer lab on the fourth floor where students can write and submit their Foundations assignments. The lobby is open at all hours for social activity, but the residential floors should remain a quiet space for the residents. Please make sure that you report any problems within the LLC as you may be the only person that knows there is a problem. You may submit work orders [here](#).

Oliver-Barnard Hall is the main office building for the Blount Scholars Program. The administrative offices and some faculty offices are on the second floor. The first floor contains classrooms, a kitchen and a great hall. The great hall in Oliver-Barnard should be thought of as a living room – many people will share it and a low-level of noise and activity should be expected throughout the day. The kitchen is available to anyone, but you must clean up after yourself after you use it. Please report any problems with the building to Heidi right away (heidi.benstead@ua.edu).

Tuomey Hall is the library, study, and work space for Blount Scholars. The lower floor contains the Yarbrough-Danforth Library, classroom space, and a kitchen. The library should be a quiet space twenty-four hours a day, with the exception of occasional times when special events are held there. The kitchen can be used by anyone, but users must clean up after themselves. The second floor contains faculty offices and a computer lab that can be used by any Blount Scholar. The computer lab offers free printing. Please report any problems with the building to Heidi right away (heidi.benstead@ua.edu).

Current Student Groups

As a Blount scholar, you are free to join any group on campus. There are also a variety of student groups within the Blount Scholars Program that require you to be a member of Blount in order to join.

The Blount Student Organization is the student collaborative that works to foster student relationships and build a strong community within the Blount Scholars Program through coordinated events and outreach. This organization works in the best interest of all Blount students by fostering inclusivity, providing support and opportunities, and promoting and maintaining the academic integrity and vibrant social life of the Blount program.

All active students of the University of Alabama that have been admitted into the Blount Scholars Program are members of the Blount Student Organization. To become a voting member of the executive council, a student must nominate him or herself for a particular office. A democratic vote will be taken among all active members of the Blount Scholars Program; the individuals with the greatest number of votes are elected as voting members of the Blount Student Organization Executive Board for the following academic year. Email blountstudentorganization@gmail.com for more information.

The **Resident Assistants** (RAs) are not technically a Blount student group. However, we have historically arranged with Housing for them to be Blount students so that they can answer questions about the program. In the unlikely event that your RA is not a Blount student, please contact your mentor for any Blount-related questions.

Blount Student Ambassadors is a student group within the Blount community that helps to spread the word about the Blount Scholars Program on and off campus, recruit incoming first-year students, and build the future of Blount. Our team of ambassadors engages with high school students across the nation through recruitment events, dorm tours, personalized phone calls, and emails. They work alongside the program's administration to improve Blount in any way they can. An application and interview process to become an ambassador takes place formally at the end of each semester, and students are notified when the process begins via the listserv, Blount's social media pages, and flyers in Blount buildings on campus. Students interested in being ambassadors are welcome to email blountstudentambassadors@gmail.com at any time throughout the year to gain more information.

The Blount Mentors are upper-class Blount student volunteers who help facilitate all aspects of incoming Blount students' transition to the Blount Program and undergraduate life at UA. The mentors work under the supervision of the Director and the Assistant Director of the Blount Program to provide first-year students with information, support, and role modeling to ensure their successful adaptation to the program and the University. Mentors will help organize first-year orientation and be assigned a small group of incoming students with whom they'll meet at regular intervals throughout the year.

The Blount Music Collective is an organization of musicians and musically-minded students within the Blount Scholars Program. Their interests range from classical to jazz to pop to experimental Baroque-Electronic fusion. With various combos and groups meeting weekly in Tuomey Hall, they welcome all students, from novice to advanced, who are interested in music.

The Blount Poetry Collective is a club for anyone who wants to improve, develop, and hone their poetry. They meet biweekly to talk about everything from fundamentals to poets themselves and, most importantly, to write poetry. This club is open to anyone no matter their prior experience with poetry.

The Guerrilla Art Collective is an organization that is seeking to beautify the halls of the Blount LLC. If students are interested in creating art for display in the halls, there are ways for it to potentially be framed/hung up.

Blount Film Collective is a club that Whiting is just itching to create. Somebody please start this one.

The Blount Trivia Team is a cohort of hyperknowledgeable Blount students (redundant) committed to crushing other trivia teams on campus.

If you are interested in joining any collective, club, or group, or starting a new one, please contact the Blount student organization: blountstudentorganization@gmail.com

Blount Communication

Every student receives a Crimson email account when they register. We will only contact you through your crimson email account, and so it is important that you check that every day. Just as you would expect us to respond to your email in a timely fashion, we expect you to respond to our emails in a timely fashion (no longer than 48 hours while school is in session).

While there are various Facebook pages and Twitter accounts associated with the Blount Scholars Program, it is important to remember that all official communication will come through the Blount email listservs. We understand that you receive quite a bit of university email, so we have created subject line codes that will alert you to what kind of information the email contains. They are:

MANDATORY: anything that every student needs to know. You must read it. If you don't, we'll know.

BLOUNT EVENTS: any event that is sponsored by Blount for Blount students

BSO: communications from the Blount Student Organization executive board

FOUNDATIONS: any information pertaining to convocation, BUI 101, or BUI102

EVENT: any lecture, event or performance around campus that you may be interested in

EMPLOYMENT: job opportunities or internships on or off campus

ABROAD/TRAVEL: opportunities for study abroad or other travel

MISC: anything that doesn't fall in the above

WHITING RANTING: what it says

Service for the Blount Community

Unlike other elite academic programs and residential honors colleges, Blount operates as a partnership between students, faculty, and administration. It is the role of students in this partnership that ultimately distinguishes the program from others of its kind. More than the quality of our faculty (considerable) or our physical resources (envious), the character of the program resides in the energy and alacrity with which our students commit themselves to the program's improvement. They provide

input concerning curriculum, they imagine, orchestrate, and execute Blount's robust social life, and they undertake social consciousness initiatives directed both within the community and beyond its boundaries. Service to the program, then, consists in making time to participate in some of the activities and events that Blount sponsors and in contriving ways to improve our study and play together. We do not formalize service or keep track of student's contributions; it is simply an expectation upon which students' admission is predicated.

Complaint Procedures

Different problems fall under different jurisdictions, and contacting the correct person will help you to resolve your difficulties as quickly as possible. Below is a list of problem categories and the people you would contact for help.

Problems with infrastructure in your room or common areas of the LLC: the first step is to fill out a [housing work order](#). If the work order is not completed or not completed to your satisfaction, contact the community director (Alex Sents amsents@ua.edu.) If the problem persists, contact Whiting (fwhiting@ua.edu).

Problems with infrastructure in Oliver-Barnard Hall or Tuomey Hall: You should contact the Blount Administrative Assistant, Heidi Benstead (heidi.benstead@ua.edu).

Problems with registration or class scheduling questions: You should contact the Blount Administrative Assistant, Heidi Benstead (heidi.benstead@ua.edu).

For questions or concerns about any Foundations class: These classes include BUI 100, BUI 101, and BUI 102. You should first contact your Senior or Junior Fellow. If you have an issue that can not be addressed by either of them, you should contact the Foundations coordinator (dakeene@ua.edu).

For questions or concerns about any BUI 301 seminar or BUI 401 Worldviews: You should first contact your professor. If there is an issue that the professor can not address, you should contact either the assistant director (dakeene@ua.edu) or the director (fwhiting@ua.edu) of the program.

For questions about any student group: You should contact the student leader of the group, whose email can be found in the "Current Student Groups" section of the handbook.

For general questions or concerns about the program: You should contact either the assistant director (dakeene@ua.edu) or the director (fwhiting@ua.edu) of the program.

For reporting channels and resources related to discrimination, harassment, hazing, sexual misconduct, alarming/threatening behavior: <https://www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/>

Honor Code/Plagiarism

All UA students must abide by the UA Honor Code. You can read the whole code [here](#). One aspect of the Honor Code is plagiarism, which means trying to pass someone else's work off as your own. The best defense against a charge of plagiarism is to learn proper citation styles. The Blount Scholars Program is a living-learning community for a reason; we want you to discuss academic ideas with each other and help each other to grow as writers and thinkers. It is acceptable and encouraged for you to discuss ideas with each other and read over each other's papers to give advice. It crosses the line when you use someone else's idea as your own or have a friend rewrite portions or all of a paper for you. We will follow the UA

procedures for academic misconduct, which means all cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean's Office.

Managing Time

One of the best ways to relieve the stress of the first semester is good time management. Don't wait until the last minute to do your work, especially your writing assignments. You have a senior and a junior fellow who are there to help you work on all writing assignments. When you write your paper the night before it is due, you deprive yourself of that enormously advantageous resource. When you wait and try to read all of the reading late at night, you will not be able to stay focused and understand it all. Some of the readings are very dense and it is best to read them slowly at different times. The best thing to do is treat your time at school as a job. Work for eight hours every weekday, working ahead if necessary. You will still have plenty of time for fun in the evenings and on the weekends.

Student Well-Being

College can be a stressful time, especially during the first few months. The Blount Community offers several ways to help deal with this stress. The first is academic help. We have a very low student/teacher ratio for our classes so that students are able to get the help that they need. Please contact your Senior or Junior Fellow the moment that you begin to feel overwhelmed with your classwork. They are there to help you work on your writing skills, discuss the readings, or help you prepare for class discussions.

The second is the stress of starting a new phase in your life. You have moved into an unfamiliar environment and are responsible for all aspects of your life. We have assigned you a Blount Mentor to help you navigate through the mundane aspects, such as where to do your laundry, but who is also there to help you navigate other facets of your new social and academic life. Please be sure to ask them questions about all aspects of student life.

Sometimes, even with additional help, parts of your student life may become overwhelming. If you, one of your friends, or any member of the Blount community begins to have issues that are concerning, contact one of the organizations below for help:

Student Care and Well-being (348-2461) can help with any aspect of student care from academic problems to family emergencies. Go [here](#) for more information.

University Police (348-5454) will respond to any emergency. They should be called if a situation occurs after hours.

Suicide Prevention help is available at UA through the counseling center (348-3863). They have additional resources on their [website](#). You may also text BAMA to 741-741 to communicate with a trained volunteer at the CrisisTextLine at any time. If it is an emergency, call the UA police at 348-5454.

The UA Counseling Center (348-3863) is available for many different kinds of help. Look at their [website](#) for all the different services they offer. You can also text BAMA to 741-741 for immediate help.

Collegiate Recovery and Intervention Services (348-2727) can provide counseling services and help for addiction. Their website is [here](#).

The ***Women and Gender Resource Center*** (348-5040) provides free and confidential help for victims of sexual assault as well as other services, which you can read about [here](#). If it is after hours and you need

an advocate, call the UAPD (348-5454) and ask to speak to the WGRC advocate. This can be done confidentially as you are not required to give identifying information to the police in this situation.

Safe-Zone can provide information and resources to any member of the LGBTQA+ community and their allies (safezone@ua.edu).

Controlled Substances

The Blount Scholars Program supports and abides by the University of Alabama Alcohol and Other Drug Policy. You can read the entire policy [here](#). We ask all members of the community to abide by the policy. If you have concerns about members of the community and their use of alcohol or other drugs, you can contact the University Counseling Center (348-3863) or Collegiate Recovery and Intervention Services (348-2727).