

General Education at UC Merced

“A Common Experience for
All Undergraduates”

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Our Distinctive Institutional Context

- A Small Research University with an ethos of discovery, creativity and rigorous questioning
- In Merced, California, at a crossroads--culturally, socioeconomically, environmentally, geographically, historically--for addressing local, regional, and global problems
- With An Undergraduate Student Body Unique in the UC System--predominantly first-generation, under-represented students

leads to

The Hallmarks of Baccalaureate Degrees at UC Merced

- Depth and breadth in academic and intellectual preparation, consistent with the values of a research university
- Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness
- Community engagement and citizenship--local and global
- Interpersonal skills necessary to the outcomes identified above, as well as to lead productive lives after graduation
- Self-awareness and intrapersonal skills

Upper Division <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 10px auto;"/> Lower Division	Culminating Experience A Capstone Course, Senior or Advanced Seminar, Service-Learning Course or Portfolio				E-Portfolio Demonstrates Learning
	Crossroads A Specific Topic From An Interdisciplinary Perspective	Writing in the Disciplines UD Writing or Writing- Intensive Course in Major	Approaches to Knowledge (3A+3B) A: NS+ENG B: SSHA	Intellectual Experience Badges (11) Curricular + Co-curricular	
	Language Exposes Students to Different Ways of Structuring Thought	Written Communication Develops College Level Skills			
	Spark Seminar Introduces Students to Life at the Research University				

Spark Seminars

The Spark Seminars introduce students to life at a research university. They ask students to focus on the nature of inquiry by exploring a particular topic over the course of the semester, engaging with campus and local resources, generating research questions, and presenting original ideas in writing and other forms of communication. Topics will be broad enough to be viewed from multiple perspectives, but focused enough to engage with the issues of the topic in some depth. Topics will be related to an area of research and/or interest to the instructor allowing students to engage with a faculty member who is sharing his or her expertise and passions.

Selections from Fall 2019:

- Archaeology in Popular Culture
- Belief in Conspiracy Theories
- Central Valley Stories
- Energy Future
- Engineering Inspired by Nature
- Exploring Leadership
- Global Grand Challenges
- The Border and Chicana/o Texts
- The Economics of Globalization
- National Parks and Landscapes
- On Meritocracy
- Vaccines, Health and Society
- Weird Math and Human Behavior
- What Do Things Mean?

If you would like to teach a Spark Seminar: <https://ge.ucmerced.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/faculty-resources/teaching-spark-seminar>