FYSA Guidelines for Choosing Courses at Other Institutions

General
When considering what to do in the fall, remember that you may choose to be a full-time or part-time student elsewhere or spend the fall traveling abroad, participating in public service, working, doing research, etc. You are not expected to attend another college.

Location and Timing
If you do decide to take classes elsewhere, the College of Arts and Sciences strongly recommends that you attend a strong four-year liberal arts institution whose academic calendar is organized by semesters rather than quarters. Courses taken at institutions that operate under the quarter system may not prepare you adequately for second semester courses at Cornell. Please be certain that the other institution’s fall term does not overlap with our Orientation period, which begins on January 22, 2016.

Credits
In order for courses to count towards Arts and Sciences distribution requirements, each semester course should be at least 3 credits and quarter-courses should be at least 4 credits. The maximum number of college credits you may transfer is 15. If you choose to attend a school that is on the quarter system, you may transfer up to 10 college credits.

Choosing Courses
In general, take courses that parallel what you would take as a first-semester freshman at Cornell, and remember that Arts and Sciences students often use their first year to explore a number of different subjects and majors. Many Arts and Sciences freshmen are undecided about their major, and many change their mind about their intended major during the first year. This is absolutely fine. You will have until the end of sophomore year to declare a major, so choose courses that genuinely interest you.

If you are looking to major in the social sciences or humanities, you might consider taking introductory courses in: anthropology, area studies, calculus, economics, government/political science, history, history of art, literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology, or statistics.

If you are looking to major in a science you should plan to enroll in a science course. If you are pre-med, you should plan on taking a biology course with a lab during the fall.
Also keep in mind the following:

- **English Composition**
  Almost all freshmen in the College of Arts and Sciences take a first-year writing seminar during their first semester at Cornell. There are high standards for these courses – visit the Writing Program website to learn how courses taken elsewhere might transfer: [http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/fws/credit.htm](http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/fws/credit.htm). A grade of at least B+ is required to transfer credit.

- **Economics**
  Introductory economics at Cornell involves two separate courses, one in micro-economics and one in macro-economics. An introductory course elsewhere that covers both micro and macro will not provide as complete a background for the intermediate level courses here. No transfer of credit is possible for a course of this type.

- **Foreign Language**
  Foreign language courses taken elsewhere are generally granted transfer credit, but subsequent placement in courses here is determined by your performance on placement exams. (Some of these may be taken at any time online; others will be offered during the Orientation period in January.)

- **Mathematics**
  Mathematics courses at the level of calculus or above normally transfer if they are equivalent to Cornell courses. Frequently, a grade higher than a C is required to transfer credit. Pre-calculus courses will not be granted credit.

**Credit Evaluations**

Courses taken elsewhere will be evaluated carefully for their content and degree of challenge. If those courses are deemed comparable to courses at Cornell and provide you with adequate preparation for advanced work here, then Cornell credit may be obtained. Credit evaluations for these courses will be available in the fall (see below). For each course you take, you must submit to the College:
- Course Description from the course catalog (including number of credit hours, length of the course in weeks, meeting times, and length of class period).

- Course Syllabus (including reading list, number of exams, number of writing assignments and their length, number of lectures per week and the topics to be covered).

Credits will not be awarded until the College receives an official transcript after the end of fall semester. The College will make the final determination of the number of credits to be transferred.

Timeline
If you have questions about the appropriateness of any course you plan to take elsewhere, the College can provide you with a preliminary evaluation prior to the start of the fall term if you send in the course description. A final credit evaluation will still need to be made and that requires the information listed above.

It is to your advantage to know exactly how your courses will transfer as early in the semester as possible – the sooner you get in the required information, the sooner you will know the results of our credit evaluation. The entire process normally takes about one month. Do not wait until the last minute! The deadline for submitting all required course information is October 15.

Grades and Good Standing
Although grades earned at another college will not contribute to your grade point average at Cornell, keep in mind that no credit will be allowed for any course in which you receive a final grade below a C. Some departments at Cornell will require a higher grade for courses to count towards a major, typically a C+ or B-.

Please note that the College, before you matriculate, reviews your academic record and will expect that you uphold our expectations of good scholarship and citizenship (no disciplinary infractions).

Still have questions?
Please remember that in the past almost all spring-semester freshmen have been able to transfer credits for coursework done elsewhere, particularly if it was taken at a strong four-year institution. If you have any questions, contact the College of Arts and Sciences at: as_fysa@cornell.edu, making sure that the subject line of your email contains the word “COURSES.”