



**Cornell University**  
**College of Architecture, Art, and Planning**

**Department of City and  
Regional Planning**

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Dear URS Freshmen – the Class of 2016:

Greetings from Ithaca! Congratulations on your acceptance to the Urban and Regional Studies program at Cornell! The faculty and students of the URS program look forward to seeing you in August. The purpose of this letter is to encourage you to begin thinking about your academic work during your freshman year. This provides information regarding your academic program over the next four years, gives a general picture of requirements for your first year, identifies specific courses you will be pre-enrolled in for the Fall 2012 semester when you arrive in August, and makes suggestions regarding your pre-enrolling later this summer in one or two additional courses for the coming semester. Please carefully consider Parts I – V of this letter. If you have questions, please call us at 607-255-4613.

**Part I. Your Academic Program – General**

1. You will be assigned an academic advisor during your freshman year.
2. You must take a minimum number of 12 credit hours during each semester in order to be considered a “full-time” student at the University.
3. To graduate from Cornell you will need to earn a minimum of 120 academic credits. Accordingly, during each of your eight Cornell semesters you should plan on carrying an academic load of approximately 15 credit hours (i.e., 15 credit hours per semester for eight semesters will yield a total of 120 credit hours). It is not important that you carry exactly 15 credit hours in any particular semester, but you will need to maintain a semester average of 15 credit hours over eight semesters in order to graduate in four years.
4. The Faculty in the Department of City and Regional Planning (CRP) have designed the URS curriculum to be broad and flexible, especially during your freshman and sophomore years. We require that you take the following six courses during your first year (and you will take additional courses as well):
  - Two First-Year Writing Seminars (3 credits each, one during each semester);
  - CRP 1100: The American City (3 credits, Fall semester);
  - CRP 1106: URS First-Year Seminar (1 credit, Fall semester);
  - CRP 1101: The Global City (3 credits, Spring semester); and
  - A course in introductory microeconomics. Most students take ECON 1110: Introductory Microeconomics (3 credits, Fall semester).

We also require that you take the following two courses during your second year (and you will take additional courses as well):

- CRP 2000: The Promises and Pitfalls of Contemporary Planning (3 credits, Fall semester); and
- CRP 2010: People, Planning and Politics in the City (3 credits, Spring semester).

In addition, we require you to take CRP 3210 Introduction to Quantitative Methods for the Analysis of Public Policy during your sophomore, junior or senior year.

5. The URS major is designed as a liberal arts major, and the general education/distribution requirements for the URS Program are closely modeled on the general education/distribution requirements established by Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences. This factor counts heavily in our recommendations to you regarding your pre-enrolling later this summer in one or two courses beyond those we have already pre-enrolled you in for the Fall 2012 semester (see below).

## **Part II. Your Fall Semester 2012 Courses**

1. We will pre-enroll you in two required CRP Fall 2012 semester courses: CRP 1100 The American City (3 credit hours) and CRP 1106 First-Year Seminar (1 credit hour).

2. (A) All URS students are required to complete two First-Year Writing Seminars, one of them during this coming semester and one during the Spring 2013 semester. Each First-Year Writing Seminar is a 3 credit hour course. Cornell offers a huge array of these First-Year Writing Seminars in many different departments, and you will have a great deal of latitude in choosing which writing seminars you will take.

(B) Information regarding pre-enrollment in a First Year Writing Seminar is available online at [http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight\\_institute/fws/index.htm](http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/fws/index.htm). The First-Year Writing Seminar ballot period is Ballot Submission July 11th (9:00am) – 20th (4:30pm).

3. By July 2, 2012 we will also pre-enroll you for the Fall 2012 semester in ECON 1110 Microeconomics (3 credit hours). All URS students are required to take a Microeconomics course, and it makes a great deal of sense for you to take this course during your first Cornell semester. If you conclude you should not take ECON 1110 during this coming semester (either because you are uncomfortable taking an Economics class during your first semester or because you think you should take a more advanced Economics course), you will be able to replace it with another course after you arrive here and have a chance to talk with your advisor

4. Your enrollment in CRP 1100, CRP 1106, ECON 1110, and your First-Year Writing Seminar will give you 10 credit hours for the Fall 2012 semester. Again, in order to be a full-time student you must take at least 12 credit hours during this coming semester.

5. Accordingly, we strongly recommend that you consider pre-enrolling in July ON-LINE in ONE or TWO additional courses for the Fall 2012 semester. The information on the New Student website (<http://aap.cornell.edu/student-services/registrar/new-students/>), together with the information in this letter will help you think about options. In enrolling in one or two additional courses, you should choose courses in the College of Arts and Sciences or the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences that will help you satisfy the URS Program's general education/distribution requirements. In particular, I urge that you carefully consider taking a physical or biological sciences course during this coming semester. Advice for finding these courses is at <http://cornellplanning.blogspot.com/2011/08/for-undergrads-how-to-find.html>

6. If you choose not to pre-enroll in July in one or two additional courses for the Fall 2012 semester, you will be able to do so in August after having a chance to talk with your advisor.

## **Part III. Enrolling in One or Two Additional Fall 2012 Semester Courses**

1. At any time following July 2, 2012 you should open your Fall 2012 academic schedule at:

<http://registrar.sas.cornell.edu/Student/enroll.html>. On that schedule you will see the time slots covered by courses in which we will have pre-enrolled you: i.e. CRP 1100 The American City (3 credit hours), CRP 1106 URS First-Year Seminar (1 credit hour), and ECON 1110 Microeconomics (3 credit hours, lectures plus a discussion section). Please note that CRP 1100 is offered on MWF 9:05am- 9:55am; CRP 1106 is offered on Mondays at 1:25pm - 2:15pm; ECON 1110 lectures are offered on TR at 10:10am – 11:00am, with a discussion section at a

different time; and your Fall 2012 academic schedule will show the ECON 1110 section in which you have been pre-enrolled. You will need to plan your additional Fall courses around the times taken up by these courses.

2. *The Courses of Study* catalog for 2011 – 2012 containing brief descriptions of Cornell’s course offerings can be found at: <http://courses/cornell.edu>. The updated 2012- 2013 *Courses of Study* catalog will appear on-line later this summer.

3. The following Cornell Website for Fall 2012 semester courses shows the course offerings for all departments and the class hours covered by each of those courses: <http://registrar.sas.cornell.edu/courses/roster/FA12/>

4. You should consult the “*URS Requirements Booklet*” (dated June 2011). It contains information about the *URS Requirements*, and in particular the Program’s General Education and Distribution Requirements. An updated version will be available later this summer at the top of this page: <http://aap.cornell.edu/crp/programs/urs/degree-reqs.cfm>. You will use the Booklet frequently, so keep it handy while working on your schedule, and bring it with you in August.

5. As mentioned previously, the additional one or two courses that you should enroll in during July for the Fall 2012 semester should meet URS distribution requirements. Those requirements are explained in the “*URS Requirements Booklet*.” Again, you should seriously consider taking a **physical science course or a biological science course** during this coming Fall semester.

6. During July you should follow the on-line instructions noted at: <http://registrar.sas.cornell.edu/Student/enroll.html> in order to pre-enroll in one or two additional courses for the Fall 2012 semester. The computer will tell you whether or not you have successfully pre-enrolled in a particular course. In some cases you may find a particular course has already been filled by pre-enrolling students; in those cases you should try to pre-enroll in another course that helps you meet the URS Program’s General Education/Distribution requirements. You may pre-enroll in these courses no earlier than Wednesday July 11 and no later than Friday July 20.

7. When you submit your First-Year Writing Seminar ballot for the Fall 2012 semester, you should identify potential seminars that do not conflict with the class hours covered by CRP 1100 The American City (3 credit hours), CRP 1106 URS First Year Seminar (1 credit hour), and ECON 1110 Microeconomics (3 credit hours, lectures plus a discussion section), and any additional course(s) in which you have pre-enrolled.

#### **Part IV. Frequently Asked Questions**

Many URS freshmen raise questions regarding the three issues addressed below, so I hope you find these points useful.

**1. Mathematics/Quantitative Methods and /or Statistics in the Freshman year.** URS students vary widely in their interests and backgrounds in math/quantitative reasoning and statistics. We strongly recommend that you take at least one math/quantitative reasoning course or a statistics course during the 2012-2013 academic year. If you choose to take a math course or a statistics course during the Fall 2012 semester, you should identify that course and pre-enroll in it as discussed in Part III above. If you prefer to wait, you can discuss math and statistics requirements with your advisor when you arrive on campus.

#### **2. Foreign Language in the Freshman year.**

(A) You will be informed about whether or not you have satisfied the URS Program’s Foreign Language requirement when you arrive on campus.

(B) If you have completed three years of the same foreign language in high school, you have probably satisfied the URS foreign language requirement.

(C) If you have NOT completed three years of the same foreign language in high school, you will need to complete two to three courses at Cornell to meet that requirement, and you should begin doing so during the coming Fall 2012 semester.

(i) If you wish to complete your Foreign Language requirement in a language that you began studying in high school, you will need to take the University Placement Test to determine which course to take.

(ii) If you wish to complete your Foreign Language requirement in a language you did not study in high school, you should during July enroll in the beginning level course in that language as discussed above in Part III.

(D) If you have already satisfied the URS Program's foreign language requirement and want to continue your studies in the language you have studied, you will need to take a placement test when you arrive in August in order to enroll in the proper course.

(E) If you have already satisfied the URS Program's foreign language requirement and wish to begin studying a new language, you may register in July for the beginning level course in that language as discussed above in Part III.

**3. Advanced Placement Credit.** If official test scores have been sent to Cornell, the advanced placement credit will be posted to your record in Student Center ([www.studentcenter.cornell.edu](http://www.studentcenter.cornell.edu)). Students can also bring test scores to the AAP Registrar's Office during orientation for processing. Please note that students may generally NOT apply advanced placement to General Education requirements: in (i) science; (ii) mathematics/quantitative reasoning; (iii) cultural analysis; (iv) historical analysis; (v) knowledge, cognition, and moral reasoning; (vi) literature and the arts; (vii) social and behavioral analysis; (viii) microeconomics; and (ix) statistics. Advanced placement credits will generally count only as elective credit toward the 120 credits needed to graduate from Cornell. However, advanced placement credit can be applied toward a maximum of one First-Year Writing Seminar. Students earning a score of 5 on **one** English literature and English language exam will receive 3 credits that will be applied toward one First-Year Writing Seminar. Students earning a score of 5 on **both** English literature and English language exams will receive 3 credits toward one First-Year Writing Seminar and 3 credits toward the in/out-of-college elective requirement.

#### **Part V. AAP Orientation**

University and college orientation information is available online at <http://newstudentprograms.cornell.edu/orientation/>.

I know this is a long letter that will take time to digest. Again, if you have questions, please contact the URS office by phone (607-255-4613). In addition, you can email Lorie Walker at [lbw9@cornell.edu](mailto:lbw9@cornell.edu). The students and faculty of the Urban and Regional Studies program look forward to seeing you, and we hope you are as eager to join the program and meet your classmates.

Sincerely,

Ann Forsyth, Professor  
Director, Undergraduate Program in Urban & Regional Studies