Northern Illinois University

College of Visual & Performing Arts

NIU Orientation: Academic Connections

[Link to NIU Orientation webpage] go.niu.edu/cvpaorientation
Whether you are a major in the **School of Art and Design**, **School of Music**, or **School of Theatre and Dance**, you have many opportunities to create and collaborate and to learn from your fellow musicians, artists, actors, dancers, and future teachers!
CVPA Office

- Dean Paul Kassel
- Office Administrator Debbie Thompson
- Acting Associate Dean Janet Hathaway

Call us at **815-753-1635**
Email us at [cvpa@niu.edu](mailto:cvpa@niu.edu)

Contact the college office for questions about overloads, course withdrawals, etc. See your advisor first: she or he will refer you to us if needed.

We are here to help!
Advising

- Advising occurs in the School of your major (art/design, music, theatre/dance).

- See your advisor at least once a semester! Advising is required for all first-year students before enrolling in classes.

- Check your own degree progress in MyNIU online.

- Remember that you are responsible for your degree progress and that your advisor and others are here to help!

- Your advisor will help you make sure you know which major classes to take as well as any gen eds, Human Diversity course, and other requirements for your degree completion.

- Your advisor is also someone to go to with questions about how to get around NIU – for example, where to get tutoring.
Your advisor is here to help you!

School of Art and Design
• Bethany Geiseman
• Stephanie Sailer
  815-753-1473

School of Music
• James R. Brown
  815-753-1551

School of Theatre and Dance
• Sahin Sahinoglu
  815-753-1334

• Art & Design, Music, Theatre & Dance majors see their advisor every semester to check their progress in their program, get permit numbers for their major classes, etc.

• First-year students must see their advisor before they can enroll in any classes.

• Advisors will let you know when to start making appointments each semester, and you can always contact them for questions anytime!
"It is the responsibility of students to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the program they are pursuing. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because students plead ignorance of, or contend that they were not informed of, the regulations or procedures. Questions on regulations, and their interpretation should be addressed to the advising office of the college in which the student’s major department is located...."

- The catalog is the authority on all policies, degree requirements, etc. If there are any questions, always refer to the catalog and ask your advisor!

- You will use the catalog year for the term you entered at NIU. You have the opportunity to change your catalog year, if necessary. Talk to your advisor about this – he or she will tell you if it helps you to change catalog year.
Some definitions

MyNIU = Online system for checking degree progress, registering for or dropping class, seeing your to do list, grades, financial, etc.

Degree Path = Simpler way of visualizing the courses for your major and university requirements. Remember that the catalog remains the authority! Ask your advisor about degree paths.

Transcript = an official academic record; shows classes, grades, GPA, etc. You can see your unofficial transcript in MyNIU.

FERPA = Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Confidentiality at NIU

• If you want to allow your advisor or anyone else permission to speak to someone about your degree progress, you can let us know that by signing a form and naming the person(s). Otherwise, we keep your information confidential.

• Shared Access – for MyNIU only: academic and/or financial information
More definitions

**Degree progress report** = **Academic requirements report** = in MyNIU, this is the document that shows your degree requirements, both those you have fulfilled and what you still need to do. Go over this report regularly and with your advisor when selecting classes.

**Credit hour** = **semester hour** = approximately the number of hours you spend in an actual class. Most academic courses are 3 credits and meet for 3 hours a week. **This is different from “non-classroom,” practice-based CVPA classes such as dance, ensemble, lessons, etc.**! For example, ensembles are 1 credit, but rehearse a few hours a week.
More Definitions…

**Gen ed** = general education classes. Large group of classes you get to choose from, part of your “big picture” education. Includes required Foundational Study classes and Knowledge Domain classes.

**Foundational Study** = core classes everyone takes (the three areas are Math, English, Communications)

**Knowledge Domain** = gen ed classes are grouped in knowledge domains, and you choose classes from each domain

**Human Diversity course** = course or experience that focuses on human diversity – you have choices to select from

**Writing-Infused course** = everyone takes two upper level (300/400 level) classes that have an emphasis on writing.

- The catalog lists all of these courses by category (for example, Writing-Infused).
- Remember that some courses might fulfill both a gen ed/univ requirement and a requirement for your major, which can help you in your progress. Ask your advisor about this!
There is a difference between dropping a class (first 2 weeks of the semester) and withdrawing from a class!

**Add/drop** = The process of making certain changes (adding, dropping, or changing a course) in a student’s schedule of courses at the beginning of a semester.

**Drop** = A procedure which allows a student to delete a course from the schedule through the second week of the semester. This course does not appear on the student’s permanent academic record. You need permission to drop in week 2.

**Withdraw** = Formal action by which a student officially discontinues participation in a course. A record of enrollment remains on the student’s permanent academic record as a “W.” A W does not affect your grade or GPA. After the 10th week of the semester, withdrawal requests need justification to be considered for college approval.

*There may be an impact on your financial aid or scholarship(s) in adding/dropping/withdrawing.*

*Please stay in touch with your advisor and the college office and consult with the [Financial Aid and Scholarship Office](#).*
Gen Eds

Foundational Studies
- Rhetoric and Composition (Writing)
  - ENGL 103
  - ENGL 203
- Oral Communication
  - COMS 100
- Quantitative Literacy
  - MATH 101

Knowledge Domains
- Creativity and Critical Analysis
- Nature and Technology
- Society and Culture

Must take 6 semester hours ("credit hours") in each domain, plus 3 semester hours in a domain you choose. This is usually two classes per domain plus one more, so 7 classes total.

Ask your advisor if any classes will fulfill both a gen ed and a requirement for your major!

CVPA doesn’t require testing. Ask your advisor about testing, AP credits, dual credit, etc.
Resources for students – where to start

- Center for Student Assistance – various offices and resources in one place. Good place to start when you aren’t sure where to go!
- ACCESS tutoring
- PAL tutoring – Peer Assisted Learning (for example, music theory peer tutors)
- DRC – Disability Resource Center
- Writing Center
- Counseling and Consultation Services
- GPA calculator
Get involved!

- Events calendar [online](#)
- Minor in Art, Music or Theatre!
- Join a musical ensemble, take an art class, sign up for Acting for Non-Majors!
- Take a gen ed in art, music, or theatre!
- [Cultural Centers](#) and more!
- [OSEEL](#) and Research Rookies
- Service opportunities ([Huskie Food Pantry](#))
Questions?

*Best wishes for your first semester!*

Contact us anytime! 815-753-1635 cvpa@niu.edu