THE FOUNDATION YEAR PROGRAM

University of King's College
Halifax, Nova Scotia



A different way to do your first year

"The Foundation Year Program has really changed my life! I feel as if I have learned something new from all of the readings that I can connect to my everyday life. FYP has been so much fun, and I know that this experience will give me a step up in my future studies!"

"The entire structure of FYP (between lecture, tutorial, and essays and the fact that it is orchestrated by the incredibly passionate and invested tutors/faculty) has, in my experience, allowed me to demonstrate to myself how capable I am of exploring and thinking about these topics."

FYP Students, 2025–26

FYP AND YOUR DEGREE



The Foundation Year Program counts as the equivalent of 80% of a full course load (or 60% for FYP Science students). Alongside the Foundation Year, you will be able to take elective courses, chosen from the wide and varied offerings available at King's and neighbouring Dalhousie University.

Because FYP is interdisciplinary (that is, it combines many academic disciplines and draws on knowledge from several fields), taking FYP plus your electives means that you will have a wide range of opportunities open to you after first year.

And because FYP focuses on writing and argument, you will find that you have developed skills and habits of mind that set you up for success in you future years of study, and by encouraging your capacities for deep thinking, FYP fosters independence of thought, so crucial in this age of artificial intelligence.

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UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE • HALIFAX

WHY THE FOUNDATION YEAR PROGRAM

The Foundation Year Program (FYP) is an intellectual journey—an odyssey—from the ancient to the contemporary, through the chronological study of great books and ideas, splendid works of art, and important developments in scientific knowledge.

In FYP we do this work in conversation and community, all the while developing our individual abilities to think deeply and argue persuasively. While the Foundation Year Program draws deeply on the past, its goal is to allow its students to live more thoughtfully and effectively in the present.

What is the Foundation Year Program?
The Foundation Year Program is a unique way of taking the first year of a Bachelor's degree, in Arts, Science, Music, or Journalism. It is not a pre-university year. It provides an alternative to the usual pattern of taking ten separate courses.

What will I study in Foundation Year?
In the Foundation Year, students read widely in many of the great works of western culture, from ancient to contemporary. They are challenged to examine those works in relation to each other, to the development of western thought and culture, to its points of meeting—often deeply destructive and exploitative—with other cultures, and to the contemporary world.

The teaching staff of FYP is drawn from a wide variety of disciplines. During the course of the year, students will be exposed to a broad range of texts and approaches to those texts.

HOW THE FOUNDATION YEAR PROGRAM WORKS

Mornings
Most days you attend morning lectures with the entire class. The lecture is delivered by one of our faculty, expert in the field, who will provide clarity around the day's reading and explain the historical importance of the work.

Afternoons
You spend an hour in small groups of fifteen or fewer (called "tutorials") led by a faculty member (your "tutor") to explore the works you are reading. Your tutors will skillfully facilitate tutorial discussion, and they will help you develop your writing, critical thinking, and oral communication skills.

Reading
There are no textbooks. Students in the Foundation Year read a lot—but they read classic works, not studies about them or commentaries on them.

These books will challenge you: the process of reading and discussing them in a guided community of your peers will help you understand and appreciate their significance.

Assignment types
You'll write papers approximately every two weeks, and a midterm exam each term. You'll also take oral exams in December and April, in which you'll use your developing oral communication skills to answer questions and reconstruct and synthesize an understanding of what you've read.


The Epic of Gilgamesh
TRANSLATED BY N. K. SANDARS
PENGUIN CLA
PLATO | THE REPUBLIC
PENGUIN CLA
CHRISTINE DE PIZAN The Book of the City of Ladies
PENGUIN CL
The Qur'an
OXFOR
THE LAIS OF MARIE DE FRANCE
PENGUIN CLAS
THE BHAGAVAD GITA
PENGUIN CLASS
More, Bacon, Neville Three Early Modern Utopias
OXFORD
MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE | THE ESSAYS
PENGUIN CLASSI
Machiavelli The Prince
OXFORD
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
OXFORD
CUGOANO Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery
PENGUIN CLASSIC
Molière The Misanthrope, Tartuffe and Other Plays
OXFORD
The Pelican SHAKESPEARE
HAMLET
Austen Emma
OXFORD
Césaire The Tragedy of King Christophe
NORTHWESTERN WORLD CLASSICS
HOUSE MADE OF DAWN N. Scott Momaday
R.C. LEWONTIN | BIOLOGY AS IDEOLOGY
On The Genealogy of Morals And Ecce Homo FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
Du Bois THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK DOVER
Lessing NATHAN THE WISE DOVER
DANTE ALIGHIERI
THE DIVINE COMEDY
PRIMO LEVI
THE DROWNED AND THE SAVED
IBN TUFAYL'S HAYY IBN YAQZAN
Translated by Lenn E. Goodman
Hegel Introduction to The Philosophy of History
HACKETT
Kant (ed. Denis) Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals
broadvi
SOPHOCLES ANTIGONE
Eliot (ed. Black et al.) THE WASTE LAND and other poems
broadview
DESCARTES MEDITATIONS ON FIRST PHILOSOPHY
BAILEY JOHNSTON
broadview
Rousseau (ed. Maguire and Williams) Fundamental Political Writings
broadview
Pico della Mirandola On the Dignity of Man
HACKETT
Shelley (ed. Macdonald and Scherf) Frankenstein Third Edition
broadview
Marx and Engels (ed. Findlay) The Communist Manifesto
broadview
Mill (ed. Kahn) On Liberty
broadview
THE AENEID VERGIL
TRANSLATED BY Sarah Ruden
Yale
WU CHENG'EN MONKEY KING JOURNEY TO THE WEST
HOLY BIBLE
THE LIFE OF BOSTON KING
Nimbus & The Nova Scotia Museum
THE ILIAD
HOMER

A TYPICAL WEEK

A typical week in the Section I schedule, involving specialists in Classics and the Ancient World:

	9:35 - 11:25 a.m.	Afternoon
Monday	The Mi'kmaw Creation Story	One hour tutorial
Tuesday	No classes	No classes
Wednesday	*The Odyssey* — Homer	One hour tutorial
Thursday	Women Poets of Antiquity	One hour tutorial
Friday	*The Republic* — Plato	One hour tutorial

A typical week in the Section VI schedule, involving specialists in History, English, Philosophy and Law:

	9:35 - 11:25 a.m.	Afternoon
Monday	*The Second Sex* — de Beauvoir	One hour tutorial
Tuesday	No classes	No classes
Wednesday	Mohandas Gandhi	One hour tutorial
Thursday	*The Wretched of the Earth* — Fanon	One hour tutorial
Friday	Truth and Reconciliation	One hour tutorial

Contact us:
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