The College of Liberal Arts offers a bachelor of arts (BA) in Physics; it’s administered through the Department of Physics in the College of Science and Engineering, which also offers a bachelor of science (BS). This may be confusing, so here we explain the similarities and differences between the two options.

- The BA and BS are equally challenging. The major courses are the same for both degrees and students from both take their classes together. The prerequisite courses to enter the major are the same.
- Admissions to the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science & Engineering are different; you might get into one college but not the other.
- The structure of the degrees are slightly different. The BA has more flexibility if you want to pursue multiple interests, allowing space in your degree plan for breadth and depth; the BS degree program offers opportunities to take additional physics and technical courses.
- The BA degree requires proficiency in a second language.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study for a B.A. in Physics at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn — how to ask the right questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts prepare students for the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect,
where economics and the environment intersect.

Student Experiences

Internships: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? CLA Career Services has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Learning Abroad in Physics

A variety of program options—250 programs in over 70 countries—have been developed to address the diverse needs of students. Programs vary in length, level, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and degree of independence demanded of the participant.

The Learning Abroad Center works with many departments, administrative offices and other units within the University to determine appropriate study abroad options for each major and minor, and to help students earn credit toward their degree through study abroad. With planning, students in any undergraduate major can study abroad and fulfill degree requirements.

Undergraduate Research: Shape Your Curiosity into New Knowledge

The University has funding opportunities available for undergraduates who wish to gain research experience. Programs such as the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) gives undergraduate students the chance to work closely with faculty members on research projects. Full information about this can be found in Undergraduate Research Opportunities.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

- Society of Physics Students
- Astronomy Club
- National Society of Black Engineers
- Science and Engineering Student Board
- Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
Meet Our Faculty

To read about our faculty, visit our website.

Meet Our Alumni

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”

-- Dean John Coleman
You might also explore

Physics (B.S.)

Associated Careers

Data Analyst, Field Test Engineer, Physical Scientist, Physicist, Professor / Teacher, Researcher

Admission Information

FRESHMAN: Admission information
TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below!
• Course plans before transferring
• Estimated time to graduation
• Career preparation in CLA
• Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
• Connecting with major/minor departments