1. Regional expertise: advanced knowledge of the societies and cultures of the region through in-depth understanding of the principal historical, social, political, cultural and scientific forces and conditions that have given rise to the unity and diversity in the region today.

2. Multi-disciplinarity: analyzing contemporary political, economic, and cultural realities in the region from at least two disciplinary perspectives, ideally including humanities, social sciences and sometimes natural science approaches.

3. Depth of knowledge: advanced knowledge of particular facets of life in the region by taking courses on particular sub-regions or countries, by studying a regional language, or by taking at least two courses on the region in one discipline

4. Research and methods: Students must demonstrate the ability to conduct interdisciplinary research that shows knowledge of research methodologies, demonstrates analytical skills, and the ability to articulate and elaborate research findings.