Saint Mary’s Core Curriculum: A guide for Transfer Students

In addition to a major, Saint Mary’s graduates must fulfill all requirements of the Core Curriculum, our general education program. Pedagogically the Core is an intentional, developmental, and integrated program of study designed to educate students in three broad intellectual areas, focusing on the skills, knowledge, and values most emblematic of a Saint Mary’s education. Practically, it is divided into twelve different learning accomplished via classwork.

This document provides a brief introduction to the Core.

**Habits of Mind:** Fundamental to a liberal arts education are the habits of mind that prepare students for a lifetime of learning and critical engagement with the world.

- **Critical Thinking:** Recognizing, formulating and pursuing meaningful questions about one’s own and others’ ideas.
- **Shared Inquiry:** Reasoning together about common texts, questions and problems.
- **Written and Oral Communication:** Development of strong written and oral communication skills.
- **Information Evaluation and Research Practices:** Understanding how information is gathered and evaluated in society.

To satisfy these learning goals students must complete
- English 4: Composition or equivalent
- English 5: Argument and Research or equivalent
- Writing in the Disciplines course (taken in major)
- One Collegiate Seminar course per year of residency

**Pathways to Knowledge:** Knowledge takes many forms and arises from a variety of methods. Training in diverse pathways to knowledge provides a cross-disciplinary approach to learning.

- **Artistic Understanding:** The analysis, interpretation and critique of the products resulting from human creative expression. Requirement: two courses in Artistic Analysis and at least 1 unit in Creative Practice. Most courses on fine arts and literature meet this learning goal.
- **Mathematical Understanding:** The application and communication of abstract, logical reasoning and mathematical ideas. Requirement: one course. Certain courses mathematics meet this learning goal.
- **Scientific Understanding:** Learning about the natural/physical world by gathering data and formulating hypotheses about how the world works based on that data. Requirement: 1 course and accompanying laboratory. Most introductory science courses meet this learning goal.
- **Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding:** Placing today’s world in a meaningful context and arriving at sufficiently complex explanations for
current social arrangements. Requirement: two courses. Most courses on society or culture or history meet this learning goal.

- **Christian Foundations**: Major themes of the Bible, its contextual and scholarly interpretation, and the implications that it has for our lives. Students also become familiar with biblical principles central to the Catholic Christian tradition. Requirement: one course. To be taken once enrolled at Saint Mary's College.

- **Theological Understanding**: The study of religious texts and traditions, and exploration of God, humankind, and the world as expressed in Catholic and other religious traditions. Requirement: one course. To be taken once enrolled at Saint Mary's College.

**Engaging the World**: Students explore justice, civic responsibility, and social, economic and cultural differences, examining and reflecting on what it means to be a citizen in local and global communities.

- **American Diversity**: An intellectual engagement with the social, cultural, economic or political diversity in the United States. Requirement: one course or qualifying experience. Courses with a focus on social diversity (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic status) may satisfy this learning goal.

- **The Common Good**: A vigorous academic exploration about what the common good is and how it might be pursued. Requirement: one course or qualifying experience. Courses with a focus on ethics or approaches to social problems may satisfy this learning goal.

- **Community Engagement**: An application of intellectual experiences to the community beyond the academy. Requirement: one course or qualifying experience. Courses that bring classroom learning into the community may satisfy this learning goal.

- **Global Perspective**: A study of social, economic, religious or political structures in different global communities and cultures. Requirement: one course or qualifying experience. Courses with a focus on globalization or the experiences of peoples of non-western societies may satisfy this learning goal.

**Jan Term**: The change to explore a single topic in great depth and at an accelerated pace, featuring a unique blend of opportunities on and off campus. Requirement: one course per year of residency.

**Language**: Studying languages and cultures helps us recognize the universal aspects of the human condition and embrace the diverse backgrounds of people at home and around the world. Requirement: Level 3 Proficiency.

During registration your previous coursework will have been evaluated as to these learning goals. If you have courses you believe should have counted, please locate a syllabus or course description and contact Jim Sauerberg, Chair of the Core Curriculum.
For additional information on the Core Curriculum, please go to:
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/core-curriculum-committee

The Core Curriculum embodies the spirit of the liberal arts, especially through its emphasis on genuine inquiry. The Core initiates students into the examined life, provides a solid foundation of integrated and developmental learning, and enables them to contribute meaningfully to community life. Each major program of study builds upon this foundation by engaging the student in particular methods of inquiry, allowing the student to access the results of inquiry, and strengthening the student's own powers of inquiry.