

First-Year Students and the (New) Core Curriculum:

What do I say when *incoming frosh* ask what classes they need to take, and why?¹

The characteristics / rationale of the core:

- **Student-centered** – The SMC Core is designed to promote particular skills and bodies of knowledge in our students; faculty play the role of expert guides engaged in helping students master the material.
- **Intentional** – The SMC Core focuses on helping students to understand the point of each of their classes and experiences, i.e., what they are expected to learn in them.
- **Developmental** – The SMC Core expects students to grow intellectually and personally—to be capable of much more in their senior year than they were as freshmen.
- **Common** – The SMC Core helps provide a shared conversation for students and faculty across the campus.
- **Integrated** – The SMC Core emphasizes the integration of all coursework, including ideas that emerge from major (disciplinary) study as well as those within core electives. Such integration of majors with the core also frees up space in the curriculum for exploration.

Schedule for incoming freshmen:²

Fall Semester

- Writing 1 (Eng 3, Eng 4, or Eng 5)
- 3 elective courses
 - One more ‘choice’ than in the past
 - **Suggestions for the elective courses:**
 - Courses that will allow students to *explore* a possible major
 - Courses that *continue competency* lines, such as Mathematical Understanding or Language requirements

January Term

- Courses in the Engaging the World areas may be available.

Spring Semester

- Seminar 1: Critical Strategies and Great Questions
- Writing 2 (Eng 4 or Eng 5) is highly recommended for most majors
 - English 5 must be complete by end of sophomore year
- 2 elective courses (as in the past)

Complete requirements of the Core Curriculum:

¹ Transfer and continuing students continue under the traditional requirements.

² Students in the Integral Program will continue to take the first semesters of Integral Language, Seminar, Laboratory, and Mathematics.

Habits of Mind: Developmental and integrated learning in Critical Thinking, Shared Inquiry, Written & Oral Communication, and Information Evaluation & Research Practices

- Fulfilled by **4 Seminar courses and 3 Writing courses**
 - Seminar – now one per academic year
 - Writing – now includes upper-division writing in the majors

Pathways to Knowledge: Explores distinct, disciplinary ways of thinking and provides the breadth of education; can “double-dip” with major or minor courses

- **Artistic Understanding**
 - 2 courses meeting the Artistic Understanding outcomes
 - One of these courses needs to involve Creative Practice, or a separate 0.25 credit course may be taken.
- **Social, Cultural, & Historical Understanding**
 - 2 courses meeting the Social, Cultural, & Historical Understanding outcomes
- **Theological Understanding**
 - 1 course meeting the Christian Foundations (CF) outcomes
 - Must be taken at SMC
 - 1 course meeting the Theological Explorations (TE) outcomes
 - Need not be upper division; can be transferred in; cannot be waived
- **Mathematical and Scientific Understanding**
 - 1 course meeting the Mathematical Understanding outcomes
 - 1 course meeting the Scientific Understanding outcomes (with lab)

Engaging the World:

- Four goals: Community Engagement, Common Good, American Diversity, and Global Perspectives
- 1 course or experience meeting each. May be double counted.

Language Requirement:

- Level 3 Proficiency (unchanged)

January Term:

- One course per year of residency

<http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/saint-marys-core-curriculum>
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