

# **Saint Mary's (New) Core Curriculum:**

**Why, What, How  
(and when and who)**

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And a cast of thousands**

## **Current SMC's General Education Requirements for Undergraduates**

### **Collegiate Seminar:** four courses

- Greek Thought (Greek). Fall of Frosh Year
- Roman, Christian, Medieval Thought (Roman). Spring of Frosh year
- Renaissance, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Thought (Renaissance). Often Soph year
- 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Thought (20<sup>th</sup> Century, or Last)

### **Written English:** (at least) two courses

- English 4 Composition (Comp), Fall of Frosh Year
- English 5, Argument and Research, Spring of Frosh Year
- (English 3, Practice in Writing, prerequisite to English 4)

### **Religious Studies:** two courses.

- TRS 97 The Bible and its Interpretations (Bib Lit)
- Upper Division course.

### **Area Requirements:** Six courses

- **Area A — Humanities:** two courses. From art history\*, communication, english, languages\* (classical and modern), performing arts\*, philosophy, theology and religious studies
- **Area B — Mathematics:** one course. From mathematics\* or computer science
- **Area B — Science:** one lab course. From biology\*, chemistry, environmental and earth sciences, physics and astronomy
- **Area C — Social Sciences:** two courses. From anthropology, economics, ethnic studies\*, history, politics, psychology, sociology, women's studies\* (\*implies some exceptions)

Area courses generally cannot be doubled counted.

### **January Term:** four courses (Jan Term)

### **Language Proficiency:**

- three years of the same language in HS with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, or  $\geq 3$  on the college entrance examination Board advanced placement, or TOEFL score of at least 527, or intermediate level score on an oral and written proficiency exam, or complete 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of college course

courses past this requirement may be applied to Area A

### **Diversity Requirement:** one course, may be double counted.

## Current Gen Ed Requirements

- Collegiate Seminar: 4 courses
- Composition: 2 courses
- Area Requirements:
  - Area A: Humanities: 2 courses
  - Area B/Mathematics: 1 course
  - Area B/Science: 1 lab course
  - Area C: Social Sciences: 2 courses
- Theology & Religious Studies: 2 courses
- Diversity: 1 course
- Language: level 3 proficiency
- January Term: 4 courses

## Problems with Old Requirements

- *Lack of integration* between areas of the core, exacerbated by a “silo mentality” of department/program ownership of areas
- *Lack of consistency* in the Area Requirements, which were defined purely in terms of breadth, not in terms of core learning
- *Lack of intentional development and integration* outside of the major
- *Lack of oversight and ability to make changes*, as there was no assessment and no faculty body responsible for the core

## Historical Timeline

- Let's (consider) build(ing) a new core!  
Plan adopted spring 2005
- CCTF: Core Curriculum Task Force. 2005—2008
- Learning Goals: broad descriptions of areas, and justifications (“Model 1”)  
Adopted spring 2008
- CCIC: Core Curriculum Implementation Committee: 2009—2012
- Learning Outcomes: specific, measurable skills, habits and exposures  
Adopted spring 2011
- CCC: Core Curriculum Committee  
Elected spring 2011
- Beginnings of associations between courses and Learning Goals

**Main goal for 2011-12:** finalize those associations (i.e., “designations”) for courses first-year students routinely take.

## Key questions driving development of the new core:

- What do we want students to learn? What knowledge and skills do we wish them to gain?

→ *learning goals and outcomes*

- Where are our students learning successfully, and where do they (and we) need to improve?

→ *assessment*

- How can we review (and revise) our choices?

→ *the Core Curriculum Committee and Working Groups*

# **The Core Curriculum**

A familiar structure (areas)

Very different mindset (learning outcomes)

Needful of a catchier name ( ?? )

## **Old Core Requirements**

- Collegiate Seminar: 4 courses
- Composition: 2 courses
- Area Requirements:
  - Area A: Humanities: 2 courses
  - Area B/Mathematics: 1 course
  - Area B/Science: 1 lab course
  - Area C: Social Sciences: 2 courses
- Theology & Religious Studies: 2 courses
- Diversity: 1 course
- Language: level 3 proficiency
- January Term: 4 courses

## **New Core Requirements**

- Collegiate Seminar - 4 courses
- Composition - 3 courses (upper division writing)
- Artistic Understanding - 2 courses
- Mathematical Understanding - 1 course
- Scientific Understanding - 1 course
- Social, Cultural, Historical Understanding - 2 courses
- Theological Understanding - 2 courses
- Engaging the World Goals - 4 goals
- Language - level 3 proficiency
- January Term - 4 courses

**The New Core:** It's not primarily about the courses.....

- **Area C:** take two courses from Anthropology, Economics, History, Politics, Psychology, Sociology, and (in some cases) Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies.
  - The emphasis is on the number of "dips" into these specific departments
  - There is no emphasis on what has to occur in those courses.
  - Some social science courses don't count
  - Cannot "double-dip" these Area requirements with major requirements. E.g. a Sociology major still has to take two non-Sociology Area C courses.
- **Social, Historical and Cultural Understanding Learning Goal:** meeting the SHC LG requires two courses in which students explore human data (outcome #1), learn social science or historical theory (outcome #2), and practice social science or historical method (outcome #3).
  - The emphasis is on student learning (and our teaching) of these learning outcomes.
  - No department "owns" this LG. Courses in the traditional departments will have to teach these outcomes in order to receive designation. Courses outside the traditional departments that teach these outcomes with disciplinary expertise may also receive designation.
  - Students can "double-dip" all core requirements with their majors.



## **Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding (Pathways to Knowledge)**

Learning Goal: By studying the world from the perspectives and frameworks of history and the social sciences, students will understand how to place today's world in a meaningful context and to arrive at sufficiently complex explanations for current social arrangements. These perspectives and their methodologies allow students to probe deeply into the richness and diversity of what it has meant and means to be a human in relationship with others, in different places and times.

Learning Outcomes: Students will

1. Examine human activity in particular periods or places from a social, cultural or historical perspective; and
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theories of human behavior, relations, culture, or institutions; or interpretations of historical causation and change; and
3. Employ social science or historical methodology to collect and interpret evidence about the social world.

**The nuts and bolts of the new core:** It is composed of ...

- **Twelve Learning goals** – broad areas of learning that define the new core
- **Learning outcomes** – specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students must learn and which will define core courses and experiences
- **Rationales** – the Academic Senate’s official “signing statements” for the outcomes, which guides their interpretation and application
- **Assessment** – meaningful and manageable measurement of student learning

## **The nuts and bolts of the new core: 3 areas of 4 goals each**

The *Core Curriculum* is the foundational and essential learning expected of all undergraduate students and the processes by which students achieve that learning.

### **Habits of Mind**

- Critical Thinking
- Shared Inquiry
- Written and Oral Communication
- Information Evaluation and Research Practices

### **Pathways to Knowledge**

- Mathematical and Scientific Understanding
- Artistic Understanding
- Theological Understanding
- Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding

### **Engaging the World**

- The Common Good
- American Diversity
- Global Perspective
- Community Engagement

**The nuts and bolts of the new core:** Where the goals will be fulfilled and overseen

**Habits of Mind** – Through an integrated and developmental effort by Composition (2 courses), Collegiate Seminar (4 courses), and upper-division writing in the majors (1 course), supplemented by other programs such as First Year Advising Cohort (FYAC). All these constituencies sit together on the Habits of Mind Working Group (WG).

**Pathways to Knowledge** – Through courses offered by various departments. Each goal has its own WG, chaired by a member of the CCC, that will be responsible for reviewing and designating courses submitted by departments.

**Engaging the World** – Either through departmental or Jan Term courses or through approved co-curricular or extra-curricular learning opportunities. There is a WG to oversee the “community” goals (the Common Good and Community Engagement) and one to oversee the “diversity” goals (American Diversity and Global Perspective), each chaired by a member of the CCC.

## **Saint Mary's Core: A brief outline of the structure**

The Core consists of three sets of four learning goals each, language and January term. It is overseen by the Core Curriculum Committee (chair plus six elected faculty) and seven working groups (each a chair from the CCC and four appointed faculty).

### **Habits of Mind**

- Learning Goals: Critical Thinking, Shared Inquiry, Written & Oral Comm'n, Information Evaluation & Research Practices
- Overseen by Habits of Mind Working Group. Chaired by CCC Chair.
- Satisfied by Collegiate Seminar (4 classes), Composition (2 classes), Upper division writing (in major, 1 class)

### **Pathways to Knowledge**

- Learning Goals: Mathematical and Scientific Understanding, Artistic Understanding, Theological Understanding, Social Historical Cultural Understanding
- Overseen by four Working Groups, one per goal. Chaired by members of the CCC.
- Satisfied by taking two designated courses in each area (with two small caveats).
- A Pathways to Knowledge course is to be *primarily* focused on that goal.
- Courses will be designated by course, not by section.
- May be satisfied by courses for the major, may be double counted with Engaging the World goals.

### **Engaging the World**

- Learning Goals: The Common Good, American Diversity, Global Perspective, Community Engagement
- Overseen by two Working Groups, one for CG/CE and one for AD/GP. Chaired by members of the CCC.
- Satisfied by one designated course or experience in each area.
- There may be .25 credit experience-based independent studies that satisfy these goals.
- An Engaging the World full-credit course is to be *integrally*, but not necessarily primarily, focused on that goal.
- May be satisfied by courses for the major and in January term. May be double counted with other EtW learning goals.

### **Language**

- Level-three competency.

### **January Term**

- Four-course requirement.
- Courses may fulfill Engaging the World learning goals.

## **Oversight**

### **2011-2012 Core Curriculum Committee**

- Jim Sauerberg, Chair CCC
- Rebecca Carroll, Economics and Business Administration Representative
- Cynthia Ganote, At Large Member
- Rebecca Jabbour, Science Representative
- Lisa Manter, Liberal Arts Representative
- Ed Tywoniak, Liberal Arts Representative
- Paul Zarnoth, Science Representative
- Jane Camarillo, Vice Provost of Student Life
- Richard Carp, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academics
- Julia Odom, Registrar
- Russ Tiberi, Dean, Academic Advising and Achievement

### **Habit of Mind WG**

- Chair: Jim Sauerberg, CCC Chair, Math
- Zach Flanagan, Chair CCIC, TRS
- Rosemary Graham, English
- Ellen Rigsby, Communication
- Cynthia van Gilder, Anthropology
- **Mathematical/ Scientific Understanding WG**
  - Chair: Rebecca Jabbour, CCC, Biology
  - Derek Marks, Kinesiology
  - Mike Nathanson, Mathematics
  - Michelle Shulman, Chemistry
  - Sally Stampp, Psychology
- **Artistic Understanding WG**
  - Chair: Rebecca Carroll, CCC, Bus Admin
  - Bob Gorsch, English
  - Lori Spicher, Modern Languages
  - Ellen Veomett, Mathematics
  - Jia Wu, Performing Arts
- **Theological Understanding WG**
  - Chair: Ed Tywoniak, CCC, Communication
  - Patrick Downey, Philosophy

- Paul Giurlanda, Theology and Religious Studies
- Ron Olowin, Physics and Astronomy
- Norrie Palmer, Theology & Religious Studies

- **Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding WG**

- Chair: Lisa Manter, CCC Member, English
- Kara Boatman, Economics
- Robert Bulman, Sociology
- Myrna Santiago, History
- Hoang Vu, Psychology

- **American Diversity / Global Perspective WG**

- Chair: Paul Zarnoth, CCC Member, Psychology
- Ron Ahnen, Politics
- Reid Davis, Performing Arts
- David Quijada, Ethnic Studies
- Elena Songster, History

- **The Common Good and Community Engagement WG**

- Chair: Cynthia Ganote, CCC Member, Sociology
- John Ely, Sociology
- Monica Fitzgerald, Liberal and Civic Studies
- Emily Hause, Psychology
- Tom Poundstone, Theology & Religious Studies

## **(Partial) Core Curriculum Timeline**

**October 2011:** Departments/Programs decide which first-year student courses they see contributing toward which goal(s)

**December 2011:** Designation applications due

**February 2012:** Courses 'designated', or revisions requested

**April 2012:** Core courses for 2012-13 determined

**June 2012:** Orientation of first-year students with new core

**August 2012:** First-year students begin in SMC Core

**2012-13:**

- Process repeats for sophomore-level core courses
- Assessment of core begins

**2013-14:** repeat with junior courses

**2014-15:** repeat with last set of courses



## **Need More???**

9/16, 9/20, 9/21, 9/27, 9/30: discussions with chairs and program directors

9/21: presentation to chairs and program directors

9/28: presentation open to all

10/13: workshop on assessment

10/13 and fall: workshops and assistance on proposal writing

2012-13: Working group openings

Core Curriculum webpage

<http://devdrupal.stmarys-ca.edu/node/8824>

Thank you!

Q&A, & C&C