

# Undergraduate Catalog

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## Signature Programs

Saint Mary's College of California

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# Saint Mary's College of California 2021-2022 Academic Catalog

[ARCHIVED CATALOG]

## Signature Programs

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## Saint Mary's Core Curriculum

[The Core Curriculum](#) consists of skills, knowledge, and values that provide the foundation of student learning at Saint Mary's College. It is an intentional, developmental, and integrated program of study designed to educate students in three broad intellectual areas: Habits of Mind, Pathways to Knowledge, and Engaging the World.

**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. Beginning in their Collegiate Seminar and Composition courses, and continuing in their major and throughout the curriculum, students develop their skills in *Critical Thinking, Shared Inquiry, Written & Oral Communication, and Information Evaluation & Research Practices*.

**Pathways to Knowledge:** An understanding of the diverse ways that humans encounter and explain the world is a central component of a liberal arts education. Through specially designated courses in the disciplines, the SMC Core assures that students will tread the most important pathways to knowledge: *Artistic Understanding, Theological Understanding, Mathematical & Scientific Understanding, and Social, Historical & Cultural Understanding*.

**Engaging the World:** An education is only complete when it ventures beyond the walls of the classroom. In fulfillment of the Catholic, Lasallian, and liberal arts mission of the College, the SMC Core asks all students to engage with the world in substantive and meaningful ways. Through participation in curricular and co-curricular experiences that fulfill the goals of *American Diversity, Global Perspective, the Common Good, and Community Engagement*, students will explore issues of justice, civic responsibility, and social difference that facilitate a critical reflection on what it means to be an ethical citizen in today's world.

## Collegiate Seminar

Since 1941, [Collegiate Seminar](#) has been central to the undergraduate experience at Saint Mary's College. The program, revised and renewed over time, seeks to engage Saint Mary's students in a critical and collaborative encounter with the world of ideas, as expressed in great and challenging texts of the Western tradition, considering those texts in dialogue with texts and ideas from other traditions. Attending to the dialogue among writers and traditions, students take part in the Great Conversation. The program

seeks to help them develop as curious, thoughtful members of an intellectual community, able to think clearly, critically, and collaboratively, and to articulate their ideas effectively in speech and writing - powers that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

As [Collegiate Seminar](#) reflects the core identity of Saint Mary's as an intellectual community, it involves all undergraduate students and faculty throughout the schools and academic departments of the College. It promotes collaborative dialogue and respect for multiple perspectives and interpretations, inviting students and faculty to share their different ways of seeing and thinking in a thoughtful, serious, and respectful conversation.

In [Collegiate Seminar](#) classes, students read and discuss challenging texts from diverse genres, traditions, and periods, and, under the guidance of faculty from many disciplines, test their own experience and their notions of authentic humanity against them. They develop an appreciation for the diverse ways of knowing that the texts embody, and for the intellectual threads that connect the texts through history and culture. In their Seminars, they create the groundwork for a lifelong reflective pursuit of meaning and truth, and for a method of seeking truth that attends to and values the views of others.

## January Term

Since 1970, [January Term](#) (Jan Term) has offered both students and faculty the opportunity to explore courses and experiences that depart from the constraints of the regular semester. Here, students are encouraged to explore beyond their major, minor, or core requirements. Each year, faculty develop a new curriculum composed of content and approaches designed to stimulate the imagination, and experiment with both subject matter and technique.

Like [Collegiate Seminar](#), all undergraduate students and faculty from across the College participate in [January Term](#). Students and faculty are freed from disciplinary constraints to create innovative learning experiences. Students are required to take one full-credit [January Term](#) course for each year of full-time attendance. The College offers both on-campus courses and off-campus travel courses throughout the United States and many parts of the globe. Many courses emphasize experiential learning through service, community-based research, and on-site learning relevant to the region.

Each January promises new and innovative opportunities. Since students enroll in only one course, which equals a full semester credit, faculty members expect more and tend to increase the pace of instruction. [January Term](#) is designed to suspend the ordinary and engage the extraordinary, nurturing students as lifelong learners.

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