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Undergraduate Curriculum

Saint Mary's College of California

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Saint Mary's College of California 2022-2023 Academic Catalog

Undergraduate Curriculum

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Undergraduate students at Saint Mary's College face the challenge of choosing a suitable program of study from the various sets of undergraduate courses offered by the College. The choices made can be deeply personal, and have profound consequences for the life of each individual student. Students can be confident that every course of study offered by the College is guided by,

and is consistent with the College mission statement.

All undergraduates pursue an educational experience comprised of two integrated components: the Core Curriculum, required of all students, and a major field of study, selected by the individual student. To graduate from Saint Mary's College, a student must complete 36 Saint Mary's course credits or approved equivalencies, of which at least 17 are upper division, and must satisfy the following Core Curriculum and Major requirements.

The Core Curriculum

Through the Core Curriculum, graduates of Saint Mary's College will share a common experience of integrated, rigorous intellectual development. The Core consists of three major areas of student learning, each containing four learning goals:

- **HABITS OF MIND.** Considered fundamental to a liberal education, habits of mind foster each person's development as one who seeks to know the truth and is preparing for a lifelong pursuit of knowledge.
- **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.
- **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.

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 contrib-

ute 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.

Courses approved to satisfy Habits of Mind, Pathways to Knowledge, and Engaging the World requirements can be found here: [Core-Designated Courses](#).

Habits of Mind

COLLEGIATE SEMINAR. Students will take four Seminar courses, one in each year of residence, beginning in the spring of the student's first year.

- [SEM 001](#)
- [SEM 002](#)
- [SEM 103](#)
- [SEM 104](#)

COMPOSITION AND WRITING-IN-THE-DISCIPLINE. Students will take three writing classes, in developmental sequence (ENGL 004 or 4C, generally to be taken in the fall of the student's first year; ENGL 005 or 5C, generally to be taken in the spring of the first year; and an advanced writing course taken in the major). Refer to English Composition placement for further information.

- [ENGL 004](#) or [ENGL 004C](#)
- [ENGL 005](#) or [ENGL 005C](#)
- Writing-in-the-Disciplines (WID): see major requirements.

Pathways to Knowledge

Students will be exposed to a variety of methodologies and subject matters by completing courses that fulfill the learning goals below. Note that courses that meet major and minor course requirements, and/or those that are designated as meeting learning goals in Engaging the World, may concurrently be used to achieve these learning goals:

MATHEMATICAL AND SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING. Students will apply abstract and logical reasoning to solve mathematical problems, and communicate mathematical ideas. Students will also learn about the natural and physical world from an empirical perspective, and engage in scientific inquiry.

- [MU - Mathematical Understanding](#): 1 course designated as meeting the MU - Mathematical Understanding learning outcomes.
- [SU - Scientific Understanding \(with Lab\)](#): 1 course and associated laboratory designated as meeting the SU - Scientific Understanding (with Lab) learning outcomes.

THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING. Students will study religious texts and traditions, and engage in an exploration of God, humankind, and the world as expressed in Catholic and other religious traditions.

- [CF - Christian Foundations](#): 1 course designated as meeting CF - Christian Foundations learning outcomes (to be taken on campus), and 1 course designated as meeting

- [TE - Theological Explorations](#): 1 course designated as meeting the TE - Theological Explorations learning outcomes.

SOCIAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING. Students will learn how to place today's world in a meaningful context, and develop sufficiently complex explanations for current social arrangements.

- 2 courses designated as meeting the [SHCU - Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding](#) learning outcomes.

ARTISTIC UNDERSTANDING. Students will analyze, interpret, and critique the products of human creative expression.

- 2 courses designated as meeting the [AA - Artistic Understanding \(Analysis\)](#) learning outcomes.
- At least .25 credits in a course designated as meeting the [CP - Artistic Understanding \(Creative Practice\)](#) learning outcome.

Engaging the World

Students will explore issues of social justice, civic responsibility, and socio-cultural differences. These broad areas of concern flow directly from the Saint Mary's College mission. Courses that meet major and minor course requirements, and/or those that are designated as meeting learning goals in Pathways to Knowledge, may simultaneously be used to meet these learning goals:

THE COMMON GOOD. Students will explore the common good and how it might be pursued.

- 1 course or experience designated as meeting the [TCG - The Common Good](#) learning goal.

AMERICAN DIVERSITY. Students will intellectually engage with the social, cultural, economic or political diversity in the United States.

- 1 course or experience designated as meeting the [AD - American Diversity](#) learning goal.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. Students will study the social, economic, religious or political structures in different global communities and cultures.

- 1 course or experience that is designated as meeting the [GP - Global Perspectives](#) learning goal.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. Students will apply intellectual experiences to activities beyond the academy.

- 1 course or experience that is designated as meeting the [CE - Community Engagement](#) learning goal.

January Term

Students must complete one full-credit January Term course for each year of full-time attendance.

Students may only enroll in one full-credit course and one .25 credit course during the January Term. (Part-time students are encouraged to take January Term courses. Any part-time student who wishes to be excused from this requirement must petition the Vice Provost for Student Academics to do so.)

Placement and Other Academic Requirements

Language Proficiency

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. All students must demonstrate an intermediate level of foreign language proficiency. The College offers courses in French, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Latin, and Greek. Students may also demonstrate proficiency in a language different from the above, including American Sign Language, by arranging a proficiency examination directly with the Placement and Proficiency Coordinator in the Department of World Languages and Cultures.

The language requirement may be satisfied in one of the following ways:

1. Successfully completing level 003 of any foreign or classical language taught at Saint Mary's;
2. Completing three years of the same language in high school with a GPA of 3.0 (B) or higher each term;
3. Scoring at least a 3 on the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Exam in a second language;
4. or Achieving a TOEFL score of 527 on the paper-based test or 71 on the internet-based test (for International Students who are non-native speakers of English).

It is strongly recommended that students complete the language requirement by the end of the sophomore year.

Students take a placement exam to determine the most suitable language course. The Department of World Languages and Cultures offers online placement exams for Spanish, Italian, Japanese, German, and French. For placement in all other languages, students must contact the Placement and Proficiency Coordinator. Students may only take the online placement exam once during each academic year. Results are valid for one year. For any questions regarding placement, please contact the Placement and Proficiency Coordinator.

Achieving a high score on the placement exam does not satisfy the language requirement. Students who place in level 004 or higher are required to take a proficiency exam to verify oral and written proficiency.

English Composition Placement

All students will complete an English composition requirement by taking writing courses designed to help you think critically and communicate effectively.

To fulfill the English composition requirement, students can choose one of two pathways:

1. [ENGL 004](#) C - Writing-about-Writing Cohort, and [ENGL 005](#) C - Writing-about-Research Cohort: these courses must be taken in consecutive semesters, with the same professor and the same cohort of students. ENGL 004C is a prerequisite to ENGL 005C.
2. [ENGL 004](#) - Composition, and [ENGL 005](#) - Argument and Research: these courses can be taken consecutively in the first year of attendance. ENGL 004 is a prerequisite to ENGL 005.

The English Composition Program uses [Directed Self-Placement \(DSP\)](#) for placing students into one of the two pathways. The DSP process uses a survey and description of the courses to guide students in choosing a composition pathway that best matches the academic writing class for which they are ready. In the DSP process, students assume agency in the decision of which composition pathway to take: [English 004C and 005C](#) or [English 004 and English 005](#) course sequence. Once a student begins a pathway, they cannot switch to the other one (e.g. a student cannot take ENGL 004 and ENGL 005C).

While all students will choose a pathway, some students may place directly into English 5 through the following standardized test scores.

Placement	ACT Writing Exam	SAT Essay Exam	AP Language OR Literature	IB English 1A Exam (higher level)
ENGL-005	10-12	Total Score 23-24	4 or 5	5 or above (on higher level)

All international students also take an online Writing Placement exam (offered before their first semester begins) to determine if they will take a supplemental SMS (Studies for International and Multilingual Students) Writing Lab, a quarter credit lab. This lab will support their writing in either English composition pathway.

Major Field of Study

Defined as a group of coordinated courses within a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary field, ordinarily including at least two preparatory courses at the lower-division level, and at least eight courses at the upper-division level. Certain majors may require additional background coursework in related fields. The regular major groups available to students in the various curricula of the College are listed in the [Majors and Minors](#) section of this catalog. First-year students are supported in a process of major exploration, and typically declare a major in the spring of their first-year. A student may [declare or change majors](#) through the Registrar's Office. A student graduating with a double major will receive only one degree even if the majors are in two different schools.

Alternative Majors

The College offers the option of an alternative major program of study, including a Split Major, an Individualized Major, or completion of comprehensive alternative programs. Information on the alternative comprehensive programs can be found in the Curriculum Section of this Catalog under these headings: Integral Program, Pre-Professional Curricula, and 3 + 2 Engineering Program.

- **SPLIT MAJORS.** Combines work in two departments, must be approved by the chairs of the departments concerned, and by the Registrar. Such majors ordinarily comprise nine upper-division courses (six courses in one field and three in another), in addition to the lower-division prerequisites of both departments.
- **INDIVIDUALIZED MAJOR.** A student who believes that their academic needs and purposes would be better served by a distinctive program of studies may present an individualized major plan. Besides fulfilling requirements for a major, this plan must satisfactorily lead the student toward the goal of liberal education, which the College sees as essential for all of its graduates. Students wishing to pursue an individualized major must submit their proposal to the Vice Provost for Student Academics, who will forward it to the Chair of the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee for consideration. [Individualized Major Guidelines](#) can be found online through the Registrar's Office. The guidelines for the proposal can be found online through the Registrar's Office.

Double Major

A student is allowed to complete two separate major fields of study. A student must fulfill all the requirements of each major as specified by each program or department, including those regarding senior projects and courses that overlap between majors. Requirements vary by major and are included in each program or department's curriculum description.

Split majors may not double major with either of the disciplines that make up the split major, and must consult with both major advisors when considering an additional major. Individualized majors may complete another major field, upon UEPC approval.

A student who double majors receives only one degree and one diploma, even if the second major is in another school. The diploma will list both majors and the transcript will indicate that two majors were completed.

Minor Field of Study

The College offers the option of a minor field of study, defined as a combination of at least five courses from a discipline or interdisciplinary field other than that of the major field, at least three of which must be upper division. Requirements for the minor, including policies on courses that overlap with the major, vary by department and are included in each program or department's curriculum description.

Specialized Certificate Programs

A Specialized Certificate Program is a coherent set of academic coursework and/or practica that does not lead to a degree but focuses on a well-defined area of study that is oriented toward skills or competencies. The award of a specialized certificate, which will be noted on the student's transcript, indicates the holder has completed the required coursework and/or practica and has successfully achieved the program's learning goals and objectives.

In some disciplines, a Specialized Certificate is akin to a professional credential, while in others, it is recognition of competence in a specific skill, practice, or field of study. Specialized certificate programs are for learners who want to increase their skills and knowledge, bolster an existing career or pursue a new field, in a short time frame. Such programs can be interdisciplinary to provide learners the opportunity to increase their skills across various disciplines, and they can also be intra-departmental, aiming to broaden and deepen the competencies gained in the major or minor.

Normally specialized certificate programs may center around coursework of at least 3.0 and no more than 5.0 course credits, or non-course-credit practica of at least 110 hours that focus on acquiring experience and demonstrating assessable competencies. A specialized certificate program's practica requirements may include, for example, attendance at lectures, internships, discussion groups, portfolio creation, field study, or research. In any case, the Specialized Certificate Program should be 'housed' within an existing department or program, so that it may provide advising and oversight.

All coursework is expected to be completed at SMC, but courses from other institutions may be transferred at the discretion of the department/program.

Notes:

- a) For 2021-22 the chairs of the UEPC and GPSEPC are authorized to approve Specialized Certificates.
- b) Non-transcripted certificates (e.g., certificates of completion or participation) are not included or affected by this definition of Specialized Certificate.

International Student Requirements

International undergraduate students enrolled at Saint Mary's College are supported in their academic success through curricular and co-curricular programs and services. are required to take courses or labs developed to assist them in their assimilation to the U.S. academic rigor and greater U.S. culture. The required course is SMS 015, a course designed to give students a working platform on which to compare their native culture to U.S. culture.

All Saint Mary's students are required to take [ENGL 004/ENGL 004C](#) and [ENGL 005/ENGL 005C](#). International students may be required or encouraged to take The English Composition requirement is the same for all students with the additional requirement of the SMS 023/SMS 024 Writing Lab, a quarter credit lab to be taken in conjunction with ENGL 004C or ENGL 004, for English language learners.

In [SMS 023/SMS 024](#), students will gain:

- greater fluency in written English.
- understanding of course expectations at Saint Mary's regarding writing.
- increased proficiency in English grammar and vocabulary.
- better understanding of the stages of assembling an essay (including thesis formation, overall essay organization, paragraph development, and effective sentence construction) through focused work on each stage.
- better writing habits gained through practice in assessing writing assignments across the disciplines, setting writing schedules, brainstorming and drafting techniques, and revising essays.

All English language learners, both first-year and transfer students, regardless of visa status, must take the Writing Placement exam. The results of this exam will determine a student's placement in the SMS Writing Lab, which they must complete as part of their Composition requirement.

International Student Enrollment Requirement

Per the Federal Code of Regulations, all undergraduate international students attending the College on an F-1 or J-1 visa must enroll in at least 3.50 credits each fall and spring semester, unless they are in their final semester. All international graduate students attending the College on an F-1 or J-1 visa must enroll in full-time coursework each term as outlined in the academic plan set forth by their academic department.
