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Undergraduate Curriculum

Saint Mary's College of California

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Saint Mary's College of California 2023-2024 Academic Catalog

Undergraduate Curriculum

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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.

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 four major areas of student learning. Each requirement must be satisfied with a letter grade, and a D- or higher grade is considered passing. A Pass/Fail grade will not be accepted to meet the Core Curriculum requirements. Remedial courses or courses taken at non-accredited organizations will not be accepted.

- **HABITS OF MIND.** This area consists of the following requirements:
 - **Collegiate Seminar sequence:** First-Time First-Year students complete three sequenced courses, [SEM 150](#), [SEM 250](#), and [SEM 350](#). Students will take the first course ([SEM 150](#)) in their first year, the second course ([SEM 250](#)) in their second year, and the last course ([SEM 350](#)) either in the third or fourth year. These courses are 3 Carnegie units each. Transfer students start with [SEM 327](#), a 4-Carnegie unit course that combines both the first and second seminar course, instead of taking [SEM 150](#) and [SEM 250](#) as separate courses.
 - **Writing:** Students complete two courses to satisfy this requirement. The first requirement is a 100-level WRIT course (3 Carnegie units), and the second requirement is a 200-level WRIT course (3 Carnegie units)
 - **January Term:** Students complete two JAN courses at 3 Carnegie units in each course. Students will start with a 100-level JAN course in their first year, and take another JAN course at 200-level or higher sometime in the second through fourth year.
- **PATHWAYS TO KNOWLEDGE.** This area consists of the following requirements:
 - **Math:** Students complete one course designated to the Math area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 3 Carnegie units taught at 100-level or higher.
 - **Science:** Students complete both the lecture and lab in a course designated to the Science area of the Core. Most of these courses are taught at 4 Carnegie units, and the coursework should be at 100-level or higher.
 - **Social Science:** Students complete one course designated to the Social Science area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 3 Carnegie units taught at 100-level or higher.
 - **Arts and Humanities with Practice:** Students complete Arts and Humanities Analysis and Practice either in a single course or two separate courses designated to the Arts and Humanities area of the Core. This is a 4 Carnegie unit requirement taught at 100-level or higher.
 - **Language:** Students demonstrate Level 2 College proficiency in a second language.
- **THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING.** This area consists of the following requirements:
 - **Christian Foundations:** Students complete one course designated to the Christian Foundations area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 3 Carnegie units taught at a 200-level or higher.

- **Theological Explorations:** Students complete one course designated to the Theological Explorations area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 3 Carnegie units taught at a 200-level or higher.
- Transfer students have the option to take a single course (4 Carnegie units) that combines both Christian Foundations and Theological Explorations learning goals. Students must have 60 units completed to take this transfer course.
- **ENGAGING THE WORLD.** This area consists of the following requirements:
 - **Identity, Power, and Equity in the United States:** Students complete one course designated to the Identity, Power and Equity area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 3 Carnegie units taught at a 200-level or higher.
 - **Global Issues and Perspectives:** Students complete one course designated to the Global Issues and Perspectives area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 3 Carnegie units taught at a 200-level or higher.
 - **Engaged Learning:** Students complete one course designated to the Engaged Learning area of the Core. The coursework should be at least 1 Carnegie unit taught at a 200-level or higher.

Placement

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. [WRIT 100](#) - Writing as Inquiry Cohort, and [WRIT 200](#) - Writing and Research Cohort: these courses must be taken in consecutive semesters, with the same professor and the same cohort of students. [WRIT 100](#) is a prerequisite to [WRIT 200](#)
2. [WRIT 101](#) - Writing as Inquiry, and one class from the WRIT 201 - 230: Writing and Research series: these courses can be taken consecutively in the first year of attendance. WRIT 101 is a prerequisite to WRIT 201 - 230 series.

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: WRIT 100 and WRIT 200 or WRIT 101 and the WRIT 201 - 230 course series. Once a student begins a pathway, they cannot switch to the other one (e.g. a student cannot take WRIT 100 and a course from the WRIT 201 - 230 series).

While all students will choose a pathway, some students may place directly into the WRIT 201 - 230 series through the following standardized test scores.

Placement	ACT Writing Exam	SAT Essay Exam	AP Language OR Literature	IB English 1A Exam (higher level)
WRIT 201-230 series	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 Writing Lab, a one unit lab. This lab will support their writing in either English composition pathway

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 Level 2 College proficiency in a second language. 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 2 (two semesters) of any foreign or classical language taught at a collegiate level;
2. Completing the third year of the same language in high school with a C- or higher each term;
3. Scoring at least a 3 on the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Exam in a second language; or
4. Achieving a TOEFL score consistent with the current enrollment standards 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.

Major Field of Study

Defined as a group of coordinated courses within a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary field. 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 Major 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.

Bachelors of Arts

Bachelor of Arts (BA) generally focus on critical thinking through research practices, written and oral communication, and grounding in the liberal arts. They offer students flexibility and allow opportunities for enhancement befitting a liberal arts education. They range from 36 to 48 Carnegie units in size, at least 22 CUs of which must be at the 300 or 400-level. Programs that offer a BS version of the degree, and hence likely require substantial lower division coursework, may range from 40 to 54 CU in size.

Bachelors of Science

Bachelor of Science (BS) majors generally focus on scientific, quantitative, or technical fields with sequentially structured major requirements. They range from 48 to 72 Carnegie units in size, at least 22 CUs of which must be at the 300 or 400-level.

Alternative Majors

Saint Mary's College offers alternative undergraduate degree programs with integrated major and general education curricula. The Integral Program of Liberal Arts is a cohort-based integrated degree program (74 CU) in lieu of separate major and Core Curriculum courses. The Dual Engineering program is a dual degree BA/BS program, requiring 58 CU in the major program. BALOS and LEAP are integrated cohort-based degree completion programs for professional learners, and do not follow individualized Major + Core Curriculum requirements. In addition, the College offers two ways for students to create majors.

- **SPLIT MAJORS.** Students whose interest lie in a coherent combination of courses from two existing majors may consider a split major. Such majors consist of at least 54 CU: ordinarily the foundational coursework in both majors (100-200 level) and at least 24 Carnegie Units of advanced coursework (300 and 400 level) planned in consultation with

chairs/directors in both major programs. It must be approved by both department chairs/program directors and the Registrar.

- **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. In addition to 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. Individualized majors must be proposed through the Registrar's Office and approved by the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee and the Vice Provost for Academic Success.

Double Major

A student is allowed to complete two or more 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 approval from the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee approval.

A student who completes multiple majors receives only one diploma. The student's transcript will list all completed majors.

Tracks and Concentrations

Tracks are considered as distinct majors housed within a single department or program. Different tracks should have at least 33% difference in the requirements. Transcript will show, for example, "Name of the Major: Name of the Track."

Concentrations are a deeper focused study of 3-4 courses (9 - 16 CU) within a single major or an interdisciplinary thematic engagement that enhances the major. Completing a concentration does not constitute a different major.

Minor Field of Study

The College offers the option of a minor field of study, defined to be a combination of at least 18 and no more than 28 units from a discipline other than that of the major field, and must include at least 6 units of 300- and 400-level coursework outside of the major.

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.

Course Overlap Between Two Majors or a Major and a Minor

When a student is pursuing two majors, no more than 10 CU of 300 and 400-level coursework may be counted for both, similarly with majors and minors. Two minors must be distinguished by at least 6 CU of distinct 300- and 400-level coursework. Academic programs may specify additional rules and prohibitions on overlapping major and minor requirements in their sections of the catalog.

Curricular Enhancement

Curriculum Enhancement may take many forms and students should be encouraged to think creatively about how they will plan this portion of their undergraduate experience as they individualize their education and prepare themselves for life after college.

For most students, enhancement will provide an opportunity for exploration, which includes double majors, minors, concentrations, certificates/credentials, and 4+1 pathways.

All students, with the support of their advisors, are encouraged to use this curricular space to integrate additional opportunities for contemporary skill-building, experiential learning, Jan Term travel, study abroad, internships, community engagement, student leadership, and professional development into their undergraduate experience.

Specialized Certificate Programs

A Specialized Certificate Program is a coherent set of academic coursework and/or practica, between 9 and 18 Carnegie units or non-course-credit practica of at least 110 hours, that does not lead to a degree but focuses on a well-defined area of study that is oriented toward acquiring experience and demonstrating assessable competencies.

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. It is expected that all coursework is completed at SMC.

Class and Final Time Block Schedule

Final Exam Time	<i>Weekly Class times</i>
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Monday 8:00-10:00	<i>MWF 8:00-9:05 or MWF 8:15-9:05</i>
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Wednesday 8:00-10:00	<i>MW 9:15-10:30 or MWF 9:15-10:20 or MWF 9:15-10:05</i>
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Monday 10:30-12:30	<i>MW 10:40-11:55 or MWF 10:40-11:45 or MWF 10:40-11:30</i>
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Wednesday 10:30-12:30	<i>MW 12:05-1:20 or MWF 12:05-1:10 or MWF 12:05- 12:55</i>
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Monday 1:00-3:00	<i>MW 1:30-3:10 or MW 1:30-2:45</i>
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Wednesday 1:00-3:00	<i>MW 3:20-5:00 or MW 3:20-4:35 or MWF 3:20-4:10</i>
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Monday 3:30-5:30	<i>MW 5:10-6:50 or MW 5:10- 6:25</i>
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Monday 7:00-9:00	<i>MW 7:00-8:40 or MW 7:00-8:15</i>
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Tuesday 8:00-10:00	<i>TTH 8:00-9:40 or TTH 8:25-9:40</i>
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Thursday 8:00-10:00	<i>TTH 9:50-11:30 or TTH 10:05-11:20</i>
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Tuesday 10:30-12:30	<i>TTH 11:40-1:20 or TTH 11:40-12:55</i>
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Thursday 1:00-3:00	<i>TTH 1:30-3:10 or TTH 1:30-2:45</i>
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Tuesday 3:30-5:30	<i>TTH 3:20-5:00 or TTH 3:20-4:35</i>
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Thursday 3:30-5:30	<i>TTH 5:10-6:50 or TTH 5:10-6:25</i>
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Tuesday 7:00-9:00	<i>TTH 7:00-8:40 or TTH 7:00-8:15</i>
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