

Components of the Common Academic Program

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1. First-Year Humanities Courses – 12 total credit hours

Introductory courses in Religious Studies, Philosophy and History and a First-Year Writing Seminar - The first-year Humanities component will introduce the seven student learning outcomes and develop appropriate disciplinary objectives as part of the first-year courses in Religious Studies, Philosophy, History and English that create a foundation for student learning in the rest of the Common Academic Program and their majors. See also the Humanities Commons Learning Goals.

2. Second-Year Writing Seminar – 3 credit hours

The second-year writing seminar, taken by students who completed the first-year writing seminar, is a variable theme composition course focused on academic discourse, research, and argumentation. Students will further develop their reading, writing, research, and critical thinking abilities as they come into contact with the ways that various disciplines (at least three) engage a particular theme. In addition, by studying scholarship across disciplines students will develop rhetorical awareness about the arguments, approaches, and conventions of these disciplines. A focus throughout the course will be on enabling students to take a process approach to making effective arguments in a complex academic context.

3. Oral Communication – 3 credit hours

To enhance students' ability to communicate effectively, all students will complete three hours [one course] in oral communication, normally in their first or second year of study. The Oral Communication foundational course will focus on the concepts of dialogue and debate, with the goals of engaging in constructive mutual dialogue in conversations and meetings; developing the ability to articulate, analyze, and defend a position in a public forum; understanding the differences between dialogue and debate; and understanding relative advantages and disadvantages of each mode of communication. With its focus on dialogue and debate, the course will assist students in the development of the skills necessary for learning, living, and working in communities. By developing the ability to engage in conversation that advances understanding, students will be better able to interact and collaborate with persons from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

4. Mathematics – 3 credit hours

To enhance quantitative reasoning skills, all students will complete three hours in mathematics. The particular course will vary based on the students' major and background in mathematics. The mathematics courses are most closely related to the HIR outcomes related to scholarship, practical wisdom and critical evaluation of our times.

5. Social Science – 3 credit hours

Essential to life in the 21st century is an understanding of the relationship between individuals, groups and institutions. All students will complete three hours in the social sciences. The social science course will be a theme-based course that varies across sections but shares common learning outcomes. The course will use social science methods and social theory to critically examine a human issue or problem from at least three social science disciplinary perspectives (anthropology, economics, political science, psychology and sociology). The course will emphasize outcomes related to scholarship, critical evaluation of our times, and the diversity of the human world.

6. Arts – 3 credit hours

To ensure that all students acquire a basic understanding of the arts as significant manifestations of diverse cultural, intellectual, aesthetic, and personal experiences, all students will complete a three hour

component in the Arts. The Arts component may include courses from the Departments of Music, Visual Arts, English and the Theatre Program. Courses will assist students to develop skills and acquire experiences that enable them to understand, reflect upon, and value the creative process within the context of the arts. The requirement may be satisfied by taking studio and performance courses as well as historical studies courses. Students may satisfy the three hour requirement with one three hour course or a combination of one- and two-hour courses. Given the diversity of the Arts, the specific learning outcomes addressed will vary across courses.

7. Natural Sciences – 7 total credit hours

An understanding of many significant issues confronting our world today requires a basic understanding of science. Students must take two three-hour lecture courses in the physical or life sciences or computer science, at least one of which should be accompanied by a corresponding one-hour laboratory section. Lecture sections are either a pre-requisite or co-requisite to their correlative laboratory sections. Students will be exposed to at least two of the five disciplines: biology, chemistry, computer science, geology, and physics. The science component will actively challenge students to explore the scientific dimensions of complex, controversial or unresolved problems facing human society. It will further the development of the outcomes related to scholarship, practical wisdom and critical evaluation of our times by challenging students to achieve an enriched understanding of the scientific method by applying it to issues of broad public interest. The community outcome will also be enhanced through the team-based learning that occurs in the laboratory setting.

8. Faith Traditions (Crossing Boundaries) – 3 credit hours

The course on faith traditions is designed to encourage students to better understand, reflect on, and place their own religious beliefs and experiences in a broader historical or cultural context. Courses satisfying the faith traditions component may be offered by any department provided that the courses incorporate some of the ideas from the introductory religious studies course and that they develop students' ability to examine their own faith commitments and to participate in dialogue with other faith traditions. The courses will: 1) place religious traditions within their historical context; 2) examine their philosophical foundations or the internal logic of religious thought, language, and practice; 3) compare religious traditions by examining their philosophical foundations, historical origins, artistic expressions, canonical texts, and/or storied practices; or 4) examine a religious tradition with which students are unfamiliar (e.g., a non-Christian tradition).

9. Practical Ethical Action (Crossing Boundaries) – 3 credit hours

The practical ethical action course is designed to cross the boundaries between the theoretical and the practical and between the liberal arts and the applied fields. It offers the opportunity for faculty to cross the boundaries of their own disciplines to dialogue with faculty from other disciplines in ways that enrich their own understanding of important ethical issues and that enrich the courses they offer to students. Courses satisfying the practical ethical action component may be offered by any department provided that the courses engage students in thick description and analysis of ethical issues using concepts central to the study of ethics such as justice, rights, natural law, conscience or forgiveness and that the courses provide sufficient normative content that allow students to reflect on value judgments and ethical reasoning and practical application. These courses will draw from relevant interdisciplinary knowledge as well as an understanding of the professions and social institutions.

10. Inquiry Course (Crossing Boundaries) – 3 credit hours

The Inquiry component of CAP requires that students select a course outside their own division to better understand the ways of knowing found in other academic disciplines. The Inquiry course provides an opportunity for all academic units, particularly the professional schools, to develop courses for the CAP. The Inquiry course will serve as an introduction to key methods of investigation, interpretation, exploration, and ways of knowing. Taking a course outside one's major can broaden awareness of differing philosophies or analytic approaches, and it can offer new ways of conceiving of and resolving problems. The Inquiry course will provide students an opportunity to contrast inquiry in their own field with a different discipline's methods of inquiry. Some modes of inquiry engage experimentation and creative practice; other modes employ cognitive systems or analytical frameworks. Still other modes of inquiry investigate the complexity of systems, languages, or cultures. Exposure to modes of inquiry not typically used in the students' major prepares them to think critically about ways of acquiring, evaluating, and applying knowledge claims within their own discipline. For this reason, the Inquiry course will include a reflective and comparative component in which a student examines methods in his or her major field with those in the field of the Inquiry course.

11. Integrative Course (Crossing Boundaries) – 3 credit hours

The integration of knowledge has a long-standing position within the Catholic intellectual tradition and an increasingly important role in understanding contemporary social issues and problems. The Integrative course in the CAP requires that faculty develop, and students select, a course that transcends disciplinary boundaries and explicitly examines significant social issues or problems in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary framework. Collaborative, interdisciplinary efforts by faculty are encouraged but not required for this course. Courses offered by one faculty member that bring together different disciplinary perspectives to enhance students' understanding of significant issues may also be developed.

12. Major Capstone Course or Experience – hours determined by department (can be zero hours)

The ability of students to integrate the knowledge acquired in the undergraduate career, both within the major and in the Common Academic Program, is greatly enhanced by a capstone experience. All students will have a capstone course or experience in their major. The capstone will provide students the opportunity to engage, integrate, practice, and demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have developed in their major courses and which reflect learning outcomes associated with the Habits of Inquiry and Reflection. The capstone will provide students the opportunity to engage in the scholarship, activity and/or practice of their major field and further the students' understanding of their chosen vocation, career or profession. Students will present their work in a forum appropriate to their major. This course or experience will be designed by faculty in each major. It may, or may not be assigned credit hours.

13. Advanced Study in Religious Studies and Philosophy – 6 credit hours (can double count with Crossing Boundaries)

Courses satisfying the religious studies component might examine the central beliefs, texts or practices of one or more religious traditions or movements; examine ethics as a central feature of a religious tradition including the use of Catholic social teaching as a resource, or; examine cultural expressions of religious identity or tradition as the central focus of theological or religious studies. Courses satisfying the advanced philosophical studies component might evaluate competing solutions to theoretical or ethical options in the present day, or draw on the philosophical resources of the Catholic intellectual tradition to address the challenges of their times. Students will have flexibility in fulfilling these requirements. First, these courses will frequently focus on issues related to, and satisfy the criteria for the Faith Traditions, Practical Ethical

Action, Inquiry and Integrative components of the CAP. Second, the criteria for these requirements are disciplinary-based in the fields of religious, philosophical and historical studies and therefore not limited to specific departments. Courses offered outside the Departments of Philosophy, Religious Studies and History may count towards the advanced religious studies, philosophy and history requirements if the courses draw extensively from those disciplinary perspectives and address in significant ways aspects of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

14. Advanced Study in Historical Studies - 3 credit hours (can double count with Crossing Boundaries)

Courses satisfying the advanced historical studies component might engage students in the study and analysis of primary materials to further develop students' historical sensibilities in a way that illuminates the historical dimensions of HIR learning outcomes. The course could examine a historical topic drawing on the work of historians to show how interpretations of the past may change over time. Students will have flexibility in fulfilling these requirements. First, these courses will frequently focus on issues related to, and satisfy the criteria for the Faith Traditions, Practical Ethical Action, Inquiry and Integrative components of the CAP. Second, the criteria for these requirements are disciplinary-based in the fields of religious, philosophical and historical studies and therefore not limited to specific departments. Courses offered outside the Departments of Philosophy, Religious Studies and History may count towards the advanced religious studies, philosophy and history requirements if the courses draw extensively from those disciplinary perspectives and address in significant ways aspects of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

15. Diversity and Social Justice Requirement - 3 credit hours (can double count with Crossing Boundaries or Capstone)

As a Marianist university, the University has a special concern for the poor and marginalized and a responsibility to promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all persons and peoples. The University curriculum is responsible for contributing to this effort and does so throughout the Common Academic Program, but in a more focused way through a Diversity and Social Justice component. Every student will investigate human diversity issues within a sustained academic context by taking at least three credit hours of course work that have a central focus on one or more dimensions of diversity that are relevant to social justice. The course must have a central focus on one or more dimensions of human diversity on the basis of which systems, institutions, or practices that obstruct social justice have functioned. The dimensions may include, but are not limited to, race, gender, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation. Courses may address diversity within the United States, in a global context, or both. Since the course uses a social justice framework, it will consider constructive responses to such injustice.

Courses approved to satisfy the Diversity and Social Justice component will build on earlier CAP courses addressing diversity including the First-Year Humanities courses, the Second-Year Writing Seminar, and the Social Science, Arts, Natural Science, and Oral Communication courses. The Diversity and Social Justice component may not double count with these courses, but may double count with courses taken to satisfy other CAP components or courses taken in the student's major.