

The Gonzaga University Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

Gonzaga University's Core Curriculum is structured around five programmatic-level learning outcomes:

Core LO A: Students will be able to use the basic modes of inquiry and expression of the disciplines that represent liberal education.

Core LO B: Students will be able to demonstrate basic intercultural knowledge and competence.

Core LO C: Students will be able to communicate clearly and persuasively, using ideas and arguments based on evidence, logic, and critical thinking.

Core LO D: Students will be able to identify and reason from concepts of faith and spirituality.

Core LO E: Students will be able to formulate and articulate the need for personal growth and social transformation.

Core Course and Designation Requirement Descriptions and Learning Outcomes *Updated January 3, 2023*

The five programmatic-level learning outcomes are supported by specific learning outcomes that define each of the core course and designation requirements.

Core Course Requirements

Christianity and Catholic Traditions
<i>Course Description:</i> The second year Religious Studies core courses introduce students to Christian approaches to answering the second-year core question, “Who are we and what does it mean to be human?” Courses on this level explore diverse topics including Christian scriptures, history, theology, and practices, as well as major contributions from the Catholic intellectual and theological traditions. The courses help students identify foundational texts, beliefs and practices of Christianity, introduce students to contemporary scholarly methods used within biblical studies, history, and theology, and encourage students to explore the relationship between Christian faith and social justice.
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i> At the completion of this course, students will be able to 1. identify the sources of Christian tradition: scripture, doctrines, historical developments, leading thinkers, and practices. 2. interpret and analyze sources of Christian tradition critically and creatively by relating sources to historical contexts, to other sources, and to their own experience. 3. articulate how the sources of Christian tradition and methods of interpretation and analysis promote cultural transformation and social justice.

The Core Integration Seminar

Course Description: The Core Integration Seminar (CIS) engages the Year Four Question: “Imagining the possible: What is our role in the world?” by offering students a culminating seminar experience in which students integrate the principles of Jesuit education, prior components of the Core, and their disciplinary expertise. Each section of the course will focus on a problem or issue raised by the contemporary world that encourages **integration**, **collaboration**, and **problem solving**. The topic for each section of the course will be proposed and developed by each faculty member in a way that clearly connects to the Jesuit Mission, to multiple disciplinary perspectives, and to our students’ future role in the world.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. integrate the principles of a Jesuit education, prior components of the Core, and their disciplinary expertise (knowledge).
2. clearly and persuasively communicate with an audience of diverse educational backgrounds, personal experiences, and value commitments using ideas and arguments based on evidence, logic, and critical thinking (skill).
3. assess the ways in which the Core has transformed the commitments and perspectives that will inform their future endeavors (attitude).

Communication and Speech

Course Description: In this course, students will be introduced to and cultivate an understanding of interpersonal and small-group communication. The course also requires application of critical-thinking, reasoning and research skills necessary to organizing, writing and presenting several speeches. Students will learn effective active communication and listening skills necessary to the development of the individual, the university and the greater public communities.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. Understand communication as a process of symbolic action that constructs social realities.
2. Identify self as constructed by *and* as a participant in communication processes that address a range of audiences in a variety of contexts.
3. [Civic engagement] Create and deliver discerning and ethical presentations that promote the common good in response to rhetorical situations.

Ethics
<i>Course Description:</i> In the Ethics course students will learn to understand, apply, and critique multiple ethical theories, traditions and modes of ethical analysis. They will develop their moral imagination by exploring and explaining the reasons humans should care about the needs and interests of others (i.e., persons, communities, creatures and creation). Students will learn to understand and practice justice by acknowledging and honoring the rights and responsibilities of all and will learn to apply moral principles and insights to a variety of realistic settings and cases. Students will develop their critical thinking and communication skills by learning to analyze and resolve complex moral problems in respectful dialogue with those holding other perspectives and positions. Additionally, students will learn to explain their moral commitments and judgments to a range of audiences, while acknowledging the weaknesses or limits of their own position and the strengths of alternative judgments.
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i> At the completion of this course, students will be able to 1. argue persuasively why each of us is responsible for having ethical concerns about and commitments to the good of others. 2. resolve moral problems consistently drawing on resources (e.g., conceptions of human nature and the human community) of one of the ethical theories or traditions studied. 3. respectfully advocate for their critically assessed moral commitments and perspective within a diverse community.

Fine Arts
<i>Course Description:</i> Fine arts courses explore multiple ways the human experience can be expressed through creativity, including across different cultures and societies. Courses relate works of art (performance or visual) with their larger cultural, historical, social, aesthetic, and/or religious contexts. Fine Arts courses lead students to (1) articulate the relationship between their own developing subjective response to artistic works and collective standards of judgment in a given artistic discipline, and (2) appreciate and/or cultivate the skills and knowledge required to create art. Performance courses develop foundational experiential knowledge of creative principles and techniques in a given artistic discipline; theoretically focused courses develop an understanding of the history of a creative field over a broad span of time.
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i> At the completion of this course, students will be able to 1. apply techniques of a given artistic discipline to the performance or creation of art (performance/studio courses) OR - analyze the basic techniques of a given artistic discipline used in the performance or creation of art (history/survey courses). 2. demonstrate through performance, creation, writing, and/or discussion the aesthetic characteristics of the artistic discipline from different styles, eras, locations, and/or cultures.

First-Year Seminar

Course Description: The primary purpose of the First-Year Seminar (FYS) is to promote a cultural shift in students as they make the transition to college by emphasizing that learning and knowing are active, constructive processes. Organized around a unique topic, each small seminar will encourage intellectual engagement and curiosity through personal contact and dialogue with other students and faculty. The FYS introduces students to the first-year core question, “How do we pursue knowledge and cultivate understanding?” by examining the fundamental and central questions in different disciplines and the methods used to explore those questions. The FYS also emphasizes an appreciation for Gonzaga University’s Jesuit heritage and the core curriculum, and their overall importance in providing a meaningful and unifying educational experience.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. differentiate the ways in which knowledge is constructed across multiple disciplines.
2. articulate how their own personal and cultural perspectives affect their discovery and generation of knowledge and understanding.
3. integrate the principles of Gonzaga’s mission with their academic, personal, and spiritual aspirations.

History

Course Description: This course is a historical survey that will assess processes of change over time within a chronological and geographical framework. The course is intended to develop students’ awareness of the historical context of both the individual and the collective human experience as a means of informing their comprehension of historical and contemporary social and civic issues. In this course students will be exposed to a wide range of approaches to studying the past, including social, economic, political, cultural, and ideological perspectives. Both primary and secondary sources will be used to help students to develop analytical interpretations of textual and non-written evidence.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. identify possible causes and consequences of significant historical events by using a diverse array of approaches and perspectives employed by historians.
2. explain processes of change over time as well as historical continuity within an extended chronological or broad geographical framework.
3. use the perspectives and discipline of history to understand and know how to formulate historical arguments, evaluate historical evidence, and assess historical interpretation.
4. explain how historical thinking provides an indispensable framework for ethical discernment when navigating past and contemporary issues.

Literature

Course Description: In this course, students will develop as readers and interpreters of literature. The course focuses on reading texts as literature; questioning how textual elements and relevant context make meaning; and communicating textually grounded ideas and interpretations in various forms. As part of these emphases, the course fosters student reflection on the relationship of literature to other liberal arts disciplines and to culture.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. read texts as literature: identifying a range of elements in the text and questioning with increasing nuance how these elements make meaning.
2. integrate texts and relevant contexts (such as genre, other literary and non-literary works and traditions, historical and socio-political conditions, critical frameworks, the student's own life, etc.) to further understanding and interpretation.
3. communicate text-grounded ideas, interpretations, and arguments in various forms, including but not limited to written and oral, while demonstrating an awareness of purpose and audience.
4. discuss how literature engages with a range of human experiences, and how it differs from and is connected to other disciplines.

Mathematics

Course Description: Mathematics core courses promote thinking according to the modes of the discipline—abstractly, symbolically, logically, and computationally. Mathematics core courses stimulate creativity in mathematics, foster an appreciation of the discipline for its inherent beauty and interconnectedness, and increase fluency and efficiency in the language of mathematics. As part of their content, these courses include applications of mathematics to a variety of disciplines and relate mathematics to the core curriculum.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. reproduce and create logical mathematical arguments.
2. perform calculations appropriate to the content of the mathematics course.
3. communicate mathematics in writing.
4. apply mathematics to problems in other disciplines.

Philosophy of Human Nature

Course Description: Philosophical study of key figures, theories, and intellectual traditions that contribute to understanding the human condition, the meaning and dignity of human life, and the human relationship to ultimate reality, with attention to such issues as the nature and possible existence of the soul, the relation between body and mind, faith and reason, freedom vs. determinism, and the possibility of human immortality.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. explain competing models of conceiving of human beings involving philosophical concepts of soul, mind, and body, and the historical and conceptual relations among these models in a way responsive to contemporary problems and concerns, such as the power of scientific accounts of human nature.
2. describe the implications of competing accounts of human nature for a set of related topics, such as human intellect, human emotions, human freedom, human sociality, the relationship between humans and animals, and human dignity.
3. recognize the relevance for human nature of key concepts from the Catholic intellectual tradition, such as God, creation, the soul, human freedom, and human dignity.

Reasoning

Course Description: Together with “Writing,” this course helps students develop the foundational skills of critical reading, thinking, analysis, and writing. Students will analyze and evaluate different approaches to formal and informal arguments, examine the differences between logical and rhetorical arguments, reconstruct arguments from a range of sources, assess the quality of various types of evidence, and demonstrate careful use of statistics. For linked sections only, one central expectation shared with “Writing” is that students will produce an extended argumentative essay, and they may be asked to explore other assignments and topics common to both courses.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. recognize and evaluate individual arguments using basic deductive reasoning structures, basic inductive methods, and informal fallacies.
2. read, reconstruct, and evaluate extended arguments in a variety of contexts using these structures and methods.
3. write effective arguments appropriate to a range of potential rhetorical situations (linked sections only).

Scientific Inquiry

Course description: The science inquiry courses explore the scientific process in the natural world through evidence-based logic. These courses utilize active participation in scientific methodologies and emphasize quantitative skills. A minimum of 40% of student contact time will be spent on lab-based activities. Science inquiry courses will investigate the interface of science with other fields, disciplines, and broader societal issues as well as the identification of credible sources of information.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. demonstrate a basic understanding of theory and concepts central to the natural sciences.
2. demonstrate understanding of the elements and recursive nature of the scientific method including observations, models, predictions, testing, quantitative analysis, and communication of findings, through participation in scientific inquiry.
3. recognize that scientific understanding is based on evidence and that evidence evolves with new observations.
4. demonstrate understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of the natural sciences and the influence of the natural sciences on contemporary issues in society.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Course description: The Social and Behavioral Sciences core courses engage students in studying human behavior, social systems, and social issues, including topics in psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and/or women/gender studies. These courses lead students to develop a basic understanding of the questions and modes of inquiry emphasized by social and behavioral scientists. Students will explore the implications of theories and knowledge about human behavior and social systems for their own self-understanding and for their understanding of others, and they will examine the questions that undergird the Core through the lens of social and behavioral science.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. use at least one of the accepted methods through which knowledge is produced and disseminated in the social and behavioral sciences.
2. express ideas and formulate arguments using modes of communication common to a social and behavioral science.
3. explain at least one way that a discipline in the social and behavioral sciences interprets and contributes to social justice.

World or Comparative Religion

Course description: Core courses addressing the religions of the world or comparative religion and theology enable students to grasp, order, and assess the foundational principles, beliefs and practices of one or more global religions. They draw attention to the diversity that exists within and among traditions and encourage students to bring critical, analytical thinking to bear on the traditions and questions considered. These courses compare religious difference. They invite students to develop the analytical skills needed to read sacred, classic, and contemporary texts with sophistication, to underscore historical context, cultural location, and theological development as markers of dynamic traditions, and to explore normative frameworks of moral analysis. Such courses lead students to examine religion as a potential source of personal and social transformation and develop in them the capacity to articulate the integral relationship between religious commitment and social justice.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. identify the sacred texts, traditions, and theological developments of one or more religious communities, attentive to insider perspectives, debates, and scholarly methods of analysis.
2. categorize the theological language in one or more traditions concerning, for example, images of the divine or sacred, religious art, the human condition and liberation, sex and gender, community, worship, practice and ritual, ethical responsibility, and marginality, attending to intercultural competence and human diversity in the study of religion.
3. evaluate the potential of religious teachings and practices to both empower and suppress social justice in the cultural contexts of human life.

Writing

Course description: Together with “Reasoning,” this course helps students develop the foundational skills of critical reading, thinking, analysis, and writing. Students will learn a variety of approaches to writing, sharpen critical reading and information literacy skills, and produce formal and informal texts that ethically and persuasively appeal to a range of audiences for distinct purposes. One central expectation shared with “Reasoning” is that students will produce an extended argumentative essay, and they may be asked to explore other assignments and topics common to both courses.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. write for different audiences to achieve distinct purposes and desired effects.
2. employ a variety of processes and habits for writing and reading.
3. demonstrate information literacy.
4. write effective arguments appropriate to a range of potential rhetorical situations.

Core Course Designation Requirements

Global-Studies (GS) Designation
<i>Course description:</i> Courses with the Global Studies designation challenge students to perceive and understand human diversity by exploring diversity within a context of constantly changing global systems. These courses promote knowledge of particular social practices and cultural systems, primarily those outside the United States; prepare students with the skills necessary to engage people in other societies; and develop attitudes that reflect curiosity, openness to difference, and critical reflection when encountering values and belief systems that are different from the student's own.
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i> At the completion of this course, students will be able to 1. demonstrate knowledge of particular social practices and cultural systems as constructed by members of one or more societies (past or present). 2. demonstrate the skills necessary to engage people in those societies. 3. demonstrate openness to difference and critical reflection when encountering values and belief systems that are different from the ones with which they are already familiar (attitude).

Social-Justice (SJ) Designation
<i>Course description:</i> To receive the social-justice designation a course will introduce students to one or more social justice concerns and help them develop the critical and analytical tools necessary to understand and respond to institutional and structural injustices found in economic, political, cultural or ecclesial systems. Such classes may also involve service learning that enables students to personally work with oppressed or marginalized groups in society. Such courses are in tune with the humanistic ideal of justice and liberation, the Catholic preferential option for the poor as well as the Jesuit emphasis on social analysis and the building of the Kingdom of God. Social-justice courses that also meet service-learning guidelines (SL) serve the additional Jesuit emphasis on the importance of direct engagement with the marginal in society.
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i> At the completion of this course, students will 1. be able to describe how social systems and structures contribute to human suffering or human flourishing, in particular how the dignity of persons is enhanced, threatened, or diminished by social systems and structures. 2. understand and be able to articulate how attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors (their own and those of others) are shaped and influenced by specific contexts and structures within which one lives. 3. be able to articulate either moral, ethical, social and/or psychological reasons for working toward the common good, especially for—and with—vulnerable populations. 4. evince enhanced empathy with vulnerable populations, and demonstrate a commitment to the need for social transformation toward a more just world.

Writing-Enriched (WE) Designation

Course description: Writing-enriched (WE) courses are designed to promote the humanistic and Jesuit pedagogical ideal of clear, effective communication. Courses with this designation provide students with opportunities to expand their understanding of writing and its various purposes. As one component of WE, faculty reinforce how writing can be employed as a tool for clarifying thinking. Another component concerns the ways in which writing serves to communicate knowledge, propose ideas, and stimulate intellectual exchange.

Faculty in WE courses dedicate time and space for teaching students skills necessary for effective writing. Students demonstrate their competencies by completing required formal and informal writing of multiple, various types in specific disciplinary and professional contexts. Students will receive instruction in finding, evaluating and incorporating primary and secondary sources; will be introduced to processes for producing effective writing; and will receive substantial feedback. For example, students may be required to submit multiple drafts of at least one assignment in order to help them to improve their writing style and clarity.

In WE courses, thinking about, learning about, and practicing writing are practices that occur in class and in assignments. As appropriate, faculty consider these practices in formative and summative assessment of student performance. In other words, for all WE courses, the quality as well as the content of student writing will be assessed, and the writing will figure significantly into the final course grade.

Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

1. demonstrate competency in formal and informal writing specific to the discipline in which the writing occurs.
2. integrate appropriate primary and secondary research in their writing by the means customarily used in the discipline.
3. incorporate feedback received during an intensive revision process.