

# THE SOPHIA PROGRAM

The Sophia Program was approved by the Saint Mary's College Board of Trustees on April 23, 2010, representing the education that is common for all Saint Mary's undergraduate students. It is a learning outcome based curriculum designed to promote integration with majors or minors. The Sophia Program was introduced in the fall of 2012 for the class of 2016. Since that time, additional requirements have been introduced. Students who begin at Saint Mary's during or following the 2016–2017 academic year are required to complete the Sophia Program.

## Learning Outcomes

The Sophia Program is a learning-outcomes-based curriculum. By "learning outcomes," we mean the effect of instruction in the student, or what she will be able to know, do, or practice from the education she receives. The broad college-wide outcomes (called Liberal Learning Outcomes) receive focus and application through specific learning outcomes included in the Sophia Program. The introduction of learning outcomes into the curriculum allows for a more permeable border between the breadth of the general education common to all students and the depth of the more particularized learning found in the major.

The college-wide learning outcomes listed in the next section are derived first and foremost from the College's Mission Statement. The aim is to produce a succinct statement of the most basic components of a Saint Mary's education within the context of our identity as a Catholic college for women sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

## Liberal Learning Outcomes

Saint Mary's College offers a liberal education committed to promoting a life of intellectual vigor, shaped by the distinctive tradition of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. This tradition promotes learning that encourages the growth of the whole person and the assumption of social responsibility. A Saint Mary's education, therefore, guides women to develop a strong sense of personal integrity, the capacity for dialogue with others, the ability to reflect on intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic traditions that shape our world, and a readiness for action in a global community. Saint Mary's is a place where women acquire the skills and knowledge to contribute confidently and creatively to the common good in a rapidly changing world. The college-wide learning outcomes for all undergraduate students are outlined on the following pages.

The foundation for the Sophia Program is Learning Outcome 1, which seeks to develop the breadth of knowledge and intellectual flexibility students need to apply their expertise appropriately inside and outside the classroom, foster the intellectual coherence enabling students to engage constructively with a diverse world, and encourage students to live intellectually active, socially responsible lives characterized by a lifelong love of learning. The specific learning outcomes discussed in the next section articulate the ways in which these goals are realized.

The sub-outcomes for knowledge acquisition are divided among fifteen areas distributed among four arms of the cross under these broader components:

- a. Arts for Living,
- b. Cultures & Systems,
- c. Traditions & Worldviews, and
- d. Science for the Citizen.

A student must take courses in each of these fifteen areas to achieve the learning outcomes for that component of the Sophia Program. For a course to occupy one of the areas, it must address the outcomes that define the area.

**Note: The Sophia Program represents a dynamic curriculum with regular changes and new courses certified for particular learning outcomes. Not all sections of all courses have been certified for the Sophia Program. The class schedule search feature in PRISM provides section-level certification details.**

Also, search current available Sophia courses in the Sophia Program tool (<https://evprod.saintmarys.edu/Argos/AWV/#explorer/Public>) User Name: public; Password: saintmarys.

## Sophia Program Requirement Summary

### Knowledge Acquisition and Integration of Learning (LO1) Requirements in the Arms of the Cross

**Note:** Each course can be used only once to satisfy a requirement in this section. However, courses used in LO1 may be used without restriction to satisfy LO2 and LO3 requirements.

- **Cultures and Systems**
  - One Literature course
  - One History course
  - Two courses in the same Modern Language
- **Traditions and Worldviews**
  - One Philosophical Worldviews course
  - One Religious Traditions I course
  - One Religious Traditions II course
  - One Historical Perspectives course
- **Science for the Citizen**
  - Two Natural Science courses (at least one laboratory course)
  - One Social Science I course
  - One Social Science II course
- **Arts for Living**
  - One Creative and Performing Arts course
  - One Professional Arts course
  - One Mathematical Arts course

## Cognitive and Communicative Skills (LO2) Requirements

**Note: The Sophia Program is comprised of 52 credit hours which are based on knowledge area outcomes (LO1). Students typically complete their Skills (LO2) requirements within their knowledge area (LO1) courses or courses in their major or minor. However, a student with sufficient free elective hours in her four-year graduation plan may choose to take more than 52 credits to complete her Sophia Program requirements.**

- **Basic Writing Proficiency**
  - Fulfill Writing Proficiency through any designated course
- **Critical Thinking Seminar**
  - One Critical Thinking course
- **Women's Voices**
  - Three Women's Voices courses

## Intercultural Competence and Social Responsibility (LO3) Requirements

**Note: The Sophia Program is comprised of 52 credit hours which are based on knowledge area outcomes (LO1). Students typically complete**

their Engagement (L03) requirements within their knowledge area (L01) courses or courses in their major or minor. *(A student with sufficient free elective hours in her four-year graduation plan may choose to take more than 52 credits to complete her Sophia Program requirements.)*

**IC, SR, GL courses must be completed by three separate courses. The AEL can be completed with one of the other L03 courses. Major or Minor courses may also be used.**

- **Intercultural Competence**
  - One Intercultural Competence A course or
  - One Intercultural Competence B course
- **Social Responsibility**
  - One Social Responsibility A course or
  - One Social Responsibility B course
- **Global Learning**
  - One Global Learning A course or
  - One Global Learning B course
- **Academic Experiential Learning**
  - One Academic Experiential Learning course

**Saint Mary's courses:** All courses which satisfy Sophia requirements must be taken for a grade, and must be taken at Saint Mary's unless an exception is approved by the Office of Academic Advising.

**Writing Proficiency:** A student may earn basic proficiency by registering for courses designated with a "W" after the course number in the Schedule of Classes. At the end of the semester, a portfolio review team and the instructor will determine whether the student qualifies for basic proficiency. If so, notification of this certification will be made on the student's grade report and on her permanent record. A transfer student who has earned a "B" or better in a composition course at the former college may submit at the end of her first semester a portfolio of papers written in Saint Mary's courses. The evaluation committee will review the portfolio for basic writing proficiency. The Advanced Writing Proficiency requirement is satisfied within the major course of study.

## L01 Knowledge Acquisition and Integration of Learning

Catholic education in the liberal arts tradition values knowledge for its own sake and affirms the interconnectedness of all learning. Therefore:

- A Saint Mary's student exhibits sound knowledge of the formation of human identities, the development and functioning of diverse cultures and social groupings, the practice of creative artistry, the multi-faceted nature of religion and the Catholic tradition, the complexity of fundamental philosophical questions, and the intricate workings of the natural world.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates the ability to look at issues from multiple perspectives, recognizing the effect that differences in areas such as gender, religion, values, culture and privilege can have on the ways that people interpret and act in the world; and she makes connections across disparate settings and areas of study.

## Cultures and Systems

### Literature

- A Saint Mary's student applies knowledge of literary genres, terms, and/or theories to the interpretation of literary texts.
- A Saint Mary's student analyzes literary texts both as forms of cultural and artistic expression and as vehicles for enduring values.
- A Saint Mary's student recognizes how literary texts construct human identities.

### History

- A Saint Mary's student identifies and demonstrates understanding of salient developments in world or United States history.
- A Saint Mary's student analyzes the historical development of human cultures in their response to their physical, social, intellectual, and political environments and seeks explanations for those developments.
- A Saint Mary's student identifies and demonstrates understanding of evidence of historical change from primary sources/records of the past and assesses historical interpretations in secondary sources.
- A Saint Mary's student analyzes how her assumptions about human identity have been influenced by her historical context, and how human identities have been constructed in history.

### Modern Languages

- A Saint Mary's student communicates in a modern European language either at an advanced beginning or intermediate low level (depending upon her previous study), or at an appropriate level in another approved non-European or classical language.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates an understanding of the structure of this language by using the language with accuracy in speaking and writing.
- A Saint Mary's student identifies salient features of the geography, history, and culture of those that speak this language.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates intercultural understanding by recognizing and analyzing cultural misconceptions and the influence of her own cultural identity on her interactions with others.

## Traditions and Worldviews

### Philosophical Worldviews

- A Saint Mary's student identifies and demonstrates understanding of significant features of and developments in philosophical traditions concerning the nature of knowledge, the nature of reality, and the nature of good.
- A Saint Mary's student analyzes and compares philosophical views.
- A Saint Mary's student thinks philosophically about her interactions in the world.
- A Saint Mary's student raises questions on philosophical issues pertaining to the development of her own worldview.

### Religious Traditions I

- A Saint Mary's student articulates an informed, broad understanding of the nature and complexities of religion and how religion interacts with other aspects of culture.
- A Saint Mary's student describes key elements in a religion (such as sacred texts, ritual, spirituality and prayer, religious language, moral code, view of human destiny or afterlife, explanation of human and natural evil, perspectives on gender), applies her understanding of these elements to specific religious traditions, and articulates commonalities and differences among religious perspectives.

- A Saint Mary's student engages perspectives that are new to her, both empathetically and critically, and engages in informed, civil, and open discourse about religious differences.
- A Saint Mary's student evaluates the meaning of religious claims made by others and, in response to those claims, reflects critically on her own religious perspectives.

### Religious Traditions II

- A Saint Mary's student applies the broadened understanding of religion gained in the first course to a detailed examination of elements important to the Catholic Christian tradition (such as sacred or theological texts, ritual, spirituality and prayer, religious language, moral code, view of human destiny or afterlife, explanation of human and natural evil, perspectives on gender).
- A Saint Mary's student analyzes issues or questions that arise in relation to those elements.
- A Saint Mary's student engages perspectives that are new to her, both empathetically and critically, and engages in informed, civil, and open discourse about religious differences.
- A Saint Mary's student evaluates the meaning of theological claims and, in response to those claims, reflects critically on her own religious perspectives.

### Historical Perspectives

- A Saint Mary's student analyzes in depth historical developments of a particular aspect or issue in human culture, and/or its contemporary impact.
- A Saint Mary's student articulates the ways in which this development is affected by cultural factors such as gender, religion, values, and privilege.

## Science for the Citizen

### Natural Science

- A Saint Mary's student uses scientific methods to investigate questions appropriate to the natural sciences.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates specific knowledge of processes and principles underlying natural phenomena.
- A Saint Mary's student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates critical scientific issues and approaches pertaining to the issues that face her as a citizen.

### Social Science I

- A Saint Mary's student identifies and explains social science concepts and theories about human behavior, systems, and cultures.
- A Saint Mary's student applies social science concepts and theories in her analysis of human behavior, systems, and cultures.
- A Saint Mary's student recognizes and explains effects of diversity and equity in specific areas such as class, race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and/or privilege.

### Social Science II

- A Saint Mary's student utilizes scientific knowledge to evaluate claims about human behavior.
- A Saint Mary's student uses scientific methods to investigate questions appropriate to particular social sciences.
- A Saint Mary's student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates critical scientific issues and approaches pertaining to the issues that face her as a citizen.

## Arts for Living

### Creative and Performing Arts

- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates a basic understanding of form, aesthetics, and/or theory in a creative or performing art.
- A Saint Mary's student practices a creative or performing art.
- A Saint Mary's student develops resources of creativity, experience, and perception, which enrich herself and her world.

### Professional Arts

- A Saint Mary's student investigates issues of policy or systems through the lens of a professional practitioner.
- A Saint Mary's student applies knowledge of a profession in her decision making.
- A Saint Mary's student adapts learning from multiple academic disciplines to develop solutions for concrete real-world problems.

### Mathematical Arts

- A Saint Mary's student formulates mathematical models using abstract and logical reasoning.
- A Saint Mary's student uses and interprets mathematical models to analyze systems and patterns.
- A Saint Mary's student uses mathematical language and concepts to phrase and answer questions pertaining to a variety of real-world contexts.

## L02 Cognitive and Communicative Skills

As a women's college, Saint Mary's emphasizes the value of women's voices and their distinctive contribution to intellectual life. Therefore:

- A Saint Mary's student masters a broad set of sophisticated intellectual skills, including critical thinking, careful interpretation of complex texts and artifacts, accurate evaluation of data, investigative problem solving, quantitative reasoning, historical analysis, as well as technological, media, and information literacy. She reflects analytically on her experience as a woman, on the contributions of women's voices, and on constructions of gender.
- A Saint Mary's student communicates her ideas, insights, thought processes, and conclusions with accuracy, competence, and style in various media and contexts.

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## Basic Writing Proficiency

- A Saint Mary's student expresses the central idea of her essay in a focused thesis.
- A Saint Mary's student organizes her material in a logical sequence of well-structured paragraphs.
- A Saint Mary's student supports her ideas with sufficient persuasive evidence.
- A Saint Mary's student expresses her ideas clearly and appropriately for the intended audience.
- A Saint Mary's student follows conventions of grammar, punctuation, syntax, and citation in the discipline in which she is writing.

- A Saint Mary's student reevaluates and revises her work in response to feedback.

### Critical Thinking Seminar

- A Saint Mary's student evaluates and formulates claims about issues, ideas, artifacts, or events using critical thinking methods that are appropriate to the discipline of the seminar.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates basic information literacy skills as listed in the information literacy sub-outcomes.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates effective oral communication in presentational or interactive contexts.
- A Saint Mary's student develops and organizes written arguments.

### Women's Voices

- A Saint Mary's student identifies and demonstrates understanding of women's contributions to human knowledge and achievement and how those have been influenced by constructions of gender.
- A Saint Mary's student reflects analytically upon constructions of gender in individual or group heritage, culture, or experience, and articulates those reflections within a particular disciplinary context.
- A Saint Mary's student analyzes the forms and effects of constructions of gender, and evaluates strategies for response.

## L03 Intercultural Competence and Social Responsibility

As a Catholic women's college, Saint Mary's fosters respect and compassion for all people and honors leadership that improves the human community. Therefore:

- A Saint Mary's student develops reflective and collaborative skills that enable her to learn from and participate in dialogue with diverse people and cultures. She does this by attaining competence in another language and by study and experience that reveal both cultural differences and the connections joining people in a global society.
- In keeping with the mission of the Sisters of the Holy Cross and their stance in solidarity with the poor and powerless, a Saint Mary's student will evaluate social conditions, discern human needs, and be able to respond as an agent of change.

**Note:** To fulfill the Sophia L03 requirements, a student takes at least three L03-certified courses/experiences from at least two different academic disciplines. At least one L03-certified course/experience used to achieve L03 outcomes must include academic experiential learning. To stay within the 52-credit-hour Sophia Program footprint, typically a student will take L03 courses that also fulfill her Sophia knowledge (L01) or her major or minor requirements. (A student with sufficient free elective hours in her four-year graduation plan may choose to take more than 52 credits to complete her Sophia Program.)

**Requirement:** One course from Intercultural Competence A or one course from Intercultural Competence B.

### Intercultural Competence (A)

- A Saint Mary's student identifies and demonstrates understanding of the aspects of culturally diverse environments in order to communicate more effectively across cultures; and she analyzes the

forms and effects of culturally diverse environments and evaluates strategies for response.

### Intercultural Competence (B)

- A Saint Mary's student reflects before and after intercultural engagement in order to identify her own cultural norms and how these norms shape her interactions with others.

**Requirement:** One course from Social Responsibility A or one course from Social Responsibility B.

### Social Responsibility (A)

- A Saint Mary's Student evaluates social conditions. For example: She recognizes how cultural, political, and economic structure and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create/enhance privilege and power for individuals or groups. She recognizes the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health, well-being, and human dignity.  
**or**
- A Saint Mary's student discerns human needs. For example: She identifies human needs of individuals situated within the context of culture and environment. She analyzes and evaluates the relationship of rights and responsibilities to human needs.

### Social Responsibility (B)

- A Saint Mary's student is able to respond as an agent of change. For example: She can explain strategies for constructive action in pursuit of social, political, and economic justice. Based on her knowledge of strategies for constructive actions, the student will be able to advocate for social, political, and economic justice either for herself or in solidarity with vulnerable or oppressed people.

**Requirement:** One course from Global Learning A or one course from Global Learning B.

### Global Learning (A)

- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates an understanding of a nation or multi-national region outside the United States by analyzing the interconnections between at least two of the following: its history, politics, geography, culture, social structures and economics.

### Global Learning (B)

- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates an understanding of global interconnectedness by analyzing how a significant issue (for instance: a political, social, economic, natural, cultural, or historical issue) connects two or more distinct nations or multi-national regions of the world.

### Academic Experiential Learning

- A Saint Mary's student applies particular theories or concepts (such as from readings, lectures, or discussions) to an analysis of her lived experiences in the settings provided by the course or program.
- A Saint Mary's student articulates the impact of her experiential learning on her understanding of her education, her decisions-making or problem solving, or her place in the world.
- A Saint Mary's student demonstrates professional and ethical behavior appropriate to her experiential context.