

# DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

## General Requirements

Holy Cross offers a curriculum leading to the Bachelor of Arts (A.B.) degree, which some students earn with College honors. To meet the requirements for graduation, all students must both successfully complete a minimum course count of 32 semester courses and record a minimum of eight semesters of full-time study. Full-time study requires enrollment in a minimum of three courses with a course count of one each. Each Holy Cross course normally carries a course count of one (see College Credit (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#collegecredittext>)). Each course also carries a GPA unit count, which can vary from zero to 1.5 and is used in the calculations of the student's grade point average (see Grading System (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#gradestext>)).

To qualify for a degree from the College, at least one half of a student's courses, including the two full semesters of the fourth year, must be completed at the College of the Holy Cross or at one of its approved programs. Students are permitted, however, to participate in Holy Cross programs, such as the Washington Semester, Semester Away and Study Abroad, in the first semester of their fourth year and may petition to participate in these programs during their final semester after consulting with their Class Dean.

Each student's curriculum consists of common requirements, a major, and freely elected courses. In designing their curriculum, students are limited to a total of three programs combining majors, minors, and concentrations, only two of which can be majors.

## Requirements for Transfer Students

For transfer students, Holy Cross will accept a maximum of four full semesters of credit for students who transfer to Holy Cross from other colleges or universities. To earn a Holy Cross degree, students are expected to complete a minimum of four full semesters (and 16 letter-graded courses) at Holy Cross or in a Holy Cross program. These four semesters must include the two of senior year.

## Conferring of Degrees

Holy Cross confers degrees in May, August, and January. Students completing all degree requirements will have their degrees conferred at the end of the term in which they complete their requirements (spring, summer, or fall). The College holds a commencement ceremony once per year at the conclusion of the spring semester in May. Students who at the end of the spring semester have fulfilled the eight semesters of full time study requirement but require one or two additional courses to complete their degree requirements may petition the Dean of Education and Academic Experience to be permitted to participate in the May commencement ceremony. Students must present a plan to complete their degree requirements during the summer after Commencement as part of their petition. Students who wish to petition to participate in Commencement should contact their Class Dean for additional information.

### Common Requirements

All students are required to complete courses in the areas of the curriculum described in the following pages. To enter into and engage with these different areas — to see them as parts of a larger whole — is essential to becoming a liberally educated person. These requirements

provide students with the opportunity to explore basic modes of inquiry and to encourage them to develop a reflective attitude with regard to different ways of knowing and the bodies of knowledge associated with them. Taken together, these areas of study reflect the College's understanding of the foundation of a liberal arts education.

Students are able to select from a range of courses that fulfill each of the requirements. These courses offer an enriching and exemplary introduction to the methods and content of a broad area of inquiry, giving students a sense of what is distinctive about each area, the kinds of questions it asks and the kinds of answers it provides. Such courses lead to an awareness of both the possibilities an area of study presents and the limitations it confronts. Guided by these requirements, Holy Cross students come to appreciate the complexity of what it means to know as well as the interrelatedness of different ways of knowing, thereby acquiring the basis for an integrated academic and intellectual experience. Students are therefore encouraged to think carefully, in consultation with their advisors, about the courses they take to fulfill these common requirements.

The requirements include one course each in Arts, Literature, Studies in Religion, Philosophical Studies, Historical Studies, and Cross-Cultural Studies; and two courses each in Language Studies, Social Science, and Natural and Mathematical Sciences.

## The Arts and Literature

The Arts and Literature are concerned with the study of aesthetic forms as expressions of meaning, as vehicles for exploring the nature of reality, as sources of beauty, and as objects of knowledge and critical scrutiny.

In studying the arts — the visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and film — there is the opportunity to explore ways of knowing and universes of expression beyond the essentially cognitive or discursive. A distinctive feature of the arts is the relationship between form and content: meaning is conveyed by both the medium and the subject matter of the work. Central to the study of the arts is the development of one's understanding, appreciation, and critical capacity in encountering particular works and genres as well as one's awareness of both the limits and possibilities of the creative imagination. Courses in this area, whether historical or contemporary in approach, interpretive or oriented toward practice, seek to foster a recognition of the distinctive role of the arts in culture, in liberal education, and in the enrichment of the human condition.

In studying literature, there is an opportunity to explore the multiple ways in which the spoken or written word may disclose features of life that might otherwise remain unarticulated and thus unknown. Critical reading and writing are fundamental to literary study. Specific features of literary study include analysis of literary form and technique, examination of the relationship between literary works and social/historical context, and exploration of methodological and theoretical perspectives on literary inquiry. More generally, the study of literature highlights the communicative, expressive, and revelatory power of language itself. Courses in this area therefore have as their main focus those works that, through their special attention to language, serve both to inform and to transform readers.

*Students are required to complete one course in the Arts and one course in Literature.*

## Studies in Religion and Philosophical Studies

As indicated in the College's Mission Statement, "critical examination of fundamental religious and philosophical questions" is essential to a

liberal arts education in the Jesuit tradition. As areas of common inquiry, studies in religion and philosophical studies provide an invitation to dialogue about such questions, furthering the search for meaning and value at the heart of intellectual life at Holy Cross.

Studies in Religion address the search for ultimate meaning by exploring such themes as the nature of the sacred, the relationship between the human and the divine, and the spiritual dimension of human existence. Against the backdrop of this search, studies in religion also address questions about the responsibilities human beings owe to each other and to their communities, the cultural significance of religious beliefs and practices, as well as the personal and social nature of religious experience. Courses in this area include the study of indigenous religions as well as major religious traditions of the world – i.e., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Daoism; religious ethics; the analysis and interpretation of sacred texts; and the study of Catholic theology and spirituality.

Philosophical Studies explore fundamental questions about the nature of reality and what it means to be human, truth and knowledge, ethical values, aesthetic experience, and religious belief. The aim of philosophical inquiry is to wonder about what is taken for granted by the theoretical and practical frameworks upon which we ordinarily rely. Such inquiry seeks, in a variety of ways, to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the world and our place in it. By reflecting on matters essential to all disciplines, philosophical studies can help students to see their education as forming an integrated whole. Since it is a vital feature of philosophical inquiry that it wonders about its own goals and methods, courses in this area should allow for this kind of reflection as well. Such courses may be either topical or historical in approach, focusing on fundamental questions or the different ways of thinking about those questions that have emerged over time.

*Students are required to complete one course in Studies in Religion and one course in Philosophical Studies.*

## Historical Studies

Historical Studies involve systematic inquiry into the human past. Historians use primary and secondary sources to analyze and reconstruct the past and to explore the relevance of the past to the present. Historical studies may focus on the interpretation of broad changes over time as well as particular moments, events or social conditions in their wider historical context. Studying history also involves the study of historians, their writings and their influence on our current understanding of the past. Courses in this area provide students with historical perspective by introducing them to a significant segment of human history and by teaching them to locate and use evidence in evaluating the historical interpretations of others.

*Students are required to complete one course in Historical Studies.*

## Cross-Cultural Studies

Cross-Cultural Studies seek to stimulate critical reflection on the theoretical, methodological, and ethical issues involved in encountering other cultures and to help students to think systematically about the fundamental assumptions underlying cultural differences. In light of this task, courses in this area often explore non-Western structures of social organization, artistic expression, meaning, and belief. Given the complexity of the Western tradition, however, courses that explore deep cultural differences within this tradition can also serve to raise significant issues of cross-cultural analysis. By challenging one to understand different world-views, cross-cultural inquiry provides an opportunity to

understand more fully – and perhaps to transcend – one's own cultural presuppositions.

*Students are required to complete one course in Cross-Cultural Studies.*

## Language Studies

Language Studies involve the study of languages other than one's own. Such study contributes to an awareness of cultural differences that are shaped by and reflected in language. The study of modern languages allows students to develop the ability to communicate with people of different cultures through speech or writing. The study of classical languages also enhances students' general understanding of different cultures through the medium of written texts. In all cases, the study of another language contributes to a greater understanding of one's own language, and to a fuller appreciation of the role of language and literature in human experience and thought.

Students continuing the study of a language begun prior to college will pursue their study of that language at a level commensurate with their language skills. Placement into the appropriate level will be determined by the appropriate language department, based on their evaluation of prior coursework, tests, and consultation with the student. Students choosing to begin the study of a new language at Holy Cross must complete language placement in the language.

*Students are required to complete two courses in the same language.*

## Social Science

Social Science investigates human behavior and the structures, institutions, and norms operative in social life. The main objectives are to identify, through empirical and systematic observations, both universal and particular patterns of human behavior and to explain or interpret human relationships, cultures, and social phenomena. Courses in this area provide a broad and substantial introduction to basic concepts of social scientific inquiry. These courses are designed to offer an opportunity to reflect on the methodological assumptions and theoretical foundations of social science in its various forms, including anthropology, economics, political science, psychology and sociology.

*Students are required to complete two courses in Social Science.*

## Natural and Mathematical Sciences

Natural Science is the systematic investigation of living and nonliving aspects of the physical universe. Its methods of investigation involve the observation, description and classification of broad patterns in nature and the testing of hypotheses that provide tentative explanations of the processes underlying these patterns. The traditional goal of natural scientific inquiry is to explain a large array of natural phenomena using a small number of theories valued in many cases for their predictive power. The measurement and demonstration of quantitative relationships and the development of abstract models is often fundamental to this enterprise. Courses in this area provide the opportunity to explore natural science, focusing on the process of scientific discovery through the use of experimental and theoretical methods of investigation.

Mathematical Science gives structure to and explores abstractions of the human mind. In addition, it often provides natural science with models on which to build theories about the physical world. Computer science, the study of algorithms, data structures, and their realizations in hardware and software systems, is also included in this area. Computer science addresses the fundamental questions: What is computable in principle, and what tasks are algorithmically feasible? Courses in this area encourage the development of logical thinking, quantitative

reasoning, and general problem-solving skills. Such courses also seek to foster an appreciation for mathematical thought as a fundamental mode of inquiry in its own right.

*Students are required to complete two courses in Natural and Mathematical Sciences, at least one of which must be in Natural Science.*

## Montserrat

Montserrat, an innovative program for first-year students, cultivates life-long approaches to learning through a rigorous, multi-disciplinary academic experience. The seminar, a small, discussion-based class, in which students work intensively with professors on a broad variety of topics, lies at the heart of the program. Students will master a body of material and learn methodological approaches; in the process, they will develop the critical faculties and the writing and speaking skills necessary for success in meeting significant challenges during their education at Holy Cross and in their lives after Holy Cross.

The seminars are grouped into six different thematic clusters (Self, Divine, Natural World, Global Society, Core Human Questions, and Contemporary Challenges), each of which contains seminars examining the theme from a variety of perspectives. All the students in a particular cluster live together in the residence halls to facilitate discussion of ideas from multiple perspectives, in informal settings, outside of class. Reinforcing and enhancing the seminar and cluster experiences are exciting cocurricular events and activities organized by professors, the Holy Cross Library, Chaplain's office and Student Affairs. These may include a foreign film series, athletic events, spiritual retreats, trips to museums, theatrical performances and concerts, and environmental initiatives in the residence halls. All of these experiences will foster lasting relationships and a sense of belonging in the Holy Cross community; encourage a passionate commitment to local and global community; and fuel an enduring quest for intellectual, personal and spiritual challenges.

## Majors

Students must fulfill the requirements of a major, which must be declared between the second semester of the first year and the enrollment period preceding the third year. A major normally consists of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 14 courses selected from a group of courses within a department. Certain courses, however, may not count toward the minimum or maximum number of courses in a given department, and some departments require additional courses in allied fields. More details about the requirements of individual majors are found in later sections of this catalog under the corresponding departmental descriptions.

Students who exceed the maximum number of courses in a major incur a deficiency for every course above the maximum. Deficiencies may be satisfied by AP credit, courses transferred to Holy Cross from other institutions, and fifth courses taken for letter grades.

The Academic Plans (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/academic-plans/>) page of the Catalog contains a list of all majors. Information on student-designed Multidisciplinary Majors appears in the section of the Catalog on the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/academic-plans/center-interdisciplinary-studies/>). Students are expected to confirm their plans for the fulfillment of major and degree requirements with the designated faculty advisor.

## Electives

In addition to the common requirements and a major, students pursue free electives. There are several curriculum options available at the

College to assist students in organizing their elective program. In addition to double majors and minors, described here, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the academic options listed under Special Academic Programs and the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. Students are limited to three program options, only two of which may be majors.

## Double Major

A double major is one of the curriculum options available at the College. Students desiring double-major status must receive the approval of the Chairs of the departments the student is entering, the academic advisor, and the Class Dean. An application for double-major status must receive approval in time to allow completion of all requirements for both majors with the normal eight semesters of enrollment. Students must complete a minimum of 18 letter-graded courses outside each major. Those who do not complete 18 courses outside a major incur a deficiency for every course below this minimum. Deficiencies may be satisfied with AP credit, courses transferred to Holy Cross from other institutions, or fifth courses taken for letter grades.

## Minors

A list of minors is available on the Academic Plans (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/academic-plans/>) page of the Catalog. Students are not required to have a minor field of study but are invited to consider such an option in designing their undergraduate curriculum. Typically, the minor consists of six courses, some of which are required and some of which are selected by students in consultation with an advisor. For information on the requirements for completion of minors, see the departmental/program descriptions in this Catalog. Information on student-designed Multidisciplinary Minors appears in the section of the Catalog on the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/academic-plans/center-interdisciplinary-studies/>).

## Concentrations

A concentration is similar to a minor, but typically includes a multidisciplinary array of course requirements. Students are not required to have a concentration but are invited to consider such an option in designing their undergraduate curriculum. A list of concentrations is available on the Academic Plans (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/academic-plans/>) page of the Catalog. Most concentrations are offered through the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (<https://catalog.holycross.edu/academic-plans/center-interdisciplinary-studies/>).

Typically, a concentration consists of six courses, some of which are required and some of which are selected by students in consultation with an advisor.