



# Core Curriculum

“How do we educate ourselves to become women and men for a more just and humane global community?” This is the question that guides the University Core Curriculum. Shaped by Gonzaga’s Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic heritage, the Core provides every student with opportunities to further develop their skills of intellectual inquiry, come to a fuller understanding of who they are, and begin to imagine their role in a complex and changing global community.

## THE PURPOSE

Gonzaga’s deep commitment to educating the whole person is embodied in our University Core Curriculum. Completed by all students regardless of major, the Core has several purposes.

First, the Core **refines students’ abilities to think critically and creatively**. While honing their reasoning skills, students learn to articulate their ideas clearly and concisely. These skills are essential to intellectual inquiry and are highly valued in every vocation beyond college life.

Second, the Core **widens students’ viewpoints**. At Gonzaga, we believe that to understand the world, students must see it from many perspectives. Gonzaga students explore a variety of subjects and themes in courses outside their major and take courses that focus on global issues and social justice. This exposure to diverse ideas broadens students’ understanding of themselves and provides a rich context for their major coursework.

Third, the Core ultimately **challenges students to integrate their studies and actions into a systematic and comprehensive philosophy of living**. While completing the Core, Gonzaga students inevitably encounter perennial questions about truth, human nature, faith, ethics, and personal responsibility. Through this work, they develop intellectual frameworks and reflective capacities that help them understand events around them and navigate complex situations. The Core engages in the exploration of faith and spirituality; however, Gonzaga students are not required to embrace a particular belief system. Thus, the Core prepares Gonzaga students for a lifetime of thoughtful reflection and action.

## THE PROGRAM

The University Core Curriculum is a four-year program. Each year of the Core is organized around a theme and question to provide a cohesive Core experience.

The Year 1 question - **“Understanding and Creating: How do we pursue knowledge and cultivate understanding?”** - is examined through courses that encourage intellectual engagement and curiosity and provide a broad foundation of fundamental skills. These courses include the First-Year Seminar, Writing, Reasoning, Communication and Speech, Scientific Inquiry, and Mathematics.

The Year 2 question - **“Being and Becoming: Who are we and what does it mean to be human?”** - and the Year 3 question - **“Caring and Doing: What principles characterize a well-lived life?”** - are explored through courses in Philosophy and Religious Studies. These courses include Philosophy of Human Nature, Ethics, Christianity and Catholic Traditions, and World/Comparative Religion.

The Year 4 question - **“Imagining the Possible: What is our role in the world?”** - is addressed through the culminating Core course, the Core Integration Seminar. In this seminar, students integrate the principles of Jesuit education, prior components of the Core, and their disciplinary expertise.

Taken at any time throughout the four years, broadening courses intersect with the Core themes and extend students’ appreciation for the humanities, arts, and social/behavioral sciences. Courses designated as Writing Enriched, Global Studies, and Social Justice reinforce essential knowledge and competencies.

# UNIVERSITY CORE

As students of a Catholic, Jesuit, and Humanistic University, how do we educate ourselves to become women and men for a more just and humane global community?



Courses in Gonzaga's Core Curriculum are taught by many of the most talented and experienced professors at the University. Gonzaga alumni regard the Core among the most influential and beneficial elements of their Gonzaga education, citing exceptional teaching and the education of the whole person as primary reasons. Finally, the Core is a unique venue for students from different majors to interact in the classroom, bringing together the experience of all departments in enlivened discussion. The Core is the educational bond that unites Gonzaga University and contributes to its vibrant academic community.

## A SAMPLE OF FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COURSES:

- Art, Race, and Public Space: U.S. Murals
- Art and Science of Dance
- Creativity
- Freaks, Geeks, and Outsiders
- Jesuit Education: A Fire Kindling Other Fires
- Race in America
- Risk & Resilience
- STEM in Developing Countries
- The Sociology of the Absurd: From UFOs to 9/11
- Thinking Through Beauty

## THE PEOPLE

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