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What is the Core?

Simply, it is a required general education curriculum.

Nearly all four-year colleges and universities in the United States require their students to complete a series of general education courses in the arts and sciences in addition to courses in their major field of study. The word “Core” is commonly used to identify this general education curriculum, and at King’s the word has special meaning. We believe that these courses are truly a “core”—something central and essential to our students’ education. ([back](#))

Why do I have to take Core courses?

Because King’s—like most colleges and universities—wants its degree-earners to be broadly educated.

Core courses—in written and oral communication, literature, the arts, history, languages, social and natural sciences, philosophy, and theology—are intended to provide the skills, knowledge and habits of mind that will contribute both to your success as a member of the working world and to your effort to find happiness, meaning and purpose in life. Our aim at King's is to graduate students who are versed in the Catholic intellectual and social justice traditions; who are proficient in recognizing, formulating, and addressing matters of moral significance and concern; who are sensitive to the scope and complexity of human experience, emotion, and expression; who have contemplated the findings and studied the methods of the natural and social sciences; and who are prepared and disposed to mobilize their talents and skills as global citizens in service of the common good. ([back](#))

How should I select my Core courses?

Consult your program planner, your program evaluation, and your advisor.

- [Academic planners](#), available on the College website, list the Core and major courses you are required to take.
- Your *program evaluation* is available through WebAdvisor. The evaluation shows what courses you have completed and are currently taking.
- Your *advisor* is your best resource, especially early in your college career. Be sure to schedule an appointment during advisement weeks—October 23 to November 7. Before the appointment, give some thought to what courses and sections interest you and composing a list of preferred courses/sections, as well as several alternatives (to account for the possibility of course sections closing before you enroll, etc.). ([back](#))

Do certain majors require specific Core courses? How will I know and/or where can I find this information?

Yes.

Several majors restrict choices in the Core. You can find this information on your [academic planner](#) and through your advisor. ([back](#))

Are ENGL 105 and MATH 100 considered Core courses?

No.

Some students, as determined by placement testing in the summer before your first semester, need additional instruction in writing or math, which is provided in these two non-Core courses. While the courses do not satisfy Core requirements, they do contribute to your overall credit count and GPA. ([back](#))

How is the Core at King's structured?

The Core begins with a *College Seminar* and continues through a series of courses organized along four *Pathways*. Each Pathway contains three or four courses. Some of the College Seminar sections are linked with one of the courses on a Pathway to make what's called a *Learning Community*. See below for more information on each of these elements. ([back](#))

What is the College Seminar?

The College Seminar, called *The Quest for Meaning*, is a three-credit course intended to develop some of the most important traits of successful college students. The course will help you hone your critical reading and reasoning skills and improve your ability to do academic research. Just

as important, the course will provide an opportunity to engage in one of the most fundamental experiences of college academic life: discussing in a seminar with your classmates important questions about life's meaning and purpose. ([back](#))

Do I have to take a College Seminar?

With few exceptions, yes.

Unless you transferred from another college or are in the Honors Program at King's, you must complete a section of the College Seminar. ([back](#))

If I do have to take the College Seminar, when should I take it?

In your first year if possible.

Sign up for a College Seminar in the fall or spring of your first year. It is rare but possible that you may be prevented from doing so. If you cannot get into a section in the first year, sign up in the fall of your sophomore year. The course is required for graduation and must be completed with a passing grade. ([back](#))

What are the Pathways?

Core courses are organized into four pathways, each of which contains three or four courses that are "connected" to one another in some conceptual way. The hope is that as you travel along a Pathway, you'll deepen your understanding of the unifying concepts and integrate your learning by seeing how the knowledge and skills developed in one course can facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills in another. Let's look at each Pathway:

- ***Communications and Creative Expression.***
There are four courses on this Pathway: writing, oral communication, arts, and literature. In these courses, you'll deepen your capacity to appreciate, analyze and engage the human experience in its creative forms, whether you're studying the works of writers and artists or creating your own expressions in art, writing and speaking. Taken together, these courses will lead you to discover and participate in the wide array of human experience, emotion and expression.
- ***Citizenship***
This Pathway has three requirements: a course in history, a course in the social sciences, and a choice between a language course or study abroad. Experiences on this pathway should help increase your understanding of the complex global issues you'll face in our increasingly interdependent world. Taken together, these courses will lead you to enhance your sense of social responsibility and prepare you to act in the service of the common good.
- ***Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning***
On this Pathway, you'll sharpen your scientific literacy as you learn more about math and both the natural and social sciences. These courses will spark your curiosity about the world, help you identify and evaluate the science that underlies national and local decisions, and provide you with the mathematical and analytical tools needed to draw sound conclusions from observations and evidence. Taken together, the courses on this

Pathway will lead you to an enhanced capacity for responding intelligently, meaningfully and ethically to contemporary issues of importance to society.

- ***Wisdom, Faith, and the Good Life***

This Pathway includes two courses in philosophy and two in theology. The experience of doing philosophy well is of discovering new, surprising, wonderful, and sometimes baffling depths and complexities to existence, our lives, and our beliefs. The aim of theology is the good life as informed by the critical study of sacred scripture, the lives and ideas of people who search for God, and the moral investigation of the personal and common good. Taken together, the courses on this Pathway will lead you to engage more fully in the transformative search for truth, wisdom, faith, and the good life.

What choices do I have in a Pathway?

It varies.

- In some cases, choice is limited to your preferred sections and times since all students must take ENGL 110, COMM 101, and PHIL 101.
- In some cases, you can choose among courses within a discipline. For your Literature requirement (on the Communication and Creative Expression Pathway), for example, you can choose among a number of literature courses. The same goes for the History requirement (on the Citizenship Pathway). Similar categories are The Arts, The Scientific Endeavor, Science in Context, Philosophical Investigations, Theology and Wisdom, and Theology and the Good Life.
- In some cases, you can choose a course in one discipline among several disciplines. For example, on the Citizenship Pathway there is a category of courses called Global Connections. Among the choices in that category are courses in economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology. Any Core-level course in one of those disciplines will satisfy the Global Connections requirement. Similarly, a category called Human Behavior and Social Institutions (on the Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning Pathway) offers courses in several disciplines, including economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology.
- For the Intercultural Competence requirement (on the Citizenship Pathway), you can take a language course or study abroad class that has an intercultural competence component.
- In all cases, your choices should be informed by your [academic planner](#) and in consultation with your academic advisor. Your advisor will have a list of all of the fall or spring courses that are being offered on a Pathway. ([back](#))

Should I take a language course or wait for a study abroad class?

It depends.

On the Citizenship Pathway is a required category called Intercultural Competence. To satisfy that requirement, choose between a language course or study abroad program advertised as having an intercultural competence component. In making this decision, consider the following:

- Language courses at King's may be different from what you expect. Talk to someone in the Languages Department about what a Core-level language course at King's entails. You may be surprised to discover how the course differs from traditional language courses of the sort you are familiar with.

- Studying abroad can be expensive. If you put off the requirement for a few years, you may be able to save for the experience. However, you may find in the future that you are not able, for whatever reason, to travel abroad. In that case, you'll have to select a language course to meet the requirement.
- Taking a language course now (to satisfy the requirement) does not preclude you from traveling abroad in the future. A future study abroad course might satisfy another Core requirement, or you might just take it as an elective. ([back](#))

What is a Learning Community?

Two linked courses.

Some College Seminar (CSEM) sections are “linked” to another class in the Core— to a literature, history, psychology, or arts class, for example. The linked class will be scheduled immediately before or after the CSEM section and in the same room. The instructor teaching the CSEM section and the instructor teaching the linked course have coordinated with one another so that a portion of their classes will overlap in some way, perhaps through common readings or writing assignments, or through an exploration of similar themes or ideas. The hope is that students in a Learning Community will develop the habit of integrating their learning, looking for ways in which other courses, across the disciplines, speak to one another. ([back](#))

Am I required to sign up for a Learning Community?

No.

The Learning Community idea is new to King’s, and we are phasing the concept in gradually. Currently there are not enough Learning Community opportunities available for all first-year students, so it’s optional. However, see the next question. ([back](#))

Should I sign up for a Learning Community?

If possible, yes.

If you 1) need College Seminar, and 2) need the Core class that is linked to the seminar, then, yes, you should absolutely sign up. You have nothing to lose. If you need both courses anyway, there is no harm in signing up. The benefits, however, are many. ([back](#))

How will I know if Core courses are linked?

WebAdvisor and your advisor.

WebAdvisor is the best place to start. Look on the master schedule of courses for College Seminar (CSEM) sections and then look to the far right of the schedule, in the column headed “Printed Comments,” where you will see whether the CSEM section is linked or not. Your advisor will have a list of linked courses as well. ([back](#))

Can I take one of the courses in a Learning Community without taking the other?

No.

If you register for one, you will automatically be registered for the other. ([back](#))

Can I drop one of the linked courses in a Learning Community?

Yes, with some conditions.

You can drop one of the linked courses within the Drop/Add period, but you must then drop the other course too. Consequently, in consultation with your academic advisor, you will need to

add two substitute courses to maintain your status as a fulltime student. After the Drop/Add period, in consultation with your academic advisor, you may withdraw from one of the linked courses, though a “W” will appear on your transcript for that course and you will then carry three fewer credits for the remainder of the semester. ([back](#))

Do I have to take HCE 101?

Yes.

Although it is not part of the Core, HCE 101: Holy Cross Experience is required of all first-year students. There are enough sections scheduled in the fall and spring semesters to accommodate all students who need the course. ([back](#))

How do I satisfy the Core requirements if I am in the Honors Program?

Follow the Honors Program requirements.

There is no one-to-one correspondence between the Honors courses and Core courses. Instead, completing the Honors requirements in their entirety replaces completing the Core Requirements in their entirety. If you have questions, see the Honors director. ([back](#))