Major Modification to Program Form

Program Title | POST Code
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Christianity and Culture Major | ASMAJ 0463

Division | Associated with (Division)
--- | ---
Arts & Science | n/a

Unit | Associated with (Unit)
--- | ---
St. Michael's College | n/a

Effective Date | March 1, 2018

Program Information

Current Calendar Copy

Consult Program Coordinator, St. Michael's College

The courses of the Christianity and Culture Program include (1) all the SMC prefixed courses listed below under the Christianity and Culture heading, and (2) the following courses of other programs and departments: HPS326H1/ITA631H1/NMC270H1/NMC289H1/RLG228H1/SMC176Y1/SMC213H1/SMC326H1/SMC464H1. In addition to Christianity and Culture courses, a number of other courses are cross-listed and may be counted towards the major and specialist programs as specified below. This list is available from the Program Co-ordinator, or on the St. Michael's College web site: http://stmikes.utoronto.ca/christianity/courses

6 full courses or their equivalent including at least 2.0 FCEs at the 300+ level, 0.5 of which must be at the 400 level
1. SMC103Y1/SMC188Y1/SMC188H1 and SMC189H1/SMC203Y1
2. 2.0 FCEs from SMC200H1/SMC201H1/SMC203Y1/SMC205H1/SMC208Y1/SMC215H1/SMC232H1/SMC233H1
3. 2.5 FCE among additional Christianity and Culture courses, of which up to 1.5 FCE may be selected from the list of approved cross-listed courses.
4. 0.5 FCE from SMC233H1/SMC385H1

Proposed Calendar Copy

Description

A multidisciplinary exploration of Christian traditions from artistic, literary, philosophical, theological, scientific, social and historical perspectives.

Enrolment Requirements

This is a Type 1 Program. Enrolment is open to students who have completed 4.0 FCEs.

Completion Requirements

6.0 FCEs including at least 2.0 FCEs at the 300+ level, 0.5 of which must be at the 400 level
First year: No specific first-year requirements

1. SMC203Y1
2. 1.5 FCE from SMC200H1/SMC215H1/SMC218H1/SMC232H1
3. 0.5 FCE from SMC370H1/SMC371H1/SMC383H1/SMC385H1 or any course from Breadth Requirement Category 5: The Physical and Mathematical Universes.
4. An additional 3.0 FCE from Christianity and Culture courses, of which one full course equivalent may be taken from the list of approved cross-listed courses.

Proposal Questions – General

Brief Description of the Proposed Changes (Provide a brief summary.)
The changes reduce the gateway to one course at the second year level (SMC203Y1), simplify the suite of required second-year courses, and clarify students’ progress through the major.

**Details of the Proposed Changes** *(Changes to program description, requirements, and program learning outcomes.)*

The changes in the course programme consist of the following:

- The first year suite of SMC103Y1/SMC188Y1/SMC188H1 no longer offer a gateway into the programme; SMC203Y1 (Christianity and Society through the Ages) is now the sole gateway course. This simplifies the structure of the major by reducing previous duplication of gateway course options and ensures that all students will receive a comprehensive introduction to Christian history and research methods early in the programme.

- In place of a 2.0 FCE requirement at the 200-level, drawn from a combination of H and Y courses totaling 4.0 half courses, the proposed revision includes a 1.5 FCE requirement at the 200-level drawn from four H courses (2.0 FCE), each of which offers an introduction to one of our thematic clusters: Christianity and the Arts (SMC200H1); Varieties of Christian Community (SMC215H1); Christianity and Education (SMC218H1); and Christianity and Science (SMC232H1). This more restricted requirement will simplify progress through the programme by creating more focused options at the 200-level and reducing duplication, and positioning students for the range of 300-level options which allow cultivation of breadth within and across the thematic areas of the programme.

- We have broadened the avenues for students to fulfill their quantitative reasoning requirement in the programme. Previously, this could be fulfilled exclusively through a second-year course in Christianity and Science and a third-year course, SMC385H1 (Multicultural Toronto, by the Numbers). The revised proposal retains SMC385H, adds several Christianity and Science options at the third-year level, and permits students to identify another suitable course from BR = 5. This offers students more freedom; at the same time, students who opt to fulfill this requirement from C & C courses will do so consistently at the 300-level, again clarifying their progress through the major.

- A number of courses are being revised and/or proposed as part of this revision. One new course, SMC218H, has been developed to introduce students to one of the programme’s thematic areas. Several other courses, such as SMC208Y1 (Major Christian Thinkers) and SMC206H1 (Christianity and Music) have been re-proposed as H courses at the 300-level, to foster a more transparent progression from the required suite of 200-level courses to more advanced courses. Several new courses, such as SMC303H1 (Global Christianities), are being created, and others deleted, to respond to reviewers’ suggestion to simplify our offerings and to adopt a more global, ecumenical programme focus. Finally, we have added FCE prerequisites for courses at the 300- and 400-level to encourage regular progress from lower to higher level courses.

**Rationale** *(Explain why the changes have been proposed, providing any additional information that may be helpful for review, or of relevance for Curriculum Committees. This may include connections to the unit’s priorities, recent reviews or institutional planning, or alignment with other programs.)*

In November 2014, the Christianity and Culture program underwent a regular cyclical external review, in accord with the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process. Several recommendations emerged from this report. Most significantly, reviewers noted that the resources required for the Specialist may not be justified by the low enrolment numbers, recommended simplification of our course offerings and a clearer articulation of their relations, emphasized the need to respond to the recent loss of the Concurrent Teacher Education (CTEP) major in religious education and suggested that the program’s traditional emphasis on Western Christianity and Catholicism be supplemented by a more global and ecumenical focus. Some of these, such as the suspension of the Specialist subject post, were enacted in the academic year 2015-2016. Others, such as the revision of the SMC203Y1 curriculum to reflect a more global emphasis, were completed in 2016-2017. The current proposals represent a more substantive and comprehensive response, based on work conducted by the core faculty during several meetings in the summer 2015, fall 2016, and fall 2017. The revisions respond primarily to the reviewers’ request for simplification and clearer progress through the programme, though some of the course proposals also reflect reviewers’ comments on the content of the programme, particularly in its new 200-level course in Christianity and Education and several proposed courses that explore Christianity in its global contexts.

**Impact** *(Specify the impact the changes will have on students, and on other units/programs. If courses listed in the program are offered by other units, include a letter of support from the head of that unit, speaking to enrolment)*
The principal impact hoped for is a clarification of the students’ progress through the program. The suite of 200-level courses that serve as the gateway and second-level requirements for the programme are considerably fewer, which simplifies students’ course selections as well as ensuring that program faculty can offer all of these courses every year. On the other hand, at the 300-level, students will have a great deal of freedom to pursue personal interests across the thematic areas of the program.

**Consultation** *(Describe consultation that has already been done with students, faculty, and other units.)*

Preparation for the UTQAP review involved broad consultation with all stakeholders and is the remote antecedent to the changes now proposed. The reviewers also had the opportunity to meet with groups of students, faculty, library staff and other stakeholders in the course of developing their recommendations. Finally, these proposals have benefitted from lively discussion in the St. Michael’s College Council, which includes not only faculty but also representation from the student union, the registrar, student life offices, and other members of the SMC community, including a dedicated discussion of the program itself that took place at the November 2017 meeting of the St. Michael’s College Council.

**Diversity** *(How does the proposed program or modification support diversity? E.g through curriculum design supporting different learners, accommodation, etc.)*

The proposed modification simplifies the program structure and allows greater flexibility in students’ progress – particularly by reducing the Y course requirements to the single gateway course. This should improve access for a wider range of students. In addition, in the revision of SMC203Y1 and new course proposals, greater emphasis has been placed on diverse global expressions of Christianity throughout history, as suggested in the UTQAP review. Finally, program faculty will continue to work closely with the SMC Writing Centre and the University of Toronto Accessibility Services to accommodate students with a variety of learning needs.

**Resource Implications** *(Provide a statement of the resource requirements for the program, and an indication of whether you can meet these requirements through your existing resources, or have received additional resources from the Dean.)*

There are no resource implications for these changes; they will be supported by the existing faculty cohort.

**Faculty and TA Support**

Courses in the program will be taught by two tenure stream and three teaching stream faculty members with budgetary appointments at St. Michael’s College.

**Arts & Science - Divisional Data** *(For further definition of these objectives, see the Degree Objectives Guidelines (July 2008).)*

**Academic Context** *(Outline the context that explains why the program is designed this way, e.g. relation of program to discipline, students’ interests, career paths, etc.)*

The proposed modification does not substantively change the academic rationale defined in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process, except insofar as it simplifies progress through the program.

**Learning Outcomes** *(Explain how the change affects the program learning outcomes, including disciplinary goals, relevant methodologies and skills acquired upon program completion.)*

The general objective of the Christianity and Culture Programmes, as stated in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process, is to offer students an opportunity to study Christianity from a variety of perspectives, including its self-understanding, its history and its interaction with various facets of Western and world cultures. The Major Programme has the following objectives: 1. To provide students with a broad foundation in the study of diverse Christian traditions of art, literature, science, philosophy, theology, ritual, law, and social and institutional history—with a special emphasis on the Catholic tradition; 2. To provide students with strong skills in critical thinking, analysis and both oral and written communication, particularly the articulation and evaluation of scholarly arguments and the negotiation of conflicting perspectives, theoretical frameworks and disciplinary approaches to the study of Christian traditions.

The proposed revisions do not substantively alter these learning objectives; indeed, we believe that the new structure will strengthen their acquisition by making options clearer for students and better positioning for courses in higher years. The simplified structure of the required suite of 200-level courses asks every student to study the
diversity of Christian traditions throughout history in SMC203Y1, as well as at least three different thematic and
disciplinary approaches to their study in the second requirement. That combined requirement provides for both the
broad foundation described in Learning Outcome 1, and, regarding Learning Outcome 2, the more specific critical
formation within specific areas of inquiry and study (whether related to Education, Science, Society, or the Arts). The
strengthening of our offerings at the 300-level, as well as new FCE prerequisites, will allow the faculty to think more
deliberately about how to introduce and strengthen transferable skills of critical thinking, analysis and capacity for
research that build on the foundation associated with Learning Outcome 1, while specifying these in the context of
faculty’s own areas of teaching and research expertise and interest, and attendant theoretical frameworks and
disciplinary approaches, which draw on law, education, music, history, the history and philosophy of science, and
literary and visual arts.

**Depth of Knowledge** *(Explain how particular courses allow students to achieve depth of knowledge, relating to the
proposed change.)*

As part of an interdisciplinary, College-based program, the Major in Christianity and Culture has traditionally
achieved depth of knowledge by fostering students’ critical engagement with multiple scholarly perspectives on a
shared object of study, as well as a well-ordered sequence of courses that apply increasing rigour and a wider range
of scholarly and research tools. The addition of minimum FCE requirements for all of our upper-year courses (4.0 FCE
for 300-level courses; 8.0 FCE for 400-level) as part of our curriculum revisions this year will encourage a clear and
transparent progress from lower-level to higher-level courses, while also preserving significant scope for student
choice and creativity.

Ordinarily, students are expected to begin their studies in Christianity and Culture with the mandatory gateway
course Christianity and Society through the Ages (SMC203Y1). This course provides students with a broad foundation
for their subsequent studies by offering a sustained overview of Christianity as a dynamic and diverse historical
phenomenon. This course also places a strong emphasis upon the development of academic skills in critical reading
and writing, the formulation of academic arguments, comparative analysis of texts and an introduction to
fundamental principles of historiography and historical enquiry.

Students are required to take 1.5 FCE from a suite of four courses at the 200-level. These courses are intended to
consolidate the foundation provided by SMC203Y1, to apply this broad knowledge base to more specialized studies
in at least three thematic areas relevant to the study of Christianity as an historical and cultural phenomenon, and to
develop and strengthen specific academic competencies. In these courses, students continue to receive training in
research methods and the critical analysis of texts, images and other media, while also cultivating an initial sense of
the distinctive contributions of different disciplinary perspectives to the study of Christianity and Culture. To this
suite is added one of several H courses, ordinarily at the 300-level, to engage students’ study of Christianity with
their quantitative reasoning skills.

An additional three full courses, including courses at the 200- and 300-level, encourage students to broaden their
knowledge of Christian traditions, history and practices; to integrate skills and perspectives from different disciplines
or fields of enquiry; and to put these scholarly tools into practice through research projects, oral presentations
critical debates and, in some courses, field work and/or community-engaged learning.

The purpose of a mandatory 400-level research seminar is to further develop students’ capacity for critical analysis,
research and integration. Having completed a full range of courses at the 200- and 300-level, Majors are presumed to
have a broad familiarity with various scholarly perspectives on the study of Christianity, as well as significant
grounding in scholarly research, the identification of research problems and the construction of academic arguments.
In the 400-level course, students receive the opportunity to engage at a very high level with specific questions of
scholarly enquiry, according to their own interests and instructors’ expertise. These courses provide a significant
opportunity to apply prior learning, to engage in more substantial research and to consolidate knowledge and
methods acquired in previous courses in relation to the specific challenge or topic under investigation.

**Competencies:** *For these five categories, describe how each competency is developed within the program to the
degree relevant to the area/discipline. If the program does not address a particular competency, explain why that
competency is not relevant to your area/discipline and how students in your program are expected to attain that
competency within their overall degree program.*
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<th>Critical and Creative Thinking</th>
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<td>The proposed modification does not substantively change the achievement of student competency in critical and creative thinking, as defined in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process. Critical engagement of primary texts feature prominently in all of our courses, beginning with SMC203Y1. Our courses in Christian intellectual traditions and Christianity and science, beginning with SMC218H1 and SMC232H1, respectively, place special emphasis on the construction and evaluation of theoretical arguments; and students are encouraged to think creatively in many of our courses, including especially SMC200H1 and our robust 300-level offerings in literature, music and the visual arts.</td>
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<th>Communication</th>
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<td>The proposed modification does not substantively change the achievement of student competency in communication, as defined in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process. Students in SMC203Y1 complete a series of written assignments intended to strengthen their command of academic prose, and this is reinforced in term papers in other 200-level courses. Like most other programmes at SMC, the Christianity and Culture programme places value on small classes and tutorial discussions; particularly in upper-level courses, students also gain experience with oral presentation, debate and other forms of communication and assessment.</td>
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<th>Information Literacy</th>
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<td>The proposed modification does not substantively change the achievement of student competency in information literacy, as defined in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process. SMC203Y1 introduces students to the conventions of scholarly research in the study of Christian history, and this skill is strengthened through further research paper assignments at the 300- and 400-level. Faculty in the Christianity and Culture programme have close working relationships with the instructional librarians in Kelly Library, who often collaborate with instructors to develop workshops and training sessions on identifying and evaluating strong sources for scholarly writing. In course such as SMC 305H, Christianity and Popular Culture, these more traditional sources as extended to include film, television, science fiction literature and other popular media.</td>
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<td>As a discipline in the Humanities, Christianity and Culture has not traditionally emphasized competence in quantitative reasoning. Nevertheless, the proposed modification provides several options for students to strengthen this capacity. They can take one of three upper-level courses that engage Christian thought with particular questions in mathematics and the physical and natural sciences; they can take the course Multicultural Toronto, by the Numbers (SMC385H), which engages census data in exploring the religious history of Toronto; or they can designate a course from another unit as part of their program, provided it would fulfill Breadth Requirement Category 5: The Physical and Mathematical Universes.</td>
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<td>The proposed modification does not substantively change the achievement of student competency in social and ethical responsibility, as defined in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process. All of the courses in Christianity and Culture relate to one degree or another to questions of social and ethical responsibility, as students study Christian responses to a variety of social issues throughout history. In a number of cases, particularly in the cluster of courses in Christianity, community and public life, beginning with SMC215H1, these ethical issues are fundamental to the course as a whole, as for example in Christianity and Politics (SMC309H1) and community-engaged learning courses like International Development, Justice and Human Dignity (SMC362H1). In these courses, as well as others in our programme, students are encouraged to examine questions of cultural identity, moral reasoning and social justice from a range of disciplinary and ethical perspectives.</td>
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<th>Integrative, Inquiry-based Activity</th>
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<td>The proposed modification does not substantively change the achievement of student competency in integrative, inquiry-based activity, as defined in the 2010-2011 curriculum renewal process. The required 400-level course requirement, including directed research and independent study options, provide a special opportunity for students to encounter significant intellectual challenges in a variety of academic disciplines, to synthesise their acquired knowledge and to refine skills of research, presentation and communication. Most 400-level courses are structured as seminars and focus on fields of enquiry directly related to faculty expertise, and all require students to produce a significant research project. This can involve the in-depth analysis of a literary text, the tracing of social or intellectual history on a particular topic, and/or the formulation of constructive arguments on a controversial or disputed question in the field. The students' preliminary research is usually offered in a proposal and/or class presentation, from which they receive feedback from the professor and peers, followed by an in-depth study of the topic or elaboration of the argument through the submission of a research paper at the end of the term.</td>
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<td>Steps</td>
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<td>Development/consultation within unit</td>
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<td>Consultation with Dean’s office (and VPAP)</td>
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<td>Reported to the Provost and included in annual report to AP&amp;P</td>
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<td>Ontario Quality Council – reported annually</td>
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