

Integrations Curriculum Summary

Excerpts from the proposal presented by the RISE Committee, 3-27-2018

This 10-page summary provides a basic overview of the key parts of the Integrations Curriculum. For more detail, please refer to the Integrations Curriculum Proposal. The proposal is 59 pages long but uses a hyper-linked Table of Contents to allow for easy navigation to desired features of the curriculum.

There are several key components of the Integrations Curriculum, each of which contributes to the goals outlined above. How these components connect to the goals is the subject of this section. Detailed explanations of each of these components are found in Section 5. See Figure 1 for a visual depiction of the curriculum.

At the heart of the proposal is the *Integrated Portfolio*. The Integrated Portfolio is an ePortfolio, which is used in over 50% of colleges and universities in the US.¹ ePortfolios are both a product (a digital collection of artifacts) and a process (selection of what to add to the collection; reflection on what the artifact means and how it affected one's learning). It is a virtual space where students can collect their work (essays, research projects, photos, videos, multimedia presentations, resumes, etc.) as they move through their classes, which they can use to reflect on their learning and growth. ePortfolios are both a pedagogical activity (meant to generate learning) and an assessment tool (meant to document progress).

The Integrated Portfolio is at the center of the two required and one optional Writing courses, which are, perhaps obviously, the way we incorporate the Writing Intensive high-impact practice. One of the goals of the final writing course is to provide for an opportunity to integrate student learning across courses, co-curricular activities, and life experiences under the tutelage of a faculty member. We also expect that the Integrated Portfolio will help students to articulate their own understanding of the value of liberal arts and sciences education they have participated in, as well as provide one of the Common Intellectual Experiences of the students. Finally, ePortfolios are themselves considered a high-impact practice.

The proposed curriculum takes seriously faculty concerns about the writing abilities of our students, which have been raised in many settings. In contrast to the Common Curriculum, the new curriculum makes sure that Writing requirements are met throughout the student's college career. The Writing courses are full of high-impact practices: First Year Seminar, ePortfolio, Writing Intensive, and Common Intellectual Experience. These courses are crucial to the development of core academic competencies and the integration of the student's learning. In addition to the writing courses, we have also built writing requirements into The Human Experience Way of Thinking and Theology 2.

We are in the process of developing five *Themes* that will help students make connections and integrate their learning across coursework. These themes will also contribute to the high-impact

¹ Kahn, S. "E-Portfolios: A Look at Where We've Been, Where We Are Now, and Where We're (Possibly) Going." *Peer Review* Winter 2014, Vol. 16, No. 1

practice of a Common Intellectual Experience, as well as the development of ethical competencies. We have heard over and over again from faculty and students of their desire for cross-disciplinary conversation; teaching in a theme will provide opportunities for faculty to collaborate outside of their department and will provide opportunities for enriched conversations among students inside and outside of the classroom. Since students will be expected to take three same-themed courses in the different Ways of Thinking (discussed below) this also satisfies our goals of giving our students a broad base of disciplinary approaches and methods. By having three different Ways of Thinking on the same topic, students will see the distinctive value different disciplines bring to bear on an issue.

This curriculum requires that students take courses in the following five Ways of Thinking: Abstract Reasoning, Artistic Creation and Interpretation, The Human Experience, Scientific Inquiry About the Natural World, and Scientific Thinking about Societies, Groups, and Individuals. Instead of using the administrative divisional structure to develop the five Ways of Thinking, RISE consulted with a variety of faculty to develop Ways of Thinking based on methodology and disciplinary approaches. This element of the curriculum is designed to fill the goals of a broad base of disciplinary methods and perspectives, core academic competencies, and explaining the value of a liberal arts and sciences education.

The proposed curriculum includes two sequential courses on Culture & Social Difference. These courses examine the ways in which gender, race, and ethnicity structure and impact our lives and how these differences are made to matter in society. Students will learn why none of these categories, in isolation, is sufficient to conceptualize either individual or social identity and will learn to think critically about their own gendered, racial, and ethnic identities as well as identify the social and cultural factors that shape and contribute to each. In addition, students will critically analyze the ways in which these forms of identity raise questions of justice in regard to access and participation in communal life. RISE believes that in addition to being a Diversity/Global Learning high-impact practice, as well as contributing to our desire for developing students' ethical competencies, these courses help support the mission of CSB/SJU. Additionally, development of courses that address racial, gender, and other inequities has repeatedly been supported and encouraged in our conversations with students.

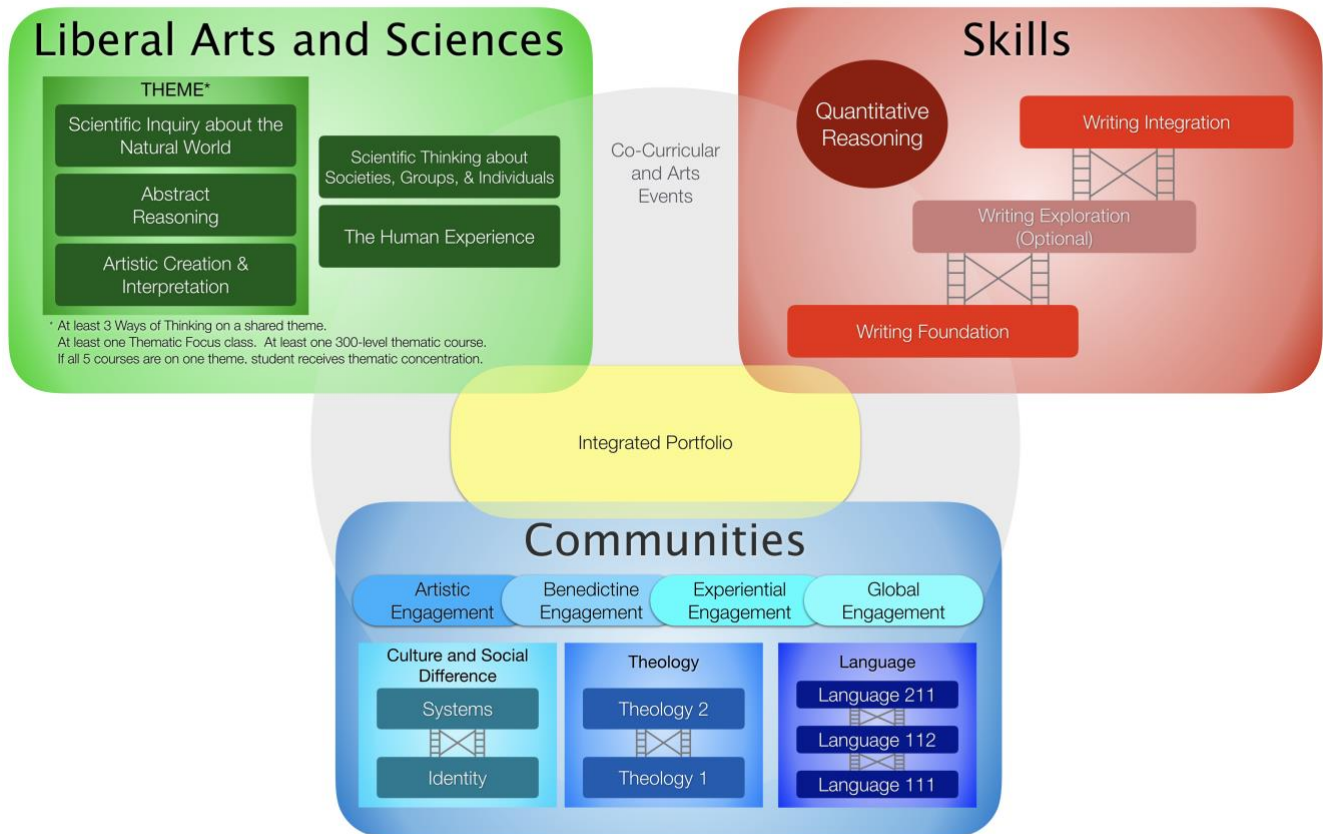
Reflecting the Catholic and Benedictine mission of our schools in multiple ways, the new curriculum includes two sequential courses in Theology and an engagement component with Benedictine community and practice. First, within the two theology courses, students engage in theological reasoning and analyze religious engagement in society. In addition to Theological Reasoning and Religious Engagement, the two Theology classes in the new curriculum carry other general education learning outcomes: the first of the two theology courses carries a Common Good outcome and the second carries a Write outcome. In this way, the theological courses are well integrated with other outcomes of the students' general education. Further integration of the schools' mission is ensured through the Benedictine Engagement requirement—one of four Engagement requirements which can be met through a class or outside of a class as explained below.

The new curriculum includes four Engagement Requirements: Experiential Engagement, Global Engagement, Artistic Engagement and Benedictine Engagement. RISE has concluded that these four requirements are fundamentally about getting students to have certain kinds of “real-life” experiences together with a structured reflection that helps them derive meaningful lessons from

these experiences. The common elements of the four Engagement requirements are an experiential activity and formal reflection, and they can be done inside or outside of credit-bearing class. The Engagement aspects of students' education will be incorporated into their work on the Integrated Portfolio.

The other components of this curriculum include a language proficiency requirement and a Quantitative Reasoning designation. We expect that many students will also encounter a Global Engagement requirement in their language classes. Quantitative Reasoning has been embedded in the Scientific Inquiry About the Natural World Way of Thinking, but can also be completed through other coursework.

Figure 1. Major Components of the Integrations Curriculum



design by Ben Faber

Integrations Curriculum Overview

This curriculum was developed using scaffolded learning outcomes. With the exception of Quantitative Reasoning, students will encounter the 12 Core Learning Outcomes at least twice (and some three times) with increasing rigor. Students may also encounter a third level of rigor for the outcomes within their majors. These learning outcomes are not discipline-specific and were developed with the direct input of around 50 faculty members; they are based on the learning outcomes approved by the JFS in Spring 2017. They have been integrated broadly across the curriculum with the intention that students will encounter different levels of the learning outcomes in different types of courses.

Integrations Curriculum Learning Outcomes

ANALYZING TEXTS: Elicit and construct meaning from texts.

COLLABORATION: Interact effectively in a group while incorporating diverse perspectives.

COMMON GOOD: Develop a conception of a moral life that incorporates concern for the common good.

GENDER: Examine the social construction of gender and related individual and systemic inequities.

INFORMATION LITERACY: Identify, evaluate, and responsibly use information.

METACOGNITION: Optimize one's own thinking and learning processes.

QUANTITATIVE REASONING: Solve quantitative problems and develop and communicate arguments supported by quantitative evidence.

RACE AND ETHNICITY: Examine the social construction of race and ethnicity and resulting inequities.

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT: Analyze religious engagement with society.

SPEAK: Construct ideas, opinions and information in appropriate oral forms.

THEOLOGICAL REASONING: Think critically about sources, doctrines, and themes of the Christian tradition.

WRITE: Construct ideas, opinions and information in appropriate written forms.

In the following section, we include brief descriptions of each of the required courses. The next few pages are designed to provide a quick overview of how a student might move through the curriculum.

Writing Sequence

Writing Foundations (fall semester, first year, general education only)

This is the first in a series of two four-credit courses focused on Writing and is taken by all first-year students in the fall semester. One common book is included, which will be chosen collectively by the faculty teaching the course. The course also introduces students to the Integrated Portfolio. Beyond the common book, individual faculty choose their own topic for the course. This course cannot count toward a major.

Writing Exploration (2-credits, optional)

This is an optional part of the writing sequence. There are two different options, one which focuses on developing communication skills in a variety of media and one that focuses on professional development. These courses cannot be offered in a major. Students can take none, one, or both.

Writing Integration (4 credits; junior or senior year; completion of the thematic coursework and all four Engagement requirements is a pre- or co-requisite)

This is the final course in the writing sequence. It cannot be done in a major. In addition to meeting the learning outcomes, the Integrated Portfolio is completed in this course.

5 Ways of Thinking and Thematic Coursework

There are five Ways of Thinking: Abstract Reasoning, Artistic Creation and Interpretation, The Human Experience, Scientific Inquiry About the Natural World, and Scientific Thinking about Societies, Groups, and Individuals. Students must take 4 credits in each Way of Thinking. These courses can count toward majors. Students may satisfy no more than 2 Ways of Thinking in the same department.

Students are required to take three courses on the same theme and each of the three same-themed courses must be on a different Way of Thinking. Any combination of 1, 2, and 4 credit courses, totaling 4 credits in a single Way of Thinking can satisfy that Way of Thinking. The equivalent of two 4-credit Ways of Thinking courses can be (but need not be) un-themed. At least one of the same-themed courses must be a 200 level Thematic Focus course and at least one of the same-themed courses must be at the 300 level.

Proposed Themes

The Themes committee developed five themes, with the expectation that the final proposal would include the four themes that worked best across the five Ways of Thinking. However, based on the data we received, RISE determined that it would be premature to reduce the number of themes in the proposal from five to four. RISE recommends that during the implementation phase efforts be made to see if offering five themes is possible, and if not, then work with departments to narrow the list.

If the Integrations Curriculum is approved, then the only five themes that will be potential themes at the start of the new curriculum will be Environment, Justice, Movement, Technology and Society, and Truth. However, RISE acknowledges that more work will need to be done to refine the descriptions of the themes and titles to ensure the themes are inclusive of all Ways of Thinking and also to determine the correct number of themes. Thus, we are presenting descriptions of the themes and their titles with the understanding that *these are likely not the final descriptions or titles*. During implementation, RISE recommends that ad hoc committees be created to revise and refine the descriptions and titles of each theme in consultation with departments and programs.

There are two kinds of themed classes: Thematic Focus, where 100% of the course addresses the theme, and Thematic Encounter, where 25% of the course will touch on the theme. Students will take at least one Thematic Focus course. While these courses can count toward the major, they have several obligations to the general education program. These courses are wholly dedicated to a single theme, are associated with a Way of Thinking (or two Ways of Thinking if they are team-taught by two faculty members with different methodological approaches), include a common reading on the theme, use the Integrated Portfolio, and introduce students to the liberal arts and sciences goal of studying a diverse array of disciplinary approaches. They can be on any topic within the theme. In cases where these courses are team taught by two faculty members with different methodological approaches, they can count as two distinct Ways of Thinking.

Thematic Encounter courses will be on the same theme as the student's Thematic Focus course. These courses must be associated with a Way of Thinking. At least one-quarter of a 4-credit course is devoted to one (and only one) of the themes.

The sketches below include bulleted lists of courses that would address the theme from each Way of Thinking, which might make it easier for faculty members to imagine themselves offering a themed course. **The descriptions of possible courses are illustrative only. They are not intended to exhaustively cover all potential courses, nor are they intended to identify every department that could contribute.** The sample classes are grouped by the Way of Thinking in the following order: Abstract Reasoning, Artistic Creation and Interpretation, Human Experience, Scientific Inquiry about the Natural World, and Scientific Thinking about Societies, Groups, and Individuals.

We believe these themes are excellent choices because they address issues of significance for our students and our world, allow students to explore these issues from a local and global perspective, allow students to reflect on how Benedictine practices might apply to questions in individual or social lives, and allow for broader reflection on questions of meaning, value and purpose.

Environment

This theme examines the impact of humans on our natural world and the impact of the natural world on humans. Courses in this theme may address a wide variety of approaches to studying the natural environment, but will be united by an emphasis on understanding the impact that humans have on the natural world, or the impact that the natural world has on human culture and society. This theme may also include classes that consider questions of sustainability such as the ability to meet society's present needs without compromising the needs of the future, or an analysis of the causes of climate change.

Courses in this theme might explore:

- Statistical or computational methods to model the impact that human activity has on the natural world or develop or evaluate models of populations affected by sustainability efforts.
- Artistic representations of human relationships to the natural world, or sustainable production methods.
- Literary efforts to understand humans' relationships to the natural world, or different historical or philosophical understandings of that relationship.
- The impact of human activity on the natural world, or strategies to preserve natural resources.
- How climate change has in turn impacted social, economic, or political systems and policies.

Justice

This theme focuses on historical and contemporary social change, whether forms of oppression or advocacy for human dignity and inclusion. Courses might explore historical or contemporary calls for fair and equitable conditions, institutions and laws, or the fight for human rights and equality, or various policies and movements that have restricted the same.

Courses in this theme might:

- Model or use data and statistical models to examine the impact of different policies on social change/social justice concerns such as income inequality.
- Explore the use of visual art, literature, and performance to advocate for or against social justice or to document or to critique social change.
- Study histories of enslavement or efforts to overthrow or recover from colonial oppression, or philosophical perspectives on justice.
- Study the use of science or technology, past or present, to maintain inequitable conditions or alleviate human suffering.
- Examine political activism, or income and wealth inequality

Movement

This theme examines the interactions of ideas, people, energy, information, or matter as they flow from one location, literal or metaphorical, to another. This theme recognizes that movement can occur across conceptual, historical and stylistic boundaries, and that humans, other animals, and even the most basic components of our world move in one form or another, and often, from one form to another.

Courses in this theme could include:

- Modeling natural resource or information transfers, immigration patterns, or effects of ecological invasions or examining how linguistic structure crosses borders.
- How theater, music, or art, transmit ideas across borders or how ideas and approaches come in contact with one another.

- The ways in which literature is used to understand migration, or histories of immigration for different countries and communities.
- Concepts in epidemiology, transfer of natural resources and technology, food and agricultural practices, or the ecological interactions in food chains.
- Past or present political, economic, or cultural causes of immigration or barriers to migration.

Technology & Society

This theme examines the ways in which individuals and societies shape, use, and respond to technology or science in the past, present or imagined future. Courses might explore past, present and anticipated technological or scientific innovations or the implications these have for our sense of self, culture, interactions, and social structures.

Courses in this theme might study:

- Algorithmic analysis and boundaries of computational complexity, models and limitations of machine intelligence, or how to codify intuition into a logical system.
- Artistic representations of science, science fiction, or technology and/or its consequences, real or imagined, or the impact that technological changes have had on literature or the visual and performing arts, in terms of content or the means of creation.
- The history of science and technology and its impact on society and the individual or how technology is blurring the boundaries between humans and machines, or the impact of artificial intelligence on selfhood.
- The interrelationship between technological advancement and the practice of science or the ways in which scientific advancements have impacted humans.
- The economic, political or social impacts of science and technology on societies and selfhood.

Truth

This theme examines what truth is, why it is valuable, how it shapes choices and our perceptions of ourselves and our world. This theme might explore efforts to discover and promote truth, or the ways in which lies, errors, biases, or faulty science subvert, obscure, and misidentify truth.

Courses in this theme might study:

- Examine and analyze the logical structure of arguments and their fallacies or use statistical analysis to identify the truths hidden in large data sets or complex systems
- The roles of artifice and authenticity in artistic expression or ways of illuminating truth or telling lies through representation in the arts.
- Human efforts to discover eternal and universal truths or the risks and consequences of telling the truth.
- Ways of illuminating truth through scientific research or developing scientific literacy.
- Ways in which our beliefs can obscure truths about ourselves or our world, how our biases can distort truth, or the processes and consequences of deceiving ourselves and others.

Culture and Social Difference Courses

Culture and Social Difference: Identity (either semester, first year, could count toward a major)

In this course, students will learn why none of these categories, in isolation, is sufficient to conceptualize either individual or social identity. Students will learn to think critically about their own gendered, racial, and ethnic identities as well as identify the social and cultural factors that shape and contribute to each. *Culture and Social Difference: Identity* must address gender, race, and ethnicity in the contemporary United States, though it can do this through the study of texts that are not primarily about the contemporary United States. This is the first of two courses focused on gender, race, and ethnicity. Faculty can choose their own topic, as long as it meets the learning outcomes. This course can count toward majors. This course must be completed in the first year and may not be used to satisfy a Way of Thinking.

Culture and Social Difference: Systems (*Culture and Social Difference: Identity* is a prerequisite)

In this course students will demonstrate an understanding of how constructions of race, gender, and ethnicity shape cultural rules and biases and how these constructions vary across time, cultures, and societies. In addition, students will critically analyze the ways in which these forms of identity raise questions of justice in regard to access and participation in communal life.

This is the second of a two-course series on Culture and Social Difference. This course can be on any topic that meets the learning outcomes and criteria. It can be taught in any department and can count toward majors but may not be used to satisfy a Way of Thinking.

Theology Sequence

Theology 1 (first three semesters)

This is the first of two courses focused on theology. Students think critically about sources and themes of the Christian tradition and begin to explore religious engagement with society. It is likely that this course will be developed under one course number to provide a degree of common grounding for the second theology course, though courses will vary by instructor.

This class also includes a grounding in Benedictine Hallmarks such that students are prepared to meet their Benedictine Engagement (BEN) requirement later. (The first theology class helps prepare students for the requirement but does not itself carry a BEN designation.)

Theology 2 (*Theology 1* is a prerequisite)

This is the second of two courses focused on theology. It can be on any topic that meets the learning outcomes, moving students into interpretation of theological sources and analysis of religious engagement with society. The second theology courses can be on a variety of topics. As in the current curriculum, these topics can continue to include religions other than Christianity.

Engagement Requirements

There are four requirements that have experiential components at their center: Experiential Engagement (EXP), Global Engagement (GLO), Artistic Engagement (ARTE) and Benedictine Engagement (BEN). RISE has concluded that these four requirements are fundamentally about getting students to have certain kinds of “real-life” experiences together with a structured reflection that helps them derive meaningful lessons from these experiences. The common elements of the four Engagement requirements are an experiential activity and formal reflection, and they can be done inside or outside a credit-bearing class.

Study Abroad fulfills the Experiential Learning and Global Engagement requirements. Additionally, students who study a semester abroad can take courses through the educational programming that counts toward the Ways of Thinking requirements. They may also have the opportunity to take *Culture and Social Difference: Systems*. Students are required to write an essay for their Integrated Portfolio that meets the requirements for Experiential Learning and Global Engagement. This assignment will be part of the class taught by the CSB/SJU faculty director.

Quantitative Reasoning Designation

There is a Quantitative Reasoning designation that could be met through a Way of Thinking (Abstract Reasoning, Scientific Inquiry about the Natural World and Scientific Thinking about Societies, Groups, and Individuals are all likely to contribute) or through the major. We do not expect that this will add to the student load, but we did want to ensure that students received college-level quantitative reasoning.

Language

Students must meet a proficiency standard equivalent to three semesters of language classes as they do in the Common Curriculum. Students may test out of the requirement.

Required Arts and Co-Curricular Events

There are a total of 10 required co-curricular events. In addition to the requirements stated above, all courses falling under the Artistic Expression Way of thinking must include attendance at two Arts events. Faculty teaching Thematic Encounter courses would be encouraged to consider including co-curricular events, especially when they relate to themes.