Core Curriculum

INTRODUCTION
From the commencement of undergraduate teaching at The University of Notre Dame Australia in 1994, it was decided to establish that, as a matter of on-going policy, all students would be required to enrol in a ‘Core Curriculum’ which would include three specifically designed units in Theology, Philosophy and Ethics. These core units have several functions:

- They help to create and sustain the ‘context of Catholic faith and values’ which is central to the Objects of the University as defined in its enabling Act of Parliament.
- They provide a liberal education base for the wide range of professional courses undertaken by undergraduate students prior to their chosen vocation.
- They encourage a ‘coming together’ of students from many religious and non-religious backgrounds and provide a setting in which important social and moral issues can be freely discussed and debated.
- They complement the ‘service learning’ and social justice education units which students are encouraged to take as part of their courses.

The Core Curriculum is a distinguishing characteristic of a Notre Dame undergraduate education.

CORE UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

Introduction to Theology
This unit seeks to introduce students to the rich heritage of theological thinking within the Catholic tradition by considering such key elements as the person of Christ, the role of Scripture, the relationship between faith and reason, the Sacramental life of the Church and the dialogue between faith and contemporary culture. Students are encouraged to reflect on these key issues in the light of their own experience as adult learners.

Introduction to Philosophy
The term ‘philosophy’ literally means the ‘love of wisdom’. Essentially the impulse to philosophise is the desire to understand the meaning and significance of things. In this sense our quest for truth in science, our quest for values for living, for beauty in art and literature, and for meaning in politics and history are all driven by the impulse to find answers to some of the most fundamental questions of human existence. In PH 100 we explore some of the central themes of philosophy - reason and faith, the nature of love, the nature of beauty, the nature of the good life, the nature of knowledge and the nature of being human - by examining how they are handled by a number of influential thinkers in the western philosophical tradition.

Students of philosophy are encouraged to reflect deeply on these fundamental questions and to examine their own beliefs. We encounter different styles of thinking and learn to critically analyse and evaluate the arguments of different philosophers. We also develop cultural literacy by exploring how great thinkers have influenced western culture.

Ethics
In the moral traditions of both East and West, Ethics is concerned with three interrelated themes: what we value as ‘good’ or ‘bad’: what we regard as ‘virtuous’ or ‘vicious’ behaviour, or character; and what we define by rule as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ to protect ourselves and society from harm and promote the health and well-being of the community. This unit introduces the themes and methods of Ethics as an academic discipline with the emphasis on practical skills in sound ethical decision-making and critical examination of current moral issues.

Other Core Units
In addition to the above core undergraduate units, individual learning areas, with the approval of the Vice Chancellor and the Trustees, may substitute special units which reflect particular needs or circumstances on individual campuses or in a specific course. For example, special units relating to Aboriginal spirituality, culture and reconciliation are taught on the Broome Campus. For medical students and law students, the compulsory ethics unit for each course focuses on issues and questions especially relevant to these professions.

FURTHER INFORMATION
The information contained in this publication is designed as a basic course description only. If you would like further information regarding courses, or information pertaining to admissions, fees or the University itself, please consult the Notre Dame Prospectus.

If you would like to view the University facilities, please contact the Prospective Students Office on (08) 9433 0533 or at future@nd.edu.au

Visit the website at www.nd.edu.au