

Assessment Report AY 2021-2022

1. Identifying Information

Saint Ignatius Institute
Certificate Program (Saint Ignatius Institute—living learning community)
Erin Brigham, SII Director

SII Faculty Steering Committee members
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2. Mission Statement

Following revisions in 2019/2020, the mission statement is as follows:

Mission Statement:

The St. Ignatius Institute is a core living/learning community at the University of San Francisco (USF) that is distinctively Jesuit. The SII curriculum and community challenge students to think critically and creatively; to reason and ask questions; and to attain a deeper understanding of the human experience across time and space. Our academic approach is multidisciplinary, historical, and global. Our curriculum integrates the study of influential ideas from around the globe to engage with the challenging realities of our world. Through intellectual inquiry, community involvement, service to others, and exploration of spirituality, SII students tackle “Great Questions”—the ideas and issues people have debated and discussed for centuries. Through SII core classes and symposia, students are challenged to explore new ideas, uncover old theories, listen respectfully to opinions different than their own, and, in the senior symposium, reflect on their own education and future paths.

3. Program Learning Outcomes

1. Identify major themes, key concepts, and perennial questions in works across the humanities (arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion and theology)
2. Interpret and analyze complex and contested histories and contexts of Christianity in the world before 1800
3. Employ interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, or discipline-specific methods in scholarly inquiry
4. Articulate critical arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources
5. Evaluate challenges facing local and global communities in light of community engagement
6. Articulate their own intellectual and personal gifts in light of major world religions, particularly the Catholic, Jesuit traditions of *cura personalis*, finding God in all things, discernment of one’s deepest desires, contemplation in action, and becoming people for (and with) others

Area D Core Learning Outcomes

Philosophy D1

- Understand the value of thinking philosophically by reflecting on the meaning of one's own life, the conceptual foundations of human actions and beliefs, the nature of the self and of human responsibility
- Understand and discuss coherently the central philosophical issues, such as the problem of evil, the existence of God, free will, the mind/body relation, human knowledge, and the question of being
- Demonstrate an ability to identify and articulate, both orally and in writing, the primary philosophical themes and issues found in the writings of the major philosophers
- Demonstrate an ability to evaluate philosophical arguments critically, both orally and in writing, using philosophical methods that have been developed by either historical or contemporary philosophers

Theology D2

- Human Dimensions of Religion, Theology, and Spirituality. Understand their own spirituality and recognize how religion, theology, and spirituality underlie and correlate with a broad range of human experience
- Religious Diversity. Understand, differentiate, and appreciate various religious traditions, as encouraged by Vatican II's stance on the Catholic Church's relationship with other faiths. This understanding will entail the creedal vision, moral teachings, historical context, social expression, and key rites and symbols of these faith traditions
- Social Justice. Investigate and discuss how religious and theological traditions can work effectively for social justice and for the good of the entire human family and the environment that sustains it

Ethics D3

- Identify and articulate central ethical problems concerning equality, justice, and rights, and understand the role these play in personal and professional life
- Compare and contrast major ethical theories, to show how actions can be determined to be just or unjust, right or wrong, or good or bad, and to demonstrate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of major ethical theories
- Investigate ways of settling ethical disputes in arriving at ethical judgments
- Think and write critically about classic and contemporary moral issues
- Identify the contributions of diversity and recognize the challenge that it presents in resolving contemporary ethical issues
- Demonstrate an ability to apply ethical theories and values in personal decision-making

4. Curricular Map

Following revisions in 2019/2020, the certificate requirements are as follows:

Students complete 8 units of the following coursework from at least two of the three areas listed below.

Philosophy (D1)

- SII 210 - Ancient Philosophy

Theology (D2)

- SII 106 - Sacred Scripture
- SII 201 - Catholic Thought
- SII 203 - Rel & Cult in Late Antiquity
- SII 205 - The Battle for Middle Earth
- SII 220 - Catholic Social Thought

Ethics (D3)

- SII 214 - Theories of Ethics
- SII 215 - Ethical Theory/Practice

SII Symposium (8 units)

One 2-unit SII Symposium per year is required for the first three years, and Senior Symposium is required in the final year.

5. Assessment schedule between APRs; description of the methodology for the required and/or alternative assessment process; description of results

Building on the work of previous directors and with the support of the SII Faculty Steering Committee, the focus of this year's assessment is on SII symposia in light of two PLOs. Our goal is to revise symposia guidelines and better align future symposia to support student learning related to the SII PLOs.

Current symposia guidelines (See Appendix 1) emphasize deep reading of primary sources and engaging perennial questions; therefore, we decided to assess PLO 1 "Identify major themes, key concepts, and perennial questions in works across the humanities (arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion and theology)" and PLO 4 "Articulate critical arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources."

Our assessment methodology entailed two parts:

1. Review all symposia syllabi (5) from AY 21-22 with attention to PLO 1 & 4.
2. Revise symposia guidelines and circulate them to SII faculty.

1. Results of syllabi review

Reviewer 1:

Semester	Symposium	Identifies SII PLOs?	Are CLOs connected to PLO #1 "Identify major themes, key concepts, and perennial questions in works across the humanities (arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion and theology)"?	Are CLOs connected to PLO #4 "Articulate critical arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources"?	Do assignments assess student learning related to PLOs 1 or 4 (directly or indirectly)?
FA 22	SYM:Power&PersuasionJesuitArts - 41053 - SII 330 - 01	yes	Yes.	Yes	Yes, syllabus specifies how assessment works tied to assignments
FA 22	SYM: Manners and Etiquette - 41054 - SII 330 - 02	no	PLOs not listed so, no	Again, no	Much more needs to be specified here
FA 22	Freshman Symposium: Etiquette - 41055 - SII 330 - 03	no	PLOs not listed so, no	Again, no	Much more needs to be specified here
SP 23	SYM:Christian-Zen Spirituality - 21387 - SII 330 - 01	no	PLOs not listed; CLOs address this	No for PLOs; CLOs address this	Could be more clearly stated
SP 23	SYM: Exploring the Quran - 21388 - SII 330 - 02	no	PLOs not listed; CLOs address this	No for PLOs; CLOs address this	No but this would be an easy fix

Reviewer 2:

Semester	Symposium	Identifies SII PLOs?	Are CLOs connected to PLO #1 "Identify major themes, key concepts, and perennial questions in works across the humanities (arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion and theology)"?	Are CLOs connected to PLO #4 "Articulate critical arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources"?	Do assignments assess student learning related to PLOs 1 or 4 (directly or indirectly)?
FA 22	SYM:Power&PersuasionJesuitArts - 41053 - SII 330 - 01	yes	Yes: Articulate how early Jesuit ideas were visually promoted through architecture and the arts of painting, sculpture, and/or printmaking	Yes: Offer historical or critical responses to early Jesuit art that exemplify one or more of the Order's global, missionary "encounters" during the early modern period	Yes

FA 22	SYM: Manners and Etiquette - 41054 - SII 330 - 02	no	Yes: Students will be able to recall basic principles around the rise of the concept of "civility".	Somewhat: Through evaluation, students will study ideas around the importance of manners and why society values them.	Not clear in syllabus
FA 22	Freshman Symposium: Etiquette - 41055 - SII 330 - 03	no	No	Somewhat: Through evaluation, students will study ideas around the importance of manners and how such skills can work towards building community.	Not clear in syllabus
SP 23	SYM: Christian-Zen Spirituality - 21387 - SII 330 - 01	no	Yes: Understand the context, meaning, and implication of the term mysticism in the spiritual life.	Maybe: all CLOs aim toward understanding	Yes
SP 23	SYM: Exploring the Quran - 21388 - SII 330 - 02	no	Yes: summarize key questions at stake in Muslim approaches to Qur'anic interpretation; explain how the Qur'an figures in the daily lives of Muslims, including in art forms;	Yes: explain the relationship between the meanings of the Qur'an and its historical context; outline the unique features of the Qur'an's form and style; articulate how the sound of the Qur'an is integral to its meanings;	Yes

2. Revision of SII Symposia Guidelines:

The faculty steering committee met and discussed current symposia guidelines, focusing on the course learning outcomes (CLOs) drafted by previous director, Jessica Blum-Sorensen. We revised the CLOs to be general enough for faculty to tailor them to their courses while also providing consistency among symposia and alignment with the SII PLOs (see Appendix 1).

Previously students were allowed to register for 1 unit although SII symposia are 2 units. We have eliminated this variable component so that students must register for 2 units when taking a 2 unit symposium.

6. Description of how the results were shared with faculty and how your department/program responded to the results. Plans for future improvement

or assessment of your program.

Revised symposia guidelines were sent in a letter to all faculty (Appendix 2) scheduled to teach symposia along with a model syllabus and CAS syllabi guidelines. We will continue to meet as a Faculty Steering Committee in the coming academic year.

Prof. Mark Miller is scheduled to teach the first SII Senior Symposium in the Fall 2024 semester. He will create a course description and send it to the FSC before submitting it to the SII catalog.

In our next assessment, we will revisit the symposia syllabi to ensure that the PLOs and CLOs have been included and assessed with relevant assignments. In addition, we will assess PLOs 1 and 4 using student work from next year's symposia.

7. Discussion of any significant feedback from your previous year's report and how your department/program responded to that feedback.

Although we were encouraged to gather data to assess learning outcomes from the current academic year, when we gathered symposia syllabi we observed that only one syllabus referred to the PLOs. We therefore decided to focus on concluding the work of previous directors to create syllabi guidelines with CLOs and communicate the expectation that faculty include PLOs in their syllabi. We believe this will set us up to more accurately assess student learning (continuing to focus on PLO 1 and 4) in the next assessment cycle.

SII has experienced significant changes with the launch of the Honors College, curriculum revision, and changes in program leadership. However, we are moving toward greater alignment with the program PLOs and consistency across symposia that will serve as touchpoints for student learning throughout their program.

Appendix 1: Guidelines for SII Symposia

Symposia Guidelines for SII Instructors Revised Fall 2023

Background

One of SII's previous directors, Sean Michelson, S.J., introduced the symposia to the SII curriculum c.2007 when he noticed that students pay for tuition which includes up to 18 credits, but usually only take a 16-unit courseload. Since he was also an English professor, he originally envisioned the symposia as a semester-long course on one particular *opus*, such as *Don Quixote* or *Ulysses*.

Since then, the symposia have evolved, but they share this initial focus on a topic of interest to the instructor, and the freedom to delve into it in ways not usually possible in, say, a core class.

The aim of the symposia is to give students a chance to study topics which would not normally fall under the rubric of the core curriculum or, for non-humanities majors, in their major areas of study. The topics and methods are left up to the professor, who is, after all, the expert in the field.

This is especially important nowadays, when many (most?) of our SII students do not

major in literature, languages, or other humanities. Like undergrads everywhere, they have gravitated to the ‘hard’ sciences such as Biology and Chemistry; social sciences such as Psychology; and career-oriented programs like Nursing or Business.

For this reason, the symposium is a special place and time to introduce students to the joy of grappling with the perennial questions of humanity, but without the imperative to meet all of the various aims of the core curriculum, for example.

Building on this history, the SII symposia in their current form aim to foster a love of—and the skills to—read slowly and deeply across texts of all sorts—literary, visual, cinematic, and beyond. Working closely with their faculty members, they will learn the tools of close reading that will last a lifetime, in order to cultivate the ability to process, engage with, and reflect upon their materials. By practicing self-reflection and articulating their perspectives, students will acquire the ability to articulate their views and beliefs intentionally and respectfully.

Throughout the course of four symposia, and culminating in the Senior Symposium, students will engage in a process of discernment, learning their own strengths and passions in order to put faith into action.

Symposium Course Learning Outcomes (Faculty can tailor these CLOs to the course content)

Over the course of their symposia in SII, students will:

- Critically engage a range of primary sources orally and in writing.
- Reflect on the perennial questions of the humanities through a Jesuit / Ignatian lens
- Apply symposia content to one’s personal desires and communal challenges through discernment

Workload:

Symposia are 2 units, lasting either a semester or a half-semester. As such, the workload over the extent of the course’s duration should equal half of what you normally do for a 4-unit class. (*See WASC guidelines for seat-time and credit hours below).

*The University credit hour policy applies equally to courses of varying credits, duration, and modes of instruction. One unit of credit in lecture, seminar, and discussion work should approximate one hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week through one 15-week semester: in other words, a minimum of 45 hours of student work is expected for each unit of credit.

Written Assignments: The symposium should include written assignment(s) as opportunities for interpretation, analysis, and reflection, per SII PLOs 1, 2, and 4.

Methods/Focus: These are up to the discretion of the instructor. Generally symposia are small discussion-based classes with a focus on the humanities and the perennial questions of humanity.

Rotation: The intention is to offer a varied selection for students. Instructors who have not taught for SII recently should receive priority consideration. The SII Director will endeavor to give priority to full-time faculty, as per University directives, but only inasmuch as it does not impede SII to continue to offer rich, varied, and stimulating symposia which fulfill our Program Learning Outcomes.

Registration for non-SII students: Allowed if space permits, at the instructor's discretion. When enrollment is lagging, we often open up these and other SII classes to non-SII students.

Majors/Minors in Other Fields: We can, and often do, set aside 4-5 seats for students from the major/minor field of the instructor. You should feel free to encourage students from your home program/department to enroll. This has proven to be a vital strategy for SII and for our home departments in the humanities to maintain varied course offerings at a time of great difficulties due to sagging student enrollments and University cuts.

Scheduling a symposium:

- You may choose to offer two symposia in a row one semester, as long as you allow students to choose one or both of them regardless of whether they've taken the other. We usually schedule them back-to-back, i.e., as if they were one four-unit class.
- If you choose to offer your symposium for the entire semester, plan to meet at half-time (i.e., once/week). That way the Director can pair it in the schedule with another in order to meet the University directives around scheduling.

Appendix 2: Letter to faculty scheduled to teach SII symposia

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for teaching a symposium for the St. Ignatius Institute in the coming semesters. As you know, these 2 unit courses are a signature feature of the SII curriculum and enable students to explore perennial questions of humanity throughout their college experience.

On behalf of the Faculty Steering Committee, I am delighted to share our updated Symposia Guidelines (attached). In addition to the [CAS syllabus guidelines](#), please make sure to state the SII PLOs and symposia CLOs in your syllabus. These CLOs can be tailored to the specific content of your course and should be directly assessed through relevant assignments. For assessment purposes, it is essential that you clearly state how / which assignments will demonstrate the PLOs and CLOs. [Professor Lusheck's syllabus](#) (attached) offers a great model.

Thank you for helping us align the SII curriculum with our transformative PLOs and helping us as we continually assess student learning.

With gratitude,
Erin Brigham
Director, St. Ignatius Institute