

MISSION CORE PROGRAM AT FONTBONNE UNIVERSITY

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.” –Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

“Historical and theoretical knowledge, which is the kind of knowledge that liberal education disseminates, is knowledge that exposes the contingency of present arrangements. It unearths the a priori buried in present assumptions; it shows the students the man behind the curtain; it provides a glimpse of what is outside the box. It encourages students to think for themselves. Liberal educators know this, but sometimes they make the wrong inference. They think that showing the man behind the curtain subverts the spectacle. But merely revealing the contingency and constructedness of present arrangements does not end the spectacle, and subversiveness is not the point. The spectacle goes on. The goal of teaching students to think for themselves is not an empty sense of self-satisfaction. The goal is to enable students, after they leave college, to make more enlightened contributions to the common good.” –Louis Menand, Harvard University

The theme of culture and the common good reflects Fontbonne’s mission to serve a world in need. To do so requires an understanding of culture, the vehicle for changing ideologies and imaginations. Because imagining and building intelligent and moral alternatives for the future intersects with every area of life, this study requires an interdisciplinary approach. It also prioritizes the following commitments of the university:

- Attention to issues of historical remembrance, social justice, and diversity
- Building alliances with individuals and organizations that are bringing about positive changes in the global community
- Integrating the liberal arts and professional education

Mission Core I: Culture and the Common Good

Required for first-time, first-year students and transfer students with fewer than 30 hours of credit.

Fontbonne’s commitment statement promotes: (1) dialogue among diverse communities, (2) the demonstration of care and respect for each member of the community, and (3) service to the larger community in a way that is ethical and responsible.

These commitments emphasize service and justice and require the promotion of common good for all humankind. This course will explore the meaning of the term “the common good” in the context of different traditions (intellectual, political, religious, academic, or social).

The course will draw examples from a wide variety of disciplines and subject areas (e.g., challenges of the common good in questions about advertising, marketing, and consumer culture; science, technology, education; race and religion; social movements; and the arts).

Learning Outcomes for Mission Core I

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- 1) Name, articulate, and compare and contrast differing definitions for "the common good" as expressed by various groups throughout history and in varying fields of academic and social life.
- 2) Discuss ways in which traditions have manifested ideas about culture and the common good in literature, art, social movements, science, and other fields.
- 3) Name, articulate, and compare and contrast our roles as individuals, as members of discrete cultures or faiths, and as global citizens in promoting "the common good".
- 4) Demonstrate application of ideas about the common good across multiple academic disciplines.
- 5) Craft a personal definition of the common good.
- 6) Respond to questions about how they view their personal, academic, and vocational work in light of their working definitions of the common good.

Mission Core II

200-level or above, required for all students 30 or more hours of credit; may be taken as a course required for the major

Courses that embody three or more of the themes relevant to the "Culture and the Common Good" tagged courses from the Bridges category *and* that include a shared content (to be developed with community input during 2011-2012) on mission-related concerns will be designated Mission Core II courses. We anticipate many current specialized valuing courses will move here.