St. John Vianney College Seminary

Distance Education Student Handbook
2019-2022

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1. Institutional Mission

The fundamental purpose of St. John Vianney College Seminary is to provide undergraduate and graduate education and formation for those students whose stated objective is to discern a call to serve the Catholic Church as priests. The institution assumes, as its specific responsibility, the academic, spiritual, pastoral, and human formation of college seminarians within a bilingual (English-Spanish) and multicultural setting. The college seminary is also committed to provide academic opportunities, both on-campus and online, for laity and others who may be enriched by its services.

2. Admission Requirements

- A valid government-issued photo identification document (ID). (e.g., Passport, Driver's License.)
- Official Transcripts from all institutions attended.
- An undergraduate GPA of 3.0.
- An application, and application fee and two letters of recommendation testifying to the student's aptitude for graduate studies from professors familiar with the student's undergraduate work.

3. Length of Program

A limit of five calendar years is the maximum time allotted for the completion of all the requirements for the Online Master's degree. Students who have not registered for a course in five years, need to reapply to the program.

4. Interrupted Program of Study

If a student engaged in online study leaves the College for a significant period before completing the degree, courses will be counted toward the program of study only if the time period of interrupted study is less than 5 years.

In special circumstances, courses completed more than 5 years previously may, at the discretion of the Academic Dean, be counted toward a degree, if, in the judgment of the dean, the College's curricular requirements and the content of those courses have not undergone significant change during the period of interrupted study.

Courses completed 5 or more years previous to any current enrollment will not be counted in the student's grade point average, unless the Academic Dean has made specific course exemptions from this policy. The transcript will indicate separate sets of courses, those completed 5 or more years previous to a new or continued enrollment and those registered after the student's return to the College.

5. How to be a Successful Online Learner

As you begin your studies online, it is important you keep the following observations and recommendations in mind:

- Because an online class offers more freedom, it is your responsibility to be self-motivated and disciplined to keep up with your course.
- An online class is the same as a face-to-face class, it will not be an "easier" course, or will it take less of your time or energy.
- Log into your class at least two to three times per week—potentially more frequently for summer courses)—or as often as your instructor recommends, in a time frame that allows you to concentrate on the course. Time management is important. Schedule your time wisely.
- Most interaction in an online class is through writing, so you should be comfortable with communicating electronically and you should know how to express yourself appropriately through writing.
- You should be familiar with using technology, the Internet and email, as well as downloading, uploading and saving files.
- Know your instructors and how to contact them. It is important to contact your instructor, by whatever means the instructor has specified, if you begin to experience any difficulties.

6. Instructional Equipment Needed to Access the LMS

All the instruction and communication between the student, faculty and administration is conducted via Canvas, the institution's LMS (Learning Management System). Students enrolled in the online degree program will be required to have a computer with Internet access (broadband preferred). Students will need Microsoft Office Suite Version 2013 or later. The minimum computer specifications for the Canvas learning management system are minimum 1GB RAM, 2GHz processor and either Windows 7 or higher OS (PC) or OSX 16.0 or higher (Mac). Browsers supported by Canvas are Chrome, Firefox, Edge and Safari.

To access Canvas, go to St. John Vianney College Seminary's website, at the bottom of the page and click on the Canvas Online Courses Portal link.

7. Login to the LMS and Course Registration Portal

Upon admission, the student will be assigned a student ID and will be instructed by the Online Program Coordinator about the login process to the LMS and Course Registration Portal.

8. Definition of an Online Course

St. John Vianney College Seminary's online courses are asynchronous, which means that students and instructors are NOT in the same physical setting during the instructional time. In an online course fully conducted online, the tests, quizzes, and learning activities occur online. Some courses, if possible and at the discretion of the instructor, may require face-to-face sessions. In those instances, the Face-to-face requirements will be listed in the course syllabus. Faculty must have Internet access, understand and be able to use email and the web, create and save documents in specific file formats, and upload files as an attachment.

9. Online Etiquette

Just as etiquette is a code of polite behavior in society, netiquette is a code of good behavior on the Internet. While there is no official list of netiquette rules or guidelines, below is a list of general etiquette expectations for online courses:

- Carefully read and reread your messages and emails before you send them. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling as these kinds of mistakes can muddle your message and confuse the reader.
- Avoid sarcasm, especially since it is difficult to recognize sarcasm in a written text.
- Know your audience. Make sure that the recipient(s) of your message are the appropriate one(s) with whom you need to communicate.
- Avoid cluttering your message with excessive emphases (such as stars, arrows and the like). They may make the message hard to follow.
- If you are responding to a message, either include the relevant part of the original message in your message, or make sure you refer to the contents of the original message.
- Be specific, especially when asking questions.
- Include your name at the end of your message, as well as other contact information, such as email address for a reply.
- When typing, use upper/lower cases appropriately. ALL CAPS give the appearance of shouting and can seem rude.

Just as you should not drive when you are angry, you should not send email responses when you are angry. Type a response, but do not mail it immediately. Chances are, when you reread it, you will be glad that you waited.

10. Technical Support

For technical support contact the Online Program Coordinator. The easiest and fastest way to do so is to send an e-mail at online@sjvcs.edu. After submitting the request, you will be contacted by the Office of Online Education, usually within one business day of your request.

11. Academic Support

Upon admission to the program, the Academic Dean will assign an academic advisor to each student. The Academic Advisor assists each student in organizing a Plan of Studies pursuant to the program. The Academic Advisor is also to serve as liaison between the student, the faculty, and the Academic Dean in academic matters.

All admitted students will also have access to the library resources of St. John Vianney College Seminary and St. Thomas University.

All admitted students will also have access to the services of the Writing Lab, which provides assistance to students in proofreading and editing their papers. To request the services of the Lab, students must contact the Director of the Writing Lab. All student requests will be answered within 48 hours of the request.

12. Course Registration

Course registration is done through the "WebConnect Course Registration Portal" at the bottom of the page of the College Seminary's Website at www.sjvcs.edu. At the time of registration, the Coordinator of Online Education will provide the student with the instructions for navigating the Course Registration Portal and will assist him with any technical issues he/she may encounter.

13. Best Practices for Online Instruction

- **Student-Faculty contact.** Instructors should provide clear guidelines for interaction with students in their course syllabus. Instructors should establish policies describing the types of communication that should take place over different channels.
- **Cooperation among Students.** Well-designed discussion assignments facilitate meaningful cooperation among students.
- **Feedback.** Students should receive prompt feedback on the assignments and discussions.
- **Deadlines.** Regularly distributed deadlines encourage students to spend time on tasks and help students with busy schedules avoid procrastination
- **Expectations.** Communicating high expectations for student performance is essential. Examples of high expectations include challenging assignments, regular participation in group discussions, submission of well-written assignments on time.

14. Library Services

As a member of a library Catholic Consortium with the library of St. Thomas University since 1996, St. John Vianney College Seminary students and faculty have access through the Web to the extensive St. Thomas's print and electronic resources (e-book and periodical collections), as well as to the many online databases available to the students of both institutions. As a member of the South East Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), SJVCS can make available, through interlibrary loans, the extensive resources of this network.

Destiny, SJVCS' web-based catalog of the Maytag Memorial Library's book and reference collection, as well as the web-accessed library collection catalog of ST. Thomas University is accessible to all students enrolled at SJVCS.

Distance Learning students can use all of the library's resources, including the print book collection of both libraries, which they can check out by submitting a request to the SJVCS Library via e-mail. Within forty-eight hours of the request, the Library will respond to the student and send via mail the requested book(s).

15. Privacy Policy

St. John Vianney College Seminary complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in protecting the confidentiality of student information and records **(Appendix 5, *Catalog*, p. 19)**.

SJVCS ensures that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by abiding by the following procedure:

- No student is admitted to the program who does not meet the admission requirements, which include verification of the student's identity.
- Upon admission, the student is assigned a secure login and a pass code that will give him/her access to the institution's Learning Management System (LMS), where he/she will register for his/her courses, conduct his/her studies in the Program, and communicate with his/her professors and administration.
- The Coordinator of Online Education and Registrar keep secure records of the student to ensure their privacy. During the initial login session in the LMS, the student is required to create a new secure and encrypted pass code that is not to be shared with anybody.
- The student accepts responsibility for the security of his/her password.
- This combination of secure login and pass code serves to verify and protect the identity and privacy of the student on each subsequent visit to the LMS. The Online Education Coordinator, who initially provides the student's access ID, instructs him/her on how to access and use the online portals that he/she will need to register and conduct his/her classes, and with any other issue encountered in navigating the LMS.

In addition, to the protection of the privacy of students taking online courses, no personal information, including addresses, telephone numbers, emails is maintained within the Learning Management System (LMS). Students are unable to see assignment grades or test scores of other students within the online course(s) they are registered in.

SJVCS does not charge students any additional fees associated with verification of student identity.

Once admitted and registered in the Program, all online communication and instruction between the student and the administration and faculty is conducted via the LMS.