

Introduction to University: Lecture Two

Which Bachelor of Arts programme should I take at Saint Mary's?

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You should *not* be thinking about the future. Your focus should be on the here-and-now. Your occupation is university student and you should be concerned almost exclusively with doing your best in your occupation.

Still, some choices you make today will be significant for your future, so maybe it's all right to turn your thoughts just briefly to the future before returning to your occupation.

In your future is work, a job.

Psychologists tell us that meaningful work is important to one's happiness and sense of satisfaction with one's life. Meaningful work is work well suited to one's temperament and one's talents, work that one perceives as significant to others or to society generally, and work that provides one with challenges and opportunities to develop one's skills.

In thinking right now about your future, you should be thinking, in very general terms, about what sort of work would be meaningful for you. You want to make choices in university that don't prevent you from eventually settling into meaningful work.

But keep in mind that no choice (or just about no choice) that you make during your university years is absolutely irrevocable. The worst that can happen if some choice turns out to be the wrong one is that you're set back two or three years. So don't worry.

Once you attain your bachelor's degree (and maybe after a year of travelling or teaching English as a second language in Japan), you will either be trying to get a job or seeking further education or training. Further education or training includes:

- Graduate school
- Professional school
- College
- Trade or vocational school

Graduate school is advanced study in arts, sciences, engineering, or social sciences. After you get your BA in arts or social sciences, you begin study for your Masters of Arts, your MA. After you get your BSc in science, you begin study for your MSc, your Masters of Science. Then you

will either get a job, or continue your education toward your Ph.D., or enrol in a professional school, in college, or in a trade or vocational school.

Professional schools are schools in professions such as law, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, nursing, business, journalism, and accounting.

At *colleges or trade or vocational schools* you can acquire the skills required to be a school teacher, a nurse, a carpenter, a welder, a dental hygienist, a paramedic, a plumber, a recording engineer, a business manager, a secretary.... (None of these lists is complete.)

Saint Mary's University offers three types of Bachelor of Arts degree.

BA—General (Double Concentration), a three-year programme

BA—Major, a four-year programme

BA—Honours, a four-year programme

A *BA—General* requires 90 credit hours, with 24 credit hours in each of two concentration disciplines (history, English, classics, political science, whatever).

A *BA—Major* requires 120 credit hours, with 36 credit hours in the student's major discipline. A double-major requires 36 credit hours in each of two disciplines. Students should declare their major in their second year—before Christmas, if they can, certainly during Winter semester.

A *BA—Honours* requires 120 credit hours, with 60 in the student's major discipline. A student must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 to earn an Honours degree. Students who are majoring in a discipline and wish to enter the Honours programme should apply to the programme late in second year or early in third year, once they have a good sense of what the discipline is all about.

Only a BA—Honours degree makes you directly a candidate for graduate school. It is possible to be accepted to a graduate school with a BA—Majors, but you might be required to complete a qualifying year before officially beginning your graduate studies. If you think you might go to graduate school, you are well advised to graduate with an Honours degree. With a BA—Honours degree, all your options are open.

With a BA—Major degree you are eligible for professional school as well as for college and for trade and vocational school. Professional schools usually have their own entrance examinations, making an Honours degree unnecessary.

With a BA—General you are eligible for some professional schools as well as for college and for trade and vocational school.

Pages 48 - 49 of the *Academic Calendar, Undergraduate Programs 2011-2012* give more information on the three different Bachelor of Arts degrees available at Saint Mary's.

Basically, the BA—Honours gives you the most options for your future and the BA—General the fewest, but the BA—Honours takes an extra year and requires you to work to higher standards. The BA—Major, for its part, prepares you for all options except the advanced academic study undertaken in graduate school.