

NURSING

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St. Olaf nurses are prepared for meaningful vocation with coursework in the humanities, social sciences, and arts alongside nursing coursework. This liberal arts foundation prepares professional nurses who think critically, communicate and collaborate effectively, act ethically, and advocate for health equity to enhance the well-being of all people within dynamic, complex healthcare systems.

By combining a liberal arts background with the acquisition of professional knowledge, the nursing program at St. Olaf integrates development of the whole person, a commitment to life-long learning, and service to others with a holistic approach to the practice of professional nursing.

Accreditation and Approval

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing at St. Olaf College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

The St. Olaf nursing program meets the requirements of all 50 states to be eligible for licensure. The Minnesota Board of Nursing has approved the St. Olaf nursing program for the purpose of meeting the education requirements for licensure as a registered nurse. Approval is the authority granted by the board for a controlling body to offer a program designed to prepare students to meet the education requirements for licensure as a practical, professional, or advanced practice registered nurse.

Information regarding state approval of the program is available from the:

Minnesota Board of Nursing
 2829 University Ave SE Suite 200
 Minneapolis, MN 55414
 Phone: 612-317-3000
 Fax: 612-617-2190
 Email: Nursing.Board@state.mn.us

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major

Distinction

See Academic Honors

The nursing department proposes two pathways for Departmental Distinction.

Departmental Distinction: Creative and Innovative Project

To qualify for Creative and Innovative Project Distinction, students will complete a project that demonstrates a significant contribution to the nursing profession. Students will create a project proposal which will be presented to the nursing department chair for approval. Once approved, students will work with a designated faculty member to complete the project. For final distinction, students will present the

project to the nursing department faculty in the spring of the senior year. Distinction will be awarded with faculty approval.

Departmental Distinction: Academic

To qualify for Academic Departmental Distinction, students must have a cumulative 3.5 GPA in all nursing courses. Students will create a project proposal which will be presented to the nursing department chair for approval. Once approved, students will work with a designated faculty member to complete the project. For final distinction, students will present the project to the nursing department faculty in the spring of the senior year. Distinction will be awarded with faculty approval.

Special Programs

Study Abroad

Nursing students at St. Olaf have the opportunity to participate in study abroad programs. Many nursing majors study abroad during J-term. Semester-long study abroad programs require additional planning and consultation with the nursing department chair.

Second Majors

Second majors may be desirable but not attainable for nursing majors without extensive planning and possibly additional years of college. There is no guarantee that nursing students will be able to complete a second major in four years.

Requirements

Applying & Admission to the Nursing Program

Students are encouraged to express an interest in the nursing major upon application for admission to St. Olaf College. The admissions office will direct you to the necessary additional application required for the nursing major. It is advised that you apply as early as possible.

Direct Admission to the Nursing Program

Students intending to major in nursing at the time of application to St. Olaf College may be considered for direct admission to the nursing program as a first-year student. Students seeking direct admission to the nursing program must complete an additional application at the same time that they submit an application to the College. Students who did not apply or were not selected for first-year direct admission to the nursing program may apply for admission during the fall of the sophomore year.

Applying to the Nursing Program

The nursing major begins in the spring semester of the sophomore year if the following criteria are met. All students applying to the nursing program (direct admit students and students who apply at a later time) must meet the criteria:

1. Minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.85.
2. Prerequisites must be taken for a letter grade, cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.70.
3. Only one prerequisite course may be below C- and this course (or an alternate course approved by the nursing department chair) may be repeated once.
4. Minimum grade of C- must be achieved in the repeated or substituted course.
5. If a grade of C- is not achieved in the repeated or substituted course, the student may not continue in the major.

- If two or more prerequisite courses are below C-, the student may not continue in the major.
- Four of the eight prerequisite courses must be completed by the end of the fall semester of the sophomore year. All prerequisite courses must be completed by the beginning of the junior year.

Students not accepted may choose to be placed on a waiting list and will be notified of their rank on that list. If openings occur, admission will be offered to waiting list students by rank, highest rank first.

Students on the waiting list may reapply for admission to the nursing program the following year. They will be considered in the next pool of applicants but will not be guaranteed admission because they apply a second time.

In addition to the college health requirements, clinical agency partners require documentation of current health and immunization status to be updated annually. For the most current information regarding requirements, please contact the St. Olaf Nursing Department.

In order to be qualified to provide direct patient services, students must complete a criminal background study conducted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). If a student is disqualified by DHS, the student will be unable to provide direct patient care and the student will be dismissed from the nursing program.

Progression in the Nursing Program

In order to continue in the nursing program, the student must:

- Complete all course requirements.
- Achieve 75% or above on the examination component of the course. If the examination grade is less than 75%, the grade on the examination component becomes the grade in the course.
- Achieve 75% or above in the clinical experience component of the course. If the clinical experience grade is less than 75%, the grade on the clinical experience component becomes the grade in the course.
- If the above criteria are not met, the student will be referred to the Nursing Department Chair.

If the above criteria are not met, the following actions may be taken:

- The student may be given the option of repeating the course. A student may repeat a maximum of one course in the nursing major one time. If the student is unsuccessful in repeating a nursing course in the major, the student will be required to withdraw permanently from the nursing major.
- The student may be required to withdraw permanently from the major. If a student receives less than 75% in more than one nursing course in a semester or in more than one course throughout the nursing major, the student must withdraw.

Dismissal from the Nursing Program

If the nursing department faculty determines that a student's performance merits dismissal from the program, the Nursing Department Chair will communicate this information to the student in writing.

Students can be dismissed from the nursing program for one of three reasons:

- Failure to maintain 75% in all nursing courses required for the nursing major.

- Failure to conform to safe and/or ethical nursing practices as stated in the Safe Nursing Practice Guidelines outlined in the Nursing Student Handbook.
- Failure to attend a significant number of clinical experiences, skills lab and/or simulations as determined by the nursing faculty.

Requirements for the Major

Code	Title	Credits
Prerequisite Courses (to be completed before beginning level III nursing courses)		
BIO 143	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Cells and Tissues	1.00
BIO 243	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems	1.00
NURS 110	Nutrition and Wellness	1.00
PSYCH 125	Principles of Psychology	1.00
PSYCH 241	Developmental Psychology	1.00
Select one of the following:		1.00
BIO 140	Explorations in Microbiology	
BIO 231	Microbiology	
Select one of the following:		1.00
CHEM 122	Introductory Chemistry	
CHEM 125	Structural Chemistry and Equilibrium	
Select one of the following:		1.00
SOAN 121	Introduction to Sociology	
SOAN 128	Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	
SOAN 248	Sociology of Dying, Death, and Bereavement	
SOAN 260	Families, Marriage, & Relationships	
SOAN 261	Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective	
SOAN 262	Global Interdependence	
SOAN 264	Race and Class in American Culture	
SOAN 267	Medical Anthropology	
Requirements for Graduation		
NURS 211	Holistic Health Assessment and Health Promotion	1.00
NURS 212	Foundations of Professional Nursing	1.00
NURS 310	Pathopharmacology	1.00
NURS 312	Family Health	1.00
NURS 313	Gerontological Nursing	1.00
NURS 314	Lifespan Medical-Surgical Nursing I	1.00
NURS 315	Medical-Surgical Nursing II	1.00
NURS 316	Public Health Nursing	1.00
NURS 317	Behavioral Health	1.00
NURS 318	Nursing Leadership (1.50)	1.50
NURS 319	Complex Patient Care	1.00

NURS 399	Senior Nursing Seminar (0.50)	0.50
	One course in ethics (students should consult with their advisor to determine what nursing courses carry the Ethical Reasoning in Context OLE Core curriculum attribute.)	1.00

**By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.*

Courses

Nursing courses are upper-level (sophomore, junior, and senior years) and include theory, simulation, skills lab, and clinical experiences.

The nursing program utilizes additional educational resources to help students succeed and pass the NCLEX exam. A fee is assessed annually in the junior and senior years of the nursing major for additional program expenses. This fee will appear on the student's tuition statement. The nursing department works to keep your cost as low as possible.

Students in the nursing program will have group clinical experiences that occur mainly on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the junior and senior years. During senior year, students will also complete a capstone experience that involves working in an area of interest with a preceptor. These experiences are in a variety of rural and urban settings.

Students are responsible for and must make their own arrangements for transportation to clinical and capstone experiences. St. Olaf College and the nursing department does not provide cars, college vans or any other means of transportation to students. All clinical and capstone experiences require transportation.

Nursing Major Courses

NURS 211: Holistic Health Assessment and Health Promotion

This course focuses on holistic health assessment, health promotion, and disease prevention across the lifespan. Students obtain health histories, identify risk factors, and develop health assessment skills in physiologic, psychosocial, developmental, and spiritual dimensions. Identification of data from a holistic perspective and analysis of findings through critical thinking are emphasized. Active learning experiences are utilized to apply knowledge and informatics during health assessment. Students attend lectures plus one two-hour laboratory per week. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: open to sophomore nursing majors only; concurrent enrollment in NURS 212.

NURS 310: Pathopharmacology

This course explores pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics, integrating principles of pathophysiology through examining drug classifications in relation to disease processes and symptom management. Evaluation of efficacy, potential complications, and special considerations for medication administration are emphasized. Monitoring of physical signs and symptoms, diagnostic evaluation, and complications of drug therapy are reviewed. Open to non-nursing majors with approval of instructor. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisites: for nursing majors: open to junior nursing majors only; completion of NURS 211 and NURS 212 (previously NURS 311) with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 313.

NURS 312: Family Health

Students focus on the nursing care of childbearing and childrearing families in the context of family-centered care. Family theory will be utilized as the framework for nursing assessment and care of families in various situations across the lifespan. Clinical experiences are provided with childbearing and childrearing families. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 314 with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 315 and NURS 316.

NURS 313: Gerontological Nursing

Students examine social, psychological, and biological aspects of aging within the context of holistic nursing. Application of knowledge and skills using gerontological principles for prevalent health problems experienced by older adults is emphasized. The course incorporates instruction and feedback for developing oral communication through the practice of interpersonal communication skills. Clinical experiences focus on elder care in a variety of community settings. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisite: open to junior nursing majors only; NURS 211 and NURS 212 with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 310.

NURS 314: Lifespan Medical-Surgical Nursing I

This course focuses on the etiology, clinical manifestations, and management of holistic nursing care for ill patients of various ages. Major concept areas explore the dynamics of common acute and chronic abnormalities observed in specific populations. Students utilize diverse roles of the nurse integrating knowledge from pharmacology and health assessment to manage the care of a patient in the clinical setting. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: open to junior nursing majors only; NURS 310 and NURS 313 with grades of C or above.

NURS 315: Medical-Surgical Nursing II

Building on the interplay between pathophysiology, pharmacology and the nursing process in NURS 314, this course expands upon the holistic nursing care for ill patients of various ages. Students utilize diverse roles of the nurse to manage the care of children and adults with complex abnormalities in the clinical setting. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 314 with grade of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 312 and NURS 316.

NURS 316: Public Health Nursing

Public health nursing is informed by community needs and environmental factors focusing on health promotion and disease prevention. Through project management, students address the health needs of groups and communities utilizing group communication processes, teamwork, and collaboration. Students focus on utilizing community resources, identifying risk factors, and evaluating the impact on population health as related to current epidemiological trends. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 314 with grade of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 312 and NURS 315.

NURS 317: Behavioral Health

Students synthesize knowledge and apply evidence-based practice in the care and management of clients experiencing a major psychiatric and/or mental health disorder. Emphasis is placed on the role of the professional nurse in various treatment settings as well as current treatment modalities. The client population includes children, adolescents, and adults along the health-illness continuum. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 312, NURS 315, and NURS 316 with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 318, NURS 319, and NURS 399.

NURS 318: Nursing Leadership (1.50)

This synthesis course focuses on professional role development, nursing leadership and contemporary issues in nursing. Students gain the knowledge and skills in organizational systems leadership, quality improvement and safety that are needed to lead healthcare teams, coordinate patient care, and achieve patient outcomes. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 312, NURS 315, and NURS 316 with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 317, NURS 319, and NURS 399.

NURS 319: Complex Patient Care

Students synthesize knowledge and apply evidence-based practice in the care and management of patients with multiple complex health conditions. The focus of this course is on caring for patients with limitations in their ability to function due to physical, mental, and psychosocial challenges. Simulation is used to facilitate student learning in critical care environments. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 312, NURS 315, and NURS 316 with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 317, NURS 318, and NURS 399.

NURS 399: Senior Nursing Seminar (0.50)

Nursing is a complex, evolving profession responding to an ever-changing healthcare environment. Students discuss emerging nursing/healthcare issues and are guided in the development of strategies to prepare for the NCLEX-RN and for successful transition to baccalaureate generalist nursing practice. This course focuses on professional development, including personal philosophies of nursing, professional ethics, and portfolio development. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: open to senior nursing majors only; NURS 312, NURS 315, and NURS 316 with grades of C or above; concurrent enrollment in NURS 317, NURS 318, and NURS 319.

Nursing Courses that Do Not Count Toward the Major

Courses that **do not** count toward the nursing major include: NURS 110 Nutrition and Wellness, NURS 294 Academic Internship, NURS 298 Independent Study, NURS 394 Academic Internship, and NURS 398 Independent Research.

NURS 110: Nutrition and Wellness

This course explores the sources, chemical composition, and metabolic behavior of nutrients. Nutritional requirements for a balanced diet are examined as well as the consequences of excesses and deficiencies. Students use nutrition tools and guidelines to make sound food choices, learn how to read food labels, and consider factors affecting food consumption. Class activities increase students' awareness of a healthy diet, help students evaluate nutrition behaviors, and facilitate a nutritionally sound lifestyle. Offered annually. Does not count toward major, but is a prerequisite for the nursing major.

NURS 294: Academic Internship

Does not count toward the Nursing major. Students may choose a 1.00, 0.50, or 0.25 credit option.

NURS 298: Independent Study

Does not count toward the Nursing major.

NURS 394: Academic Internship

Does not count toward the Nursing major. Students may choose a 1.00, 0.50, or 0.25 credit option.

NURS 398: Independent Research

Does not count toward the Nursing major.

Plan of Study

Nursing Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements for the Nursing major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
Fall Semester		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
CHEM 122	Introductory Chemistry ¹	1.00
PSYCH 125	Principles of Psychology (or approved SOAN course) ²	1.00
World Language		1.00
Credits		4
January Term		
NURS 110	Nutrition and Wellness	1.00
Credits		1
Spring Semester		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
BIO 140	Explorations in Microbiology	1.00
World Language		1.00
Credits		3
Sophomore Year		
Fall Semester		
BIO 143	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Cells and Tissues	1.00
Credits		1
Spring Semester		
BIO 243	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems	1.00
PSYCH 241	Developmental Psychology (or approved SOAN course) ²	1.00
NURS 211	Holistic Health Assessment and Health Promotion	1.00
NURS 212	Foundations of Professional Nursing	1.00
Credits		4
Junior Year		
Fall Semester		
NURS 310	Pathopharmacology	1.00

NURS 313	Gerontological Nursing	1.00
Credits		2
Spring Semester		
NURS 314	Lifespan Medical-Surgical Nursing I	1.00
Credits		1
Senior Year		
Fall Semester		
NURS 312	Family Health	1.00
NURS 315	Medical-Surgical Nursing II	1.00
NURS 316	Public Health Nursing	1.00
Credits		3
Spring Semester		
NURS 317	Behavioral Health	1.00
NURS 318	Nursing Leadership (1.50)	1.50
NURS 319	Complex Patient Care	1.00
NURS 399	Senior Nursing Seminar (0.50)	0.50
Credits		4
Total Credits		23

Joshua Sonnenburg
Adjunct Instructor of Nursing

Ericka Welsh
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Nursing

1

Chemistry course taken is based on student's placement test results.

2

Choose from: PSYCH 125, PSYCH 241, SOAN 121, SOAN 128, SOAN 260, SOAN 261, SOAN 262, SOAN 264, or SOAN 267.

3

NOTE: Nursing Program Prerequisite Courses GPA Requirement: 2.70 or higher. Nursing Program Cumulative GPA Requirement: 2.85 or higher

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 or more St. Olaf credits, through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses, one major, and all other degree requirements to earn the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Visit the Nursing Department webpage for more information.

Faculty

Department Chair, 2025-2026

Susan L. Huehn

Associate Professor of Nursing

Dawn Bicknell

Adjunct Instructor of Nursing

Emily Carroll

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Steven Cole

Instructor of Biology

Kris Ehresmann

Visiting Instructor of Nursing

Anna Graefe

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Nancy Pelegano

Visiting Assistant Professor of Nursing

Rebecca Saxton

Professor of Nursing