



The Wilmette Institute

A Center of Learning sponsored by the
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

The Wilmette Institute was established in 1995 to offer formal and systematic educational programs to raise up diverse, knowledgeable, articulate teachers and administrators of the Bahá'í Faith by imparting knowledge; developing various skills, particularly teaching skills; and fostering Bahá'í identity. It offers two programs:

1. Spiritual Foundations for a Global Civilization

A Four-Year Study Program
(described on page 2)

2. Studies in the Bahá'í Faith

Distance-Learning Courses on Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, the Writings of `Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í History, the Bahá'í Teachings, and the World's Religions
(described on pages 3-4)

1. The Spiritual Foundations for a Global Civilization Program

A comprehensive, four-year program of systematic study of all aspects of the Bahá'í Faith, including:

The Bahá'í Perspective on Global Issues: Carrying Forward an Ever-Advancing Civilization, covering such issues as establishment of world peace, wealth and poverty, development, international politics and world order, education, science and religion, agriculture, and the environment. *(covered in residential session August 2003)*

World Religions and Philosophies and Bahá'í Theology *(August 2004)*

The Development of the Individual and the Creation of Strong Marriages and Bahá'í Families *(August 2005)*

The Formation and Governance of Bahá'í Communities *(August 2006)*

Bahá'í History *(partially covered each August)*

The Bahá'í Writings *(treated thematically each August)*

Presentation and Curriculum Development Skills *(covered each August)*

Teaching the Bahá'í Faith *(covered each August)*

How Does the Program Work?

?Program includes an **annual residential session** in Wilmette, where students attend classes, participate in service projects, and build a Bahá'í community with other participants.

?Program also includes **five months per year of home study** (May through September) in which students complete projects of their choosing, including firesides, deepenings, and other efforts to apply their learning.

?Students may take Wilmette Institute **distance-learning courses for \$25** (see pp. 3–4), thereby specializing their education.

?Program is open to anyone 18 years or older with a high school diploma or equivalent. Tuition is \$700 per year excluding meals (about \$16/day), lodging (\$200 in 2002), and textbooks (\$100).

?Students have opportunities for **daily prayer and service at the House of Worship**.

The Spiritual Foundations program provides well-organized, formal, systematic classes that help students gain “spiritual insights, the knowledge, and the skills needed to carry out the many tasks of accelerated expansion and consolidation.” (Universal House of Justice, letter of December 26, 1995, describing the tasks of training institutes)

What Do the Students Say?

“The Wilmette Institute is one of the most incredible experiences I have had as a Bahá'í and I highly encourage each of you and your loved ones to consider joining the Spiritual Foundations for a Global Civilization program, participate in a distance-learning course or become involved in supporting the institute in some way. Some of you have already heard me rave about the Wilmette Institute, but I must say again what a faculty member stated during our residency program that ‘the Wilmette Institute is like 20 years of Bahá'í summer school in three weeks.’” (Shelley Rastall, graduate)

Home study begins May 1, 2003

Next residential session: Aug. 2–16, 2003

Final home study work: Aug. 20–Sept. 30, 2003

Registration open now through April 1, 2003

The Wilmette Institute

536 Sheridan Rd., Wilmette, IL 60091

1-877-Wilmette (945-6388) (phone and fax)

<http://www.wilmetteinstitute.org>

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2. Studies in the Bahá'í Faith: Distance Learning Courses

Upcoming Courses

Sept. 1–Nov. 30, 2002: **Century of Light**
Oct. 1–Dec. 31, 2002: **The Mission and Destiny of America**
Nov. 1, 2002–Jan. 31, 2003: **Call to Remembrance: The Life of Bahá'u'lláh in His Own Words**
Dec. 15, 2002–Mar. 15, 2003: **The Summons of the Lord of Hosts**
Jan. 15–Apr. 31, 2003: **Living the Spiritual Life**
Mar. 1–May 31, 2003: **Bahá'í Community and Administration**

Studies in the Bahá'í Faith is a growing series of formally organized and systematic distance-learning courses for home study. Of the thirty courses the Institute has developed, about ten are available every year, depending on demand. They divide into the following areas:

Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation: a series that includes courses on the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, and a single course surveying all of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation. Courses are planned on several other books or groups of tablets.

Exploring the Ministry, Writings, and Talks of `Abdu'l-Bahá: a course treating *The Secret of Divine Civilization* and a survey course on His life have been developed; courses on *The Tablets of the Divine Plan* and on `Abdu'l-Bahá's talks and travels in the West are planned.

Exploring the Ministry and Writings of Shoghi Effendi: courses on *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, and *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* are offered every year or two. Additional courses are projected.

The Bahá'í Teachings: a series of courses on various aspects of the Bahá'í Faith. So far the following have been offered: **Bahá'í Theology** (concepts of God, Manifestation, revelation, creation, humanity, afterlife, the Covenant); **Development of the Individual** (in the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical senses); **Marriage and Family Life**; and **Living the Spiritual Life**. Courses on **Bahá'í Community and Spiritual Assembly Development** and on **Global Issues** are projected for 2003.

An Evolving Community: The History and Development of the Bahá'í Faith: a series of five courses on Bahá'í history covering the periods 1844–63, 1863–92, 1892–1921, 1921–63, and 1963–present. The 1892–1921 course, focusing on the Bahá'í community during the ministry of `Abdu'l-Bahá, will be offered in 2003.

World Religions: An Integrated Approach: a series of courses that introduces the origins, founders, teachings, practices, and followers of various world religions. The faiths are studied, not as isolated phenomena, but as integral parts of the religion of God. Each course is designed to foster deepening (understanding the basics of the other religion and, by comparison, the Bahá'í Faith) and dialogue (interacting with people of the other religion and explaining the Faith to them). Courses on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Chinese religions and on the Bible and Qur'án have been offered and will be repeated every one to three years.

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See course updates in every issue of *The American Bahá'í*

How Do Distance-Learning Courses Work?

- Most courses are three months in length and cost \$150. Financial aid is available.
- Late registration (up to one month into the course) is possible.
- Courses are designed for the majority of adult Bahá'ís.
- All course work is done in your home by e-mail, mail, the Web, and telephone.
- Students receive a notebook with a syllabus and study materials.
- Courses include an e-mail listserv or Web-based bulletin board for discussion of course material with faculty and fellow students.
- Monthly conference calls allow students and faculty to interact directly.
- Students use Wilmette Institute course materials to prepare presentations, such as firesides, deepenings, local classes, and artistic and writing projects.
- Mentors review homework and give students suggestions for improvement.
- Courses are designed to help teachers of training institutes and children's classes.
- Certificates of completion are given at the end of each course.

Learning That Fulfills the Call of the National Spiritual Assembly

To foster systematic deepening across the country, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States often asks the friends to study certain books or topics. Whenever possible, the Institute offers courses on the recommended works or topics. Information will be available at the Wilmette Institute's Web site.

Learning That Fits Individual Needs

Distance-learning courses can be taken at the **introductory level** (a basic course that will help students teach the Faith more effectively), the **intermediate level** (equivalent to undergraduate university study), or the **advanced level** (equivalent to graduate-level study), allowing students to adjust the course to match their experience and needs. Most adults have the skills to take Institute courses at the introductory level.

The Institute is not accredited but may be able to help you obtain college or university credit through a local university.

What Do the Students Say?

"I cannot express the immense gratitude I have for all those involved with this Institute. You have given me the gift of the writings. Yes, they were there before, but I really didn't understand their true power until you showed me the unity and progression of these Gems so that I now have a deeper, more rounded understanding of this Faith." (Dana McMurry)

"I am a new believer, and have found this class [Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, 1853–63] immensely helpful in forming a solid foundation for both conceptual understanding and loving commitment [head and heart]. . . . With the assistance of this class, I am finding that I do comprehend the Writings at both the deeper level of intended meaning, and at the level of metaphorical or culturally specific language. Specifically, the Islamic references are no longer mysterious." (Kathryn Brown)

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