

St. Mary's Academy High School
Course Catalog
2011–2012

Discipline	Credit Requirements and Required Courses
	25.0 credits required for graduation
FINE ARTS Performing Arts Visual Arts	2 credits
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	completion of Level III
HUMANITIES English Religious Studies Social Studies	World Visions 4 credits; Intro to English, American Literature 2 credits (0.5 credit each year) 4 credits; World Geography, U.S. History, Intro to Political Science or AP U.S. Government
MATH and SCIENCE Mathematics Science	4 credits; Advanced Algebra & Trig 4 credits; Intro to Chemistry & Physics, Biology, one physical science
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	0.5 credit at each grade level

In the listings, all courses not indicated otherwise are one credit, one semester, and one full block.

The course catalog can be found online at http://www.smanet.org/CourseCatalog/courses_index.htm

Performing Arts

All acting classes at St. Mary's Academy are designed to motivate the high school actress, through theatre games, improvisation, monologues, script analysis, scene work, and technical theatre. Through the study of basic theatre vocabulary and etiquette, we work in teams and individually to become better speakers, overall effective communicators, and competent stage actresses.

Each student will have stage time in front of an audience in a variety of possible ways. Through the viewing of live theatrical performances on and off campus, students learn how to compare and contrast theatrical literature, how to be good audience members, and how to energize their own performances by learning from others.

Drama

Foundations in Performing Arts (0.5 credit; half block, first semester)

Prerequisite: None—this is an ideal entry-level class for 9th grade students.

This class offers students an opportunity to explore many areas of performing arts. Units and activities will include the study of theater arts, handbells, and singing. Students will not present a formal performance, but will explore and demonstrate within the classroom setting in a workshop format. This is a non-performance class that provides students with basic skills and knowledge in music and drama.

Advanced Drama (0.5 credit; half block, second semester)

Prerequisite: Foundations in Performing Arts, Musical Theatre, or Performance/Technical Theatre Workshop

This course is designed for students in grades 11 and 12 who have shown a dedication to the St. Mary's Academy theatre program and to developing their acting skills. This class is aimed toward students who will continue their acting studies in college or have sights for the professional stage. Units and activities will revolve around audition techniques for the many varieties of genres and a fully staged production as the final project.

Performance/Technical Theater Workshop (1 credit; full block, first semester)

Prerequisite: Foundations in Performing Arts or Instructor Approval

This course is designed for students in grades 10, 11, and 12 to further their overall knowledge of the basics of theatre. Units and activities will revolve around developing scenes and one-act plays in class from first rehearsal to final production utilizing performance and technical skills such as improvisation, vocal strengthening, gesture work, character development, lighting design, sound design, costuming, prop making, and creating a functional set. The class members will also be required to help develop technical aspects for all other productions on campus throughout the semester.

Musical Theatre (1 credit; full block, second semester)

Prerequisite: Foundations in Performing Arts or Instructor Approval

This course is designed for students in grades 10, 11, and 12 to further their knowledge of musical theatre literature and provide solo and small ensemble performance opportunities. Through acting exercises, improvisational games, and the development of monologues, songs, and musical scenes, students develop a respect for the theatre as an academic discipline and gain access to audition techniques that can be used for school productions, for college auditions, and in the professional arena.

Performing Arts: Music

Academy Singers (Choir A and B) (0.5 credit; half block; offered each semester)

Prerequisite: None

This class is open to all students who are interested in singing. No audition or previous experience is required. Students sing a variety of choral repertoire representing diverse eras and genres. Students improve their singing skills by focusing on intonation, breath support, diction, blend, and tone quality. Music theory and history are taught in context with the songs students prepare for performance. Academy Singers performs four concerts per year. This course is REQUIRED for 9th graders who plan to audition for Advanced Choir (SAIMARAC) at the end of 9th grade. The Fall class is titled Choir A, the Spring class Choir B. The class may be taken in both semesters.

SAIMARAC (Advanced Choir A and B) (0.5 credit each semester; half block each semester)

Prerequisite: By audition only (previous participation in Academy Singers or Foundations in Performing Arts is required). Ninth graders may not audition unless they have been in Choir (Academy Singers).

This choir is a select vocal ensemble. Students sing a variety of difficult choral repertoire with an emphasis on vocal jazz and a cappella music. SAIMARAC performs several times each semester both within the St. Mary's Academy community and as an outreach to the greater Denver metropolitan area. Students are expected to sing independently, sight read well, have a good tonal memory, and possess strong vocal skills. *SAIMARAC students are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons.* The Fall class is titled Advanced Choir A, the Spring class Advanced Choir B. The class may be taken in both semesters.

Orchestra (A and B) (0.5 credit each semester; half block each semester)

Prerequisite: Two years' experience playing a string, brass, woodwind, or percussion instrument.

This class is designed to challenge the instrumental musician in an ensemble setting. Students play a variety of repertoire representing diverse eras and genres. Students improve their technique by focusing on intonation, fingering positions, dynamics, rhythm, and tone quality. Music theory and history are taught in context with the songs students prepare for performance. The orchestra performs four concerts per year. The Fall class is titled Orchestra A, the Spring class Orchestra B. The class may be taken in both semesters.

Handbells (0.5 credit; half block; offered each semester)

Prerequisite: None (Limited to 12 students)

This class is open to all students who are interested in ringing handbells. No audition or previous experience is required. Students will learn note reading, counting, and basic handbell notation. Additional music theory is taught in context with the music used in class. This class will play at Masses or prayer services during the semester.

Visual Arts

The Visual Arts program emphasizes technique building, risk taking, and aesthetic awareness through the exploration of drawing, painting, photography, ceramics, metalworks, sculpture, and theory of aesthetics.

The mastery of technique in the arts is directly connected to the student's ability to find her creative voice. As students achieve new levels of competency in the technique of a given discipline, the confidence they gain becomes the foundation necessary for genuine creative expression.

The active participation in portfolio-building and exhibition projects requires students to engage in a large degree of risk-taking. The willingness to risk a creative idea that may not formally succeed is central to all the arts because it provides new and transformative solutions that could not be derived any other way. Participation in the arts helps students to problem-solve, to "think outside the box," and to celebrate divergent but equally successful solutions to any given problem. These are all traits that serve students well in a variety of academic disciplines.

We hope to increase students' aesthetic awareness of the world through the arts. Students study the formal qualities of the arts through a combination of aesthetic theory, critical analysis, historical context, and studio projects. Through these processes, students acquire the ability to place their aesthetic values in context with other important value systems, ethically, culturally, and spiritually.

Drawing and Painting I (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

This class introduces students to the fundamentals of drawing and painting. Through a series of skill-building exercises, students learn to draw from life. Contour line drawing, rendering form through value (a technique that students often refer to as shading), and understanding perspective form the core of the drawing content for the class. An introduction to color theory concludes the class with a series of painting exercises.

Photography I

Prerequisite: For grades 10, 11, and 12 only.

This class introduces students to the fundamentals of traditional black and white photography. Camera mechanics, the chemical processes required for developing both film and photographic paper, and basic darkroom techniques form the core of this class. The aesthetic of photography is also addressed, both historically and currently, helping students to place their own work in a larger cultural context.

Ceramics I

This class introduces students to the fundamentals of ceramics. Through hand building techniques and surface and decorative treatment, students will create forms from clay that are functional, non-functional, expressive, and sculptural. Students will also have the opportunity to practice throwing on the potter's wheel to further their experience in working with clay.

Jewelry I (0.5 credit; half block, fall semester)

This class introduces students to the fundamentals of jewelry work. Students will learn how to cut, emboss, enamel, texture, solder, file, and polish a variety of jewelry metals. In addition, they will learn how to make a ring and learn how to set a stone.

Advanced Metals (1 credit; spring semester)

Prerequisite: Jewelry I.

Advanced Metals is a course for serious art students who want to enhance their knowledge of metalwork. Lessons for precious metal include setting stones, using colored enamels, and lost-wax casting. In addition, students will be exposed to various forms of copper soldering. Projects include copper conduit sculptures and advanced stained glass. Portfolio development will be introduced and everyone is expected to participate in group critiques.

Ceramics II (1 credit; spring semester)

Prerequisite: Ceramics I

Ceramics II is designed to enhance the throwing and hand building skills of serious art students. This course will introduce large-scale construction methods, glaze chemistry, figurative sculpture, and portfolio development. Students must complete Ceramics I prior to their enrollment in this class.

Advanced 2D Studio Art

Prerequisite: Drawing and Painting I or Photo I

This 90-minute class combines Drawing and Painting II and Photo II into a single studio program for advanced students. Photo students will continue to pursue only photography, and draw/paint students will work only within their discipline. In both cases, students will work to further their technical mastery of the medium(s) while more rigorously exploring the content and ideas that inform their work. The purpose of this class is to bring serious art students from both 2-dimensional disciplines together to enrich their experience, gain valuable feedback from a variety of perspective, and foster a greater sense of community and purpose within the visual arts.

Independent Study Portfolio Development (fall term suggested for Scholastics competition and college application)

Prerequisite: Either Advanced 2D or 3D Studio Art.

This class is for the serious art student who is committed to developing a portfolio for scholastics or AP Art submission. Students applying for this Independent Study should be motivated, focused, and capable of working independently. This is a tremendous opportunity for students for a number of reasons: competing in the Scholastics art competition, submitting a portfolio to art departments and/or art schools at the undergraduate level, and building a strong and diverse resume for college applications in general.

AP Studio Art/Drawing Portfolio

Prerequisite: Advanced 2D Studio Art

AP Studio Art is chosen by highly motivated students who can work well independently, coming together as a group for critique. The AP Studio Art program addresses the three distinct areas of portfolio development: the creation of (and assessment of) consistently high-quality art work; breadth of art-making approaches, including media, formal concerns, and conceptual ideas; and a concentration of work that explores personal content through the successful completion of a portfolio.

Theory of Aesthetics (Philosophy of Art) (0.5 credits for Fine Arts or Humanities; half block, 1 semester)

Prerequisite: For grades 11 and 12 only.

Aesthetics, simply defined, is that branch of philosophy that attempts to define and understand the nature of beauty. As such, the study of aesthetics is critical to understanding and appreciating art. This class investigates a range of aesthetic stances, starting with Platonic metaphysics and ending with a postmodern understanding of art and culture. This class provides a wonderful opportunity for students wishing to investigate art through the lens of aesthetic philosophy, and is highly recommended for students who are also interested in taking AP Art History.

AP Art History

Prerequisite: For grades 11 and 12 (10th graders with Principal's approval).

AP Art History is a chronological survey course studying world history through the examination of the visual arts, including sculpture, painting, and architecture. Students will experience the breadth of creative output from 35,000 B.C.E. to the present and gain skills in the appreciation of art and the development of vocabulary to discuss art in the context of the time periods taught.

Foreign Language

The primary objective of our Foreign Language program is for the student to achieve proficiency in oral communication and to be able to exchange information in conversation. Students improve their vocabulary, their ability to manipulate more complicated grammatical structures, their reading of texts, and their writing expression. Knowledge and understanding of culture help to develop a sense of respect and tolerance for others.

French I/Spanish I (1 credit total; half block each semester)

In the first year, students are introduced to the basics of French or Spanish and the cultures associated with the French or Spanish language. Students learn the skills required to function in a variety of situations.

French II/Spanish II (1 credit total; half block each semester)

In the second year, students encounter more complex situations and verb tenses. Students work to express themselves in writing within the context of short essays.

French III/Spanish III

Students in the third year work with more complex grammatical structures and write and read longer texts. There is a continued emphasis on using the French or Spanish language in an authentic context.

French IV/Spanish IV

Students in the fourth year begin the advanced study of either French/Francophone literature or Spanish (Peninsular)/Latin American literature. The class will also conduct an advanced review of complex grammatical structures. Class will be discussion-based.

French Culture and Conversation (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Prerequisite: French III

This course is conducted entirely in French and does not focus on grammar or structures. To learn about French culture, we follow the life cycle of an individual from birth to death within French society with its unique practices and attitudes. Each phase of life is presented including facts and data, but there is always an attempt to get beyond the facts to the underlying values and beliefs of the society. Readings, charts, the Internet, and films are some of the sources for discussion topics.

Chinese I

Chinese I is an introductory course, which is designed for students with no prior or a limited knowledge of the language. This class uses the Pinyin system and simplified characters to ease students into the world of Chinese. This class focuses on listening, speaking, reading and writing through hands-on activities, oral and written exercises, songs, videos, games and stories. Special emphasis is placed on culture awareness and oral communication skills. By the end of the year, students will be able to express thoughts about their daily life, family, pets, food, weather, preferences in a basic yet culturally appropriate way.

Chinese II

Prerequisite: Chinese I with grade of C or better

Chinese II reviews concepts learned in Chinese I and introduces new vocabulary and grammatical concepts. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills will be practiced through topics pertaining to real life situations. Each unit has a specific theme, such as shopping, colors, ordering food, etc. In addition to language skills, the class will continue to explore the culture of the Chinese and the rest of the Asian world. By the end of the year, students will be able to express thoughts about their daily life with increasing sophistication in terms of style and usage.

Spanish and Latin American Film for Conversation (full block fall)

Prerequisite: Spanish IV or AP Spanish

This course will use outstanding films from the Spanish speaking world to explore the cultures and histories of Spain and the Americas. The movies will be a catalyst for classroom conversation. Students will hear Spanish as it is spoken in various countries and will be encouraged to discuss social and cultural aspects of Spanish-speaking countries around the world. This course is designed to hone all of the four major communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with special emphasis on aural comprehension and oral fluency.

AP French Language (1 credit; full block spring)

AP Spanish Language (1 credit; full block spring)

Prerequisite: Recommendation from current teacher

In the Advanced Placement Language class, students will work to perfect their grammar as much as possible and practice their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in preparation for the AP test in May. Classes are typically thematically based and interdisciplinary in nature, touching upon literature, art, and culture.

AP Spanish Literature

Prerequisite: Recommendation of previous teacher

In the Advanced Placement Literature class, students undertake a fast-paced survey of some of the great writers of the Spanish/Latin American canon. Students will refine techniques of literary analysis and write extensively in preparation for the AP test in May.

English

St. Mary's English department offers an academically rigorous curriculum that allows students to further their knowledge and understanding of English. With an emphasis on strengthening critical thinking skills, writing, and vocabulary, the courses offered in this department allow students to take a variety of classes that expose them to many different genres of literature. In the Loretto tradition, all English courses include women writers, writers of varying ethnic backgrounds, as well as underrepresented authors. Additionally, students read and explore many of the classics in their English courses. Summer reading is required in all English courses. The 9th grade curriculum starts students in their college preparations with an intensive exposure to genres and a heavy focus on organization in writing. The 10th grade English course, *World Visions*, centers on world literature, with cross-curriculum bridges to history and religion. Students in this course work to further their critical thinking skills, while also working on building independent theses. In 11th grade, *American Literature*, students study literary works that offer a variety of viewpoints from the American perspective. *American Literature* also expands structures in writing and thinking. In their senior year students are able to draw from any number of courses, all of which help to hone their skills for their freshman year in college. Students may also choose to take creative writing courses, which count as elective credit.

CORE Grade 9

Introduction to English

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the four central genres in literature: poetry, fiction (long and short), nonfiction, and theatre, and to teach them to express what they find in that literature through the use of five-paragraph essays which work to prove a thesis, and through orals based on the same organizational structure. Students will read a great deal of literature, will write about it on a regular basis, and will learn to talk and think about literature both analytically and creatively. The course will center on the way in which literature has been a forum for exploration of central human questions and perspectives, the examination of which has captivated humans since our inception as a species. As a class, we will involve ourselves in the consideration of the authors' perspectives, as well as the questions which their writings reveal. Additionally, attention will be given to improving both grammatical and vocabulary skills, so that students will be able to express themselves accurately and effectively.

CORE Grade 10

World Visions: Literature (1 credit; part of two-block, 1 semester WV course)

This course will cover the entire span of written communication from the ancient epic of Gilgamesh to Ursula K. LeGuin's science fiction masterpiece, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. The titles read and the analysis taken on will coincide with the progression of humanity from pre-history to the present day. We will not study any one genre or time period for any length of time, but rather we will study the nature of written and spoken communication as it documented and changed our lives and the lives of our ancestors—as well as how it will affect those to come. Academic writing skills will be worked on extensively throughout the semester.

CORE Grade 11

American Literature

Juniors read a variety of texts that expose them to the American experience. To facilitate this study, students complete close and precise textual analysis. The writing component of this course requires students to expand on the five paragraph structure so that they are capable of writing more complex and sophisticated essays. Additionally, students take weekly vocabulary quizzes in an effort to expand their own word bank and to prepare them for the SAT.

CORE Grade 12

Each of the following courses fulfills at least one credit toward the English requirement. Seniors must take one of these courses. Some are open to Juniors, but none replace the American Literature requirement.

American Cultural Studies

Prerequisite: parent's approval

Students study an amalgamation of material that gives them specific insight into American culture from the end of World War II to the present. Drawing from many different perspectives, this course includes the intricate study of literature, music, film, television, history, and culture, all in an effort to help students further their understanding of the complex dynamics of American culture.

Introduction to College Writing

Introduction to College Writing is a course where students develop the skills necessary to excel in the college writing arena. Every paper assigned is drawn from a correspondence with a college professor, assuring the tasks are preparing students for college writing. Through writing such papers as personal narratives (suitable for use as a college essay), journal article reviews, creative writing assignments, and research papers, students will have the confidence, experience, practice, and tools needed to make a fluid transition from high school to college writing.

AP English Literature and Composition (1.5 English credits; full block fall, half block spring)

Prerequisite: B+ or higher in American Literature, recommendation from American Literature teacher, and 5 or higher on the course's entrance test.

Advanced Placement English is reserved for the stronger English students in the senior class. The first semester requires students to delve into serious and complex literature that spans 2400 years of literary tradition and history. In the second semester the focus is on preparation for the exam. Students complete a challenging study of poetry and write on AP English prompts every week. The spring session of the course is titled AP English II.

British Literature

British Literature deals with a broad range of English and Irish literature—from Shakespeare to Virginia Woolf. It is not a survey course, but does address the strength and merit of the accepted canon. Each work will, in essence, be considered contextually. It is the job of the class to investigate and discuss the important themes of these works. It is the job of each student to write in-depth essays expressing the ideas and themes brought up in class. It should be noted that this is a class wherein strength in academic writing is stressed to a great degree.

African Literature

Prerequisite: For seniors only.

In this course we will look at a number of African authors and their works from around the continent. The students will learn about the different regions and cultures that generated the works as well as the general themes which are common to all African literature. These themes include but are not limited to: The individual versus the community, the issue of education, post-colonial African on African oppression, and the legacy of European colonialism on the continent. All students within the course will be required to write a number of academic essays and demonstrate knowledge of the texts read.

Multicultural Literature

Prerequisite: For seniors only.

Multicultural Literature examines the work of American writers whose cultural heritage originates in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Consideration of what it means to assimilate in the United States will include an analysis of ethnicity, cultural perspectives, and racial identity. Historical and political contexts as seen through the unique lens of each writer are likewise examined. The authors' use of a variety of literary techniques, including experimentation with point of view, revivals of cultural mythology, and innovative storytelling devices will aid students in understanding, redefining, and challenging their views of what it means to be an American.

ELECTIVES (Grades 9–12, unless otherwise indicated)

The following courses do not fulfill credit toward the English requirement.

Creative Writing (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the three central genres of creative writing: fiction, theatre, and poetry. We will read a variety of work in each of the genres as a springboard to doing our own work as writers. We will also do some work with personal essays or “creative nonfiction,” and will read several works by other authors about their craft. This class is only for those students who are truly interested in writing; you will be creating your own creative work on a daily basis, and you will be expected to be willing to challenge yourself and be a participating member of a group of serious writers. You will also develop your critical skills through reading and critiquing the work of your peers, and are expected to be mature about the constructive criticism you provide.

Introduction to Rhetoric and Critical Thinking (0.5 credit)

Prerequisite: Grades 9–10 only.

The main purpose of this course is to help students critically analyze multimedia information. This course will introduce students to the basic tenets of rhetoric through historical, visual, and literary analysis of the subject. Conversely, fallacies of logic, manipulation of language and image, and uses of propaganda to sway individual and group opinion will be discussed and developed through historical evaluation. The course will survey Western political and social movements from the 14th C to the modern era, tracing the use of literary and artistic works to influence mass opinion. Students will be responding to lectures, readings, movies, radio broadcasts, music selections, art works, and other media publications through daily written responses.

Advanced Rhetoric and Critical Thinking (0.5 credit)

Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing. Sophomores may enroll with instructor approval.

This course will further develop critical analysis of rhetoric and its uses through multimedia evaluation. This class will explore the relationship between the advent of the science of psychology in relation to mass media technology. Specific topics to be covered will be the use of propaganda used during times of war, economic booms, and periods of political unrest. The reading, lectures, and multimedia selections discussed will be more advanced than in the introductory course.

Expository Writing (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Expository Writing is a course where 10th and 11th grade students enrich their academic writing skills. Emphasis and focus of structural composition and organization of papers, as well as SAT essays and in-class essay exams allows the students to strengthen their approach to writing. Students will gain proficiency, confidence and the tools to apply this knowledge to the rest of their studies.

Literary Magazine Production (0.5 credit; half block, spring semester)

Students in this class partake in the production process of the annual SMA literary magazine, *The Burning Page*. Students execute most of the production aspects of the magazine, which include working with art and literature. Students gain excellent technical skills and knowledge about the production process.

Publications (A and B) (0.5 credit; half block; offered each semester)

Students publish the High School Yearbook. They conduct interviews, write copy and captions, take pictures, and prepare all of these for publication. Students gain excellent working knowledge of Adobe PageMaker. This class can also provide leadership opportunities as students assume editorial roles. The Fall class is Publications A, the Spring class Publications B. The class may be taken in both semesters.

Women and Film: The Heroine's Journey

In this course students will view, analyze, and discuss films from a variety of genres, depicting the journeys of diverse female protagonists. Whether studying Japanese anime, Hollywood classics, inspiring documentaries, or “indie” cult favorites, students will have the opportunity to take a fresh look at the powerful and compelling stories of strong women and girls.

Religious Studies

As a school in the Catholic tradition, the curriculum reflects a broad range of topics for students to study. The students are required for graduation to take a total of two credits in the area of Religious Studies.

Ninth graders take “Understanding Faith” (0.5 credit, 1 semester) which examines the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and the student’s own spirituality. In the sophomore year, within the World Visions course, the study of World Religions (0.5 credit, 1 semester) is integrated with the study of world civilization and world literature.

In the junior and senior years, the students have a choice of several classes, all of which, except for Philosophy, are one half credit. The Social Justice course examines the scripture imperative to live God’s all-inclusive justice in the world and looks at both the problems that face our times and viable strategies each of us can employ to change the injustice that exists. Any of the other courses offered may be taken based on a student’s interest and what her schedule will accommodate. The student always has the option of taking additional credit beyond the two needed for graduation.

Grade 9

Understanding Faith (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

This class is designed to help students explore, deepen, and enhance the relationships they have with themselves, others, and God. The Judeo-Christian tradition is the basis for this course, with an emphasis on the Catholic perspective. Other elements of this course include Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, prayer, morality, and skills for making good decisions.

Grade 10

World Visions: Religion (0.5 credit; part of two-block, 1 semester WV course)

This component of the World Visions course seeks to examine the various sacred traditions, particularly of the five major world religions. The primitive religions and the New Age religions of today will also be studied in a brief overview as well as other divisions of the five major religions. Students will be introduced to the founders, creeds, sacred texts, and beliefs of each of these religions. This course will culminate in a field trip to several of the places of worship of the religions examined in this class.

Grades 11 and 12

Ancient Scriptures (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

The sacred texts from various world religions will be studied with specific emphasis on selected Hindu, Buddhist, Tao, Hebrew, and Islamic texts. The class studies specific literary genres found in the texts and it explores the themes that emerge from the texts. The study of sacred texts will help the student come to understand how these writings have been fundamental in the shaping of views of the world, life, and human nature. The sacred texts from various world religions will

Christian Scriptures (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

This course examines core themes of Christian teaching exemplified through three types of literature: narrative, letters, and apocalyptic. By reading selected letters, the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation, the central teaching of Jesus carried out in the community of disciples is studied. Reflection on these teachings will help the student understand how this message has shaped fundamental values and beliefs of the Christian tradition.

Roman Catholicism (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

The Catholic Church has greatly influenced the world in the past and continues to do so in contemporary times. This course looks critically at several key events in Church history. In addition, topics such as ecumenism, hierarchical authority, and methods of Scripture interpretation will be studied.

Ethics Seminar (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Morality deals with the set of values and principles that guide our choices about what kind of person we are becoming. Students study and reflect on the ways of divine love and justice which provide the ultimate standard against which all else is measured. Students further study how this standard is found in Scripture and modeled by individuals and communities faithful to the ways of God. The class considers the process of forming one's conscience in order to make good moral decisions. The students also research and debate selected ethical issues applying principles for moral thinking that they have learned in class.

Social Justice (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

In a world characterized by justice, conditions needed for all people and all creation to survive and flourish are met. This course develops a conceptual framework for thinking about justice issues. Attention is given to the social justice teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly the justice teachings of the New Testament and social encyclicals. Equity issues are identified and evaluated using principles of justice specifically articulated in the teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The interrelationship of teachings about justice and the experience of justice in contemporary life are examined through a variety of activities, readings, and research projects.

Sacraments and Symbols: A Theology of Sign and Response (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Humans are sacramental people by nature. Whether we are exchanging wedding rings, lighting memorial candles, or breaking bread together, symbols express human experience when words alone are inadequate. This course reflects on the universal language of symbols, the power of ritual, and the grace of sacraments. It will include a study of the seven sacraments in the Catholic tradition as well as exposure to and experience of a sacramental worldview from a variety of religious perspectives. Students will discover symbols as mirrors of who we are and sacraments as pathways to discovering the divine and the human in ourselves and in the world.

Philosophy (1 credit for Religious Studies, or Social Studies elective)

Philosophy deals with the great questions of human existence. What gives human life meaning? How do we come to know? What are the characteristics of the moral life? Does a God exist? This course explores the efforts of philosophers of Western civilization to answer these and other questions and allows the students to delve into the process of answering many of their own philosophical questions.

Women and Religion (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

The subject of women in the religions of the world is vast, fascinating and complex—and full of remarkable personalities. How have social systems and religious traditions molded the spirituality of men and women? How do the ways women participate and contribute across the religious spectrum differ from their male counterparts? In our review of major world religions and cultures, we will consider theology from a variety of perspectives and learn the stories of women in religious communities, mystics, healers and other significant spiritual figures.

Social Studies

The social studies courses at St. Mary's expose students to the fundamental concepts of geography, history, economics, and political science as well as to the critical thinking skills associated with writing, reading, researching, analyzing, and evaluating evidence. To graduate, students are required to take four credits in social studies. World Geography is required in 9th grade, World Visions in 10th grade, and U.S. History in 11th grade. Other 11th grade and 12th grade options include AP US Government and Politics, Current World Issues, AP European History, and Middle East History. The course 21st Century Challenges and Choices is offered only to a limited number of seniors. A student may also choose from other electives offered by the social studies department.

World Geography

This course is designed to introduce students to the universals, tools, and techniques of World Geography. Students will examine the composition of the physical earth and its relationship to the sun, the theory of plate tectonics, as well as landforms, water, and climate. Students will also analyze the complexities of human culture and its relationship with the Earth, and assess impacts on the environment. World Geography also provides a general overview of the cultural, socioeconomic, political, and ecological issues unique to different geographical regions of the world. Inquiry and research, lecture notes and discussion, projects and presentations are all designed to encourage students to contemplate our responsibility to the future of the planet.

Grade 10

World Visions: History (1 credit; part of two-block, 1 semester WV course)

The history component of the World Visions course explores the story of human societal development through a thematic approach rather than chronologically. The four themes are: The Individual and Society; Power and Justice; Change and Dissent; and Creativity, Will, and the Human Spirit. These themes include content in sociology, anthropology, political science, and ecology. Historical examples of paradigm shifts and tipping points, along with accompanying causes and effects are used to help the student understand that what has occurred in the past is part of who we are today. The student should gain an understanding that the process and reasons for historical cultural change can and should influence our choices about the future.

Grades 11 and 12

U.S. History: Colony to Colossus

This course uses a thematic and chronological approach to understanding the development of American Society. Students will examine the underlying principles of American government and culture from inception to the present day. We will analyze the causes and effects that have resulted in the uniquely American story.

Current World Issues

Prerequisite: For 11th and 12th grade only.

Through covering the various issues present in the world, students will gain awareness of the struggles of humanity and their effects. The ultimate goal is to obtain a sense of responsibility to stay informed and realize the capacity for change.

The Middle East

The geographic region of the Middle East has been the focus of a long human history during which time a many-layered cultural landscape evolved. It is the birthplace of the greatest changes human organization has seen, from the earliest agriculture to the first gathering of people into urban, city living. From those early beginnings came many of the greatest human accomplishments in art, science, and religion, but also a long legacy of human conflict. The colonization of the region by powerful European nations left a legacy of distrust of the West, and vast cultural and geopolitical differences continue to create serious conflicts between and within the countries of the region. More recently, the region's vast oil reserves have become a focus of economic attention and conflict. This course will be an in-depth exploration into the region's rich, but complicated cultural history, and the legacy that has created the conflicts we face today.

21st Century: Challenges and Choices

Prerequisite: For seniors only.

This course will focus on solutions for major global issues facing humanity in the 21st century. Following a team-taught overview of key issues, which will be approximately one-third of the class, students will spend the remainder of the course exploring the diversity of approaches currently evolving that address elements of the key issues. The development of scenarios will be an important component of the course as students design possible future societal directions and the shifting of cultural priorities. There will be both solo and group work, coached by teachers, to help students search for solutions. All of the semester's work will culminate in a personal presentation of a specific facet of a global problem along with the solutions you have explored. These are possible issue topics you can expect:

- Energy Issues: Fossil Fuels, Peak Oil, and Petro-Collapse
- Population Growth Trends and Global Security/Resource Issues
- Climate Crisis and its Consequences
- Economic Inequality and its Consequences
- Water Quality and Quantity
- Weapons Proliferation
- Religious and Ethnic Conflict
- Terrestrial and Aquatic Resource Depletion
- Rise of Fundamentalism and Authoritarianism

AP US Government and Politics

Prerequisite: US History. Normally this course is for seniors.

“You will either do politics, or have politics done to you.” — Mike Cummings. “APGOV” is an in-depth look at the structure and functioning of the American government. We focus heavily on how the rules of the American political system are written, and what the consequences of those rules are for the legislative process, for political campaigns, for the Presidency, among other topics. We also focus on the consequences of the rules for average citizens. Most importantly, we will learn how to pressure the American political system in an effort to change the rules so that they work better for all of us. We'll visit a city council meeting, get registered, join an interest group, learn how to donate campaign \$, and visit the State Legislature to “lobby.” Current events are heavily emphasized in this course as real-world examples of the theory we will investigate. And as with all “AP” level courses, you will get a tough course on your transcript (looks good for college) and a chance to get some college credit before you even set foot on campus. Students should have taken or be taking currently some form of American History in order to take APGOV (Either AP US History or American History will be fine.)

AP European History (1 credit; half block each semester)

Prerequisite: Open to 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

The study of European history since 1450 introduces students to cultural, economic, political, and social developments that played a fundamental role in shaping the world in which they live. Without this knowledge, we would lack the context for understanding the development of contemporary institutions, the role of continuity and change in present-day society and politics, and the evolution of current forms of artistic expression and intellectual discourse. In addition to providing a basic narrative of events and movements, the goals of AP European History are to develop an understanding of some of the principal themes in modern European history, an ability to analyze historical evidence and historical interpretation, and an ability to express historical understanding in writing.

ELECTIVES (Grades 10, 11, 12)

The following courses do not fulfill credit toward the Social Studies requirement.

Psychology (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

This course is designed to help students gain insight and understanding of human behavior and to understand the developmental stages of human psychology. There is emphasis on reading and observation, as well as class participation.

Introduction To Cultural Anthropology (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Cultural anthropology is the comparative study of society, culture, and human diversity. The discipline focuses on the various ways that people's lives are shaped by social relations, history, political economy, and cultural images such as the media. This course will examine the social and cultural consequences of globalization and culture change in the world today.

Philosophy (1 credit for Religious Studies or Social Studies)

Philosophy deals with the great questions of human existence. What gives human life meaning? How do we come to know? What are the characteristics of the moral life? Does a God exist? This course explores the efforts of philosophers of Western civilization to answer these and other questions and allows the students to delve into the process of answering many of their own philosophical questions.

Mathematics

Four credits in math are required for graduation. Knowledge and competence in the basic ideas of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry are considered necessary for success in college and for full participation in society. Every student is thus required to complete Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry.

Beyond that, there are options to suit each student. For a student not intending to take calculus in high school, but wishing to further develop math skills for college, College Algebra is recommended. Statistics is valuable for almost any future educational path. Economics develops concepts seen in the news and provides practical knowledge for personal finances. For students with strong skills, and perhaps interested in the sciences, Math Analysis is recommended; it is required in order to eventually take AP Calculus at St. Mary's. For students wishing to advance further, there are Precalculus and AP Calculus. Independent Study is available to any student ready for more advanced mathematics.

Algebra I

This is a required course, to be taken prior to Geometry. It emphasizes the fundamental skills necessary for students to achieve confidence using variables and solving equations. Topics include linear and quadratic equations, inequalities, polynomials, exponential functions, word problems, and the vocabulary and patterns of reasoning used in mathematics. The core concepts of arithmetic are reviewed, with emphasis on practicing and refining algebraic and problem-solving skills.

Geometry

Prerequisite: Algebra I

This course provides an overview of Euclidean geometry. Units of study include lines, angles, triangles, polygons, circles, the Pythagorean Theorem, area, volume, and similarity. The calculator (TI-84 Plus or Silver) and dynamic geometry software (Geometer's Sketchpad) will be used. Principles and skills of algebra are applied in this course.

Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry (2 credits; full block each semester)

Prerequisite: Geometry

This year-long course is for students who want to fulfill the Advanced Algebra mathematics requirement at a moderate pace. It includes everything beyond Geometry needed for the math sections of the SAT and ACT. This includes a thorough treatment of linear and quadratic functions; rational exponents; systems of equations and inequalities; polynomials; plane trigonometry; and an introduction to the circular functions. In addition, logarithms, exponential functions, and power functions are introduced. The graphing calculator is used extensively. Upon completion of this course, students may enroll in Probability and Statistics, Economic Choices, College Algebra, or Math Analysis. Students must enroll for both semesters of Advanced Algebra.

Honors Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry

Prerequisite: B+ or better in Geometry and Math Department Approval

This course is for students who are adept at mathematics and want to advance quickly. It is expected that students who take this course will also take at least College Algebra or Math Analysis. Students who aim to eventually take calculus should take this course. It includes everything beyond Geometry needed for the math sections of the SAT and ACT, including plane trigonometry and the circular functions. (This does not include exponential functions and logarithms.) It develops in depth—in a way that should require little elaboration later—the ideas associated with linear and quadratic functions. The rapid pace of the course demands a substantial time commitment outside of class.

Statistics

Prerequisite: Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry (or the Honors course)

Statistics is the branch of mathematics dealing with the collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation of information. It can help answer questions in a variety of fields: Is there really a difference or is it just due to chance? How much risk are we willing to take that we make the wrong decision based on a sample? Is there bias in the process? All students who wish to be informed citizens and prepare for a college-level course are welcome in this class.

Economics

Prerequisite: Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry (or the Honors course)

This course will cover aspects of economic choices that young adults will encounter. Making sound economic choices is an integral part of college life and after; these choices will be enhanced with knowledge and practice through the Stock Market Game, the Budget Game, and many hands-on exercises and activities. Emphasis is on investing, saving, and credit. In addition, general economic principles and current issues are examined including from a global perspective. Recommended for Seniors.

College Algebra

Prerequisite: Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry (or the Honors course)

This course is for students who do not intend to take calculus in high school but seek an integration of algebraic concepts necessary for college level mathematics and wish to progress at a moderate pace. Topics include relations and functions, advanced algebraic expressions and inequalities, inverse, exponential, and logarithmic functions, systems and matrices, data analysis, and analytic geometry. The course will address how the algebraic topics studied are used in real-life applications. The graphing calculator is used extensively in this class.

Math Analysis

Prerequisite: B or better in Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry and recommendation of teacher

This course is for students who may eventually take calculus, as well as for students who simply want to continue in mathematics at a strong pace. It provides a deliberate development of the elementary functions commonly used in other fields and in calculus. A further precalculus course is needed after this to prepare for calculus. The course pursues a deeper study of linear, quadratic, exponential, power, and logarithmic functions. This includes characterizations describing how they change, applications showing how they are used (including data analysis), and general aspects of functions (e.g., rates of change and inverses). The concepts of transformations and symmetries are developed and used in characterizing the elementary functions. The course also aims to promote fluency in algebra, problem-solving, and communicating mathematics.

Precalculus

Prerequisite: Math Analysis

This course is for students who want to and are able to advance quickly toward taking calculus. It covers the essentials needed to start calculus—the ideas associated with piecewise, exponential, logarithmic, power, sinusoidal, inverse trigonometric, polynomial, and rational functions. Also covered are some analytic geometry and advanced aspects of functions and transformations.

AP Calculus AB (1.5 credits; full block fall, half block spring)

Prerequisite: Precalculus

After a short review of preparatory topics, this course develops calculus through applications of integration and elementary differential equations—somewhat further than a first semester university course. It is sufficient for meeting all the types of problems on the AP Calculus AB exam. The half block spring portion of the course is titled AP Calculus AB II.

AP Calculus BC (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Prerequisite: AP Calculus AB

This course extends the development of calculus through power series. It includes the calculus of polar and parametrized curves.

Science

The science curriculum at St. Mary's Academy creates successful science students. The program provides basic knowledge in mathematics, and understanding of how scientific processes operate and how those processes relate to one another. St. Mary's science curriculum emphasizes problem solving while teaching students to read, write, and communicate with clarity, cohesiveness, and meaning. The science department encourages students to act on their curiosity and take risks to understand the intricacies and mysteries of science.

All students at St. Mary's Academy are required to complete at least four credits in science. Introduction to Chemistry & Physics is required in the 9th grade and Biology is required by completion of the 10th grade. One other physical science course is required.

Introduction to Chemistry & Physics

This is a required course for all ninth graders and a prerequisite for all other science courses. This class serves as an introduction to chemistry, physics, and data analysis. Units of study include motion, force, work, power, PE, KE, periodic table, equations, reactions, all using simple algebraic equations to solve problems. This course is lab based. This course fulfills one science credit, but does not fulfill the physical science credit.

Biology

Prerequisite: Introduction to Chemistry & Physics

This is a required course for all tenth graders and a prerequisite for all other science courses. Biology covers the concepts and principles of biology from the structure and function of the cell to the organization of the biosphere. This course is lab based and students will examine the wonders of all areas of biology so that they can later enroll in advanced biology courses. This course fulfills one science credit.

Biology II

Prerequisite: Introduction to Chemistry & Physics; Biology

This course is a continuation of Biology. The course furthers the exploration of Biology with a global view. Topics will include exploring biodiversity of plants, animals and microbes. Focusing attention on evolutionary adaptations and examining the biosphere as a global ecosystem. This course is lab based and fulfills one science credit.

Chemistry I

Prerequisite: Intro to Chemistry & Physics, Biology, and Adv. Algebra & Trig (which may be concurrent)

This course is an introductory college level class in which concepts are presented in a clear and straightforward manner using language and analogies that students can relate to their own lives. Students are to study the mechanisms of matter and chemical reactions. Upon completion of the course, the student should have a clear understanding of the history of chemistry, explore the uses of chemistry in various careers, and gain an ability to cope with chemical questions and problems related to social issues. This course fulfills the physical science requirement.

Chemistry II

Prerequisite: Chemistry I (with a minimum grade of a B+)

This course is a second year chemistry class that will provide in depth investigation of more specialized areas of chemistry. Areas of study include: thermochemistry, kinetics, chemical equilibrium and electrochemistry. This course is lab based.

Physics

Prerequisite: Introduction to Chemistry & Physics, Biology (may be concurrent), and Algebra I

This course introduces basic topics of physics with emphasis on conceptual understanding and scientific thinking skills. There will be frequent hands-on explorations, supplemented by demonstrations, video clips, reading, questions, lecture, and discussion. Through these, students will explore their existing conceptions; refine their understanding of formal physics concepts; analyze physical situations by means of fundamental principles; and integrate seemingly unrelated pieces of physics knowledge. The content includes core topics in mechanics (description of motion, analysis of interactions using Newton's Laws, use of momentum and energy concepts), and fundamental forces and fields—gravitational, electric, and magnetic. This course fulfills the physical science requirement.

Introduction to Marine Science

Prerequisite: Intro to Chemistry & Physics, Biology, and Chemistry I. For juniors and seniors only

This course is designed to give St. Mary's students an introduction to the biological, geological, chemical, and physical aspects of marine science. We will explore the mysteries of the ocean in both a lecture and lab format. The lecture will cover the basic principles of oceanography supplemented by recent advances in the field. In lab we will approach marine science hands-on using the current disciplines of scientific research.

Anatomy and Physiology

Prerequisite: Introduction to Chemistry & Physics and Biology

This course is a study of the form and function of the body. Anatomy is a study of body structure and Physiology is a study of body function. Through a variety of methods, including lecture, class discussion, video, student presentations, sketching/coloring, and dissection of fetal pigs, students will learn about the intricate living system that is the human body.

AP Biology (2.0 science credits; full block each semester)

Prerequisite: Biology, and Chemistry I (which may be concurrent)

This is an in-depth college course with a molecular emphasis and 12 major (4 hour) labs. There is an intensive coverage of the entire field of biological science, using a college text. Method of presentation is primarily lecture/lab and will develop all required college skills. This course requires a daily (and vacation) homework commitment of an hour or more.

AP Environmental Science (spring semester)

Prerequisite: Introduction to Chemistry & Physics and Biology

This course will be a study of the living and non-living factors that make up the environment, the interactions between organisms, and the human impact on these various components. Students will discover more about the environment around them, how it affects our population, and how we, in turn, influence our surroundings. We will study the basics of ecology, aspects of the environmental movement and various environmental views, and a range of topics pertaining to the environment today.

AP Physics C: Mechanics

Prerequisite: AP Calculus AB (completed), or Physics and concurrent AP Calculus AB

This is a calculus-based general physics course using a college-level textbook, with an emphasis on mechanics. It presumes a student has a grounding in Newton's Laws. The primary topics are from mechanics—energy and work, systems of particles, and rotational phenomena. Further topics, with the background and interest of students in mind, will be chosen from solids, fluids, oscillations and waves, heat and thermodynamics, and gravitation.

Physical Education

Each student is required to complete 0.5 credits of physical education per year at St. Mary's Academy. Physical education credit may be earned by completing a semester course, successfully completing one season of a sport, or receiving approval for independent study.

Introduction to Dance Studies (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

This course is designed to encourage the individual student to achieve a high standard of excellence in the practical and academic aspect of dance as an art form. Students will develop knowledge through the study of the central concepts of dance: Choreography, Performance, and Appreciation.

Lifetime Sports (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Lifetime sports include activities that can be enjoyed throughout one's lifetime. Such activities include, but are not limited to, archery, bowling, tennis, golf, walking-jogging-hiking-running, badminton, pickleball, disc golf and recreational games such as horseshoes and croquet. Some team sports may be included as well.

Team Sports (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

This course gives an introduction to sports and team activities such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, lacrosse, softball, field hockey, tennis, badminton, bowling, and archery. Students will also participate in cardiovascular activities and workouts in the weight room. Factors which contribute to healthy, active lifestyles are also covered in this class. Nutrition and substance abuse are examples of some of the topics of discussion.

Fitness and Wellness (0.5 credit; half block, 1 semester)

Fitness and Wellness is a physical education class that requires active participation. Students will learn and demonstrate safe weight training techniques, and take part in regular cardiovascular activities. This course will address a variety of topics related to nutrition, components and principles of fitness, cardiovascular health and disease prevention, and stress management. Each student will assess her individual fitness levels, and set goals to adopt a healthy and fit lifestyle.

Interscholastic Athletics (0.5 credit for one season)

Sports practices take place before or after school. Students who complete one season from the following sports offered at St. Mary's Academy will receive physical education credit:

- Fall sports: cross country, field hockey, softball, volleyball
- Winter sports: swimming and diving, basketball, dance
- Spring sports: lacrosse, soccer, tennis

Only 0.5 credits can be earned per year for participation in athletics.

Independent Study (0.5 credit; one semester)

Prerequisite: Principal's approval

Prior approval must be granted by the High School Principal and certain requirements must be met in order for credit to be received for independent study. In general, this option is designed for students who participate regularly in a physical activity that is not offered here at SMA. Some examples of this might be ice skating or horseback riding. Valid activities must have a qualified instructor and meet certain requirements. Occasional recreational pursuits do not qualify.