



San Marcos Academy
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW
Upper High School (Grade 12)

Plutarch once wrote, “*To be ignorant of the lives of the most celebrated men of antiquity is to continue in a state of childhood all our days.*” Seniors at SMA are hard-pressed to ground their notions of the good, beautiful, and true on the bedrock of antiquity. The finished secondary education is the “*very spring and root of honesty and virtue,*” preparing students for higher education and life as a Christian adult.

Upper high school students are expected to perform the following:

Seniors demonstrate a value for discovering, contemplating upon, understanding, and exhibiting what is the good, beautiful, and true. They observe the highest ethical standards, living to the glory of God and serving the betterment of others.

Seniors are self-governing. They consistently recognize and produce quality work. They consistently strive for excellence in a wide array of both academic and extra-curricular activities and interests.

Seniors will be able to read and comprehend varied and challenging texts. They conduct sound research followed by well-written compositions, characterized by eloquence, and sound arguments. Their speech is articulate with clear enunciation and persuasion. They will be able to communicate with varied cultures and groups. They are able to use a wide range of communication skills, using the latest technology and media to enlarge their spheres of influence.

Seniors determine and achieve worthwhile goals, maintain organization skills, exercise effective study habits, and eliminate attitudes or behaviors that would jeopardize their potential.

Seniors continually integrate and reconcile new knowledge into a view of the world as it truly exists as revealed by God’s word. They correctly associate complex inter-relationships of diverse, disparate, or abstract information. They consistently apply learning across-the-curriculum.

Seniors display appropriate behavior in a wide variety of settings. They demonstrate expanding social skills, such as leadership, problem solving, coping, communication, observance of rules and social conventions. They understand and appreciate diverse cultures. They cultivate and maintain an interdependent social network. They are skilled at resolving conflict and consistently treat others with respect.

What does this look like at San Marcos Academy?

- Our seniors should be able to fully recognize and engage in the “Great Conversation,” as a result of their ongoing examination of Western art, history, literature, theology and philosophy. Rather than relying solely on anthologies that skim the surface of thousands of events, SMA uses the most significant primary sources, thoughtfully treated with depth, to develop each student’s competency.
- In language arts, seniors present a comprehensive composition in both form and substance, which reflect eloquent and persuasive thought.
- Math and science courses require students to solve problems, calculate using linear reasoning, and express their understanding of difficult concepts with words as well as through successful calculation and experiment.
- Seniors enrolled in English IV(H) will complete a capstone thesis paper that will develop an approved interdisciplinary theme. During the spring semester, this paper will be presented and defended before a panel of reviewers who will be familiar with the subject area.

- Senior classes reflect expectations that will be in place for college freshmen. As such, after the second grading period of the fall semester, no late papers are accepted without an appropriate penalty as outlined in school policy. All major assignments, with corresponding dates are provided in the syllabi at the beginning of each semester, any adjustment to the dates due will be communicated through approved media.

These expectations are accomplished within the context of the following courses of study:

English – For students to succeed in the senior English courses, they are expected to be able to compose grammatically correct assignments using MLA standards, read, and comprehend course materials in varied genres (Pre-requisite English 3). Those with reading or writing deficiencies may be required to enroll in Research and Technical Writing as their fourth Language Arts credit. Primary sources of the best British literary works are read, and students analyze works in their historical and cultural contexts, identify aesthetic value, and examine the truth-claims. Essays will be regularly written throughout the course. Honors students usually take the college dual-enrollment Freshman Composition class. Students are expected to satisfactorily perform on tests, compositions, and readings. The second part is a continued training in writing and incorporating British Literature. By the end of the first grading period of the spring semester, students will provide a finished copy of the senior thesis and prepare an oral defense. Earning the honors credit requires the successful defense of the thesis paper (Pre-requisite English 3-H).

United States Government – This course is not limited to the functions of government, but includes civics. All students will be expected to read and comprehend various works on governance and civic responsibility. They must be able to compare, contrast, and analyze these works in depth. They must be able to reasonably infer causal relationships. The course will enable students to analyze primary sources, as well as develop research and writing skills to enable them to include geopolitical facts as evidence for the senior thesis. It is offered as a college dual-enrollment credit for those who qualify.

Economics – Students enrolled into the honors track will enroll into AP Micro-Economics and AP Macro-Economics. The students who are enrolled in these classes will be required to take the AP exam unless Academic Dean. Others will enroll into a semester overview of Economic theory. All students will be expected to read and comprehend texts in economic theory. They will be able to recognize and argue against the fallacies of deviant theories and present a cogent defense of sound free market economics. The courses will provide information that may be included in senior theses.

Science – In twelfth grade, there are four science courses offered. Students enrolled in the honors track and have successfully completed honors Advanced Physics. Eligible students may take the college dual-enrollment Chemistry course. Others will take Anatomy & Physiology or Environmental Science. Students who have struggled in the sciences will take Chemistry as their final science, unless seeking a STEM endorsement, then they usually take Environmental Science. To successfully complete any of these courses, students should have a clear understanding of the scientific method, ability to perform Algebra II level calculation, demonstrate sound reasoning, and ability to follow lab procedures. Each class will enable the student to be able to use scientific data as evidence for the senior thesis.

Math – Seniors enrolled in the honors track may take the college dual-enrollment Math courses – Algebra, Trigonometry, Statistics, or Calculus AB, BC (AP). As with other college dual-enrollment courses, students must pass a college entrance exam and be admitted to the college. To perform in these math courses, mastery of Algebra 2 and Pre-calculus are necessary. Those who have struggled in math will enroll into Algebra 2 as the terminal course. Those students who demonstrate a lack of proficiency in those skills may be required to enroll into a math lab. Students in Algebra 2 as a senior must have successfully completed Math Models a prior year. All senior math courses will enable students to use mathematical data as evidence in the construction of the senior thesis.

Languages – Seniors in the honors track will normally have completed their foreign language requirements. If the senior is completing their third year in the same language, to be able to perform

successfully in either of these courses, students must have mastered the content in the prior courses and must be conversational enough to conduct the class in the foreign language.

Religion – Those seniors who are enrolled in honors English courses and lack a semester or more of religion credit are required to take a semester of Apologetics, unless excused by the Academic Dean. Otherwise, they may take RFC or LMJC. To complete these courses successfully, students must be able to read and comprehend texts, recall information, analyze truth-claims, and make reasonable inferences. Each of these courses will enable students to be able to use religious truth as evidence in the senior thesis.

Electives – Continued enrollment in these classes are contingent upon the upper high school student’s contribution to the learning. These electives consist of, but are not limited to, Athletics, JROTC, Band, Cheerleading, Visual Art, Photography, Theatre Arts, Research & Technical Writing, Math Lab, Reading, Analysis of Visual Media, Clay, Journalism, Principles of Information Technology, and AP Computer Science. Other electives are available through our SMA Distance Education program and students are strongly advised to take at least one of these courses prior to graduation to develop the requisite skills needed to learn in that environment. On-campus electives are contingent upon meeting minimum enrollment requirements and staffing. Additional fees may apply.

What is the typical schedule of an SMA senior?

Regular College Preparatory Sequence – *The following course of study is recommended for those students intending to attend a college or university after high school, and satisfies both the Foundation and Multi-Disciplinary Endorsements.*

Grade 12
English 4
Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus
Environmental Science
U S Government or Economics
Religion (RFC, LMJC) or Elective
Athletics, Fine Arts, or Elective
Endorsement Course or Elective
Endorsement Course or Elective

NOTE: For those seeking endorsements, elective sections should be carefully planned to ensure you are meeting the academic requirements. Review the graduation requirements, class ranking formula, policies and procedures that govern course selections in the student handbook.

Honors College Preparatory Sequence – *The following course of study is recommended for those students intending to attend a highly competitive college or university after high school, and satisfies both the Foundation and Multi-Disciplinary Endorsements.*

Grade 12
College English (CD)
College Chemistry (CD), Environmental Science (AP), or Anatomy & Physiology (H)
College Dual-Enrollment Math Courses, or Calculus AB & BC (AP)
College U. S. Gov’t (CD)
Micro-/Macro- Economics (AP)
Religion (LMJC, Apologetics) or Elective
Fine Art, Athletics, or Elective
Endorsement Course or Elective

NOTE: For those seeking endorsements, elective sections should be carefully planned to ensure you are meeting the academic requirements. Review the graduation requirements,

class ranking formula, policies and procedures that govern course selections in the student handbook.

Students with English as a Second Language and those enrolled into the Learning Skills Program –
Alternative graduation plans must be approved by the Academic Dean as determined in consultation with the LS Director and Guidance Counselor.

What can seniors expect at San Marcos Academy?

- By the end of September, the senior class president will submit a petition for senior privileges to the President's Council. An approved list of senior class privileges will be provided, which is often related to the level of leadership and responsibility demonstrated by the seniors during their junior and senior years. These privileges typically include senior lunches, special trips, and senior shirts.
- The senior class provides leadership in all facets of SMA and its programs, including JROTC, band, and athletic teams.
- By attending the entire junior and senior years at SMA, students are eligible for graduation honors, Valedictorian or Salutatorian, with adequate class ranking based upon cumulative GPA, SAT/ACT scores, and Activity Points.
- Juniors and seniors who attend the prom elect the prom King and Queen.
- Qualified seniors can take college dual-enrollment classes. It is possible to earn enough college credits to forgo the freshman year of college.
- Seniors can take AP Exams.
- Seniors can drive their cars on campus, with the permission from school administration.
- Seniors can improve their SAT/ACT scores to qualify for college admission.
- Seniors are eligible to be elected as President for the Student Council.
- Seniors can take at least four college days to visit different colleges.
- Seniors finish and defend their senior theses.

What must I do to prepare for my senior year?

- Decide on what leadership role you would like to fulfill.
- Over the summer, begin reading works that may be used to develop your senior thesis.
- Read those novels, literary and historical works that will be required for your core courses.
- If you have not already done so, take a SAT or ACT prep course (e.g., Kaplan, Princeton Review).
- Plan to coordinate vacation trips to those venues that are near colleges you may be interested in visiting. Visit as many colleges and universities as you may be interested.
- Spend some time getting better connected with your church or faith community.
- Decide on a schedule that will optimize your grade point average and class rank.
- Identify those areas that need to be improved, and attend workshops at area colleges. For example, take a speed reading course, creative writing, or math reinforcement.