

Sacred Heart High School

Preliminary Curriculum Guide

Freshman through Senior Year | Planning Stage

Curriculum Vision

The goal of the Sacred Heart High School curriculum is to form students intellectually, spiritually, morally, and practically through an authentically Catholic education. Academic excellence is important, but the school is intended to do more than prepare students for college or employment. It should help students understand truth, develop sound judgment, communicate clearly, recognize the dignity of the human person, and live their Catholic faith with confidence.

Catholic faith and formation should be woven throughout the life of the school rather than confined to a single theology period. Students will study theology every year, participate in weekly school Mass, and have regular opportunities for Adoration, Rosary, Confession, retreats, and service. Daily Mass will be available, with freshmen expected to attend as part of their formation.

Academically, Sacred Heart High School will combine the Catholic intellectual and classical traditions with rigorous mathematics and science, literature and history, philosophy and logic, communication, and fine arts. Students will also learn to use modern technology thoughtfully and responsibly where it adds educational value. Technology, including artificial intelligence, should support learning rather than replace deep reading, clear writing, disciplined memory, independent reasoning, or sound judgment.

Four-Year Intellectual Sequence

9th Grade: *Learn to read, write, speak and understand foundational truths.*

10th Grade: *Learn to reason.*

11th Grade: *Encounter the major ideas of Western civilization.*

12th Grade: *Learn to judge, defend and apply those ideas.*

Daily Schedule Philosophy

The working model assumes eight daily periods: seven academic/course periods and one dedicated study hall. The study hall is intended to be a meaningful part of the academic program, providing time for homework, teacher assistance, test preparation, reading, Mount Marty University coursework, and the added demands of athletics, fine arts, service, and extracurricular activities such as choir or debate groups.

Core courses such as Theology, English/Literature, Mathematics, Science, and major History courses will generally run for the full academic year. Selected subjects - including Speech, Logic, Ethics, Human Behavior/Psychology, Health/Theology of the Body, Government, Economics/Personal Finance, and some Fine Arts offerings - may be taught as semester courses.

Technology and Independent Thinking

Sacred Heart High School will use technology when appropriate, but will not treat it as a substitute for educating the mind. Students will be expected to read deeply, write clearly, reason independently, discuss ideas thoughtfully, and develop their own judgment. Digital tools, including AI, may be used where they strengthen learning, creativity, research, or practical skills, but never as a replacement for the student's own thinking.

Freshman Year - Grade 9

Year Theme: *Learn to read, write, speak and understand foundational truths.*

Freshman year establishes the common foundation for every Sacred Heart student: Catholic identity, strong reading and writing habits, confident oral communication, mathematical discipline, scientific curiosity, historical perspective, and healthy personal formation. It is also the year in which daily Mass is expected as part of students' introduction to the spiritual culture of the school.

Area	Course	Length
Theology	Theology I	Full Year
English	Classical Literature & Composition	Full Year
Mathematics - College Algebra Track	Algebra I	Full Year
Mathematics - Calculus Track	Geometry	Full Year
Science	Earth Science & Astronomy	Full Year
History	Ancient & Medieval World History	Full Year
Foreign Language	Foreign Language I	Full Year
Communication	Speech	Semester
Health / Formation	Health & Theology of the Body	Semester
Academic Support	Study Hall	Full Year / Daily

Short Course Descriptions

Theology I: Introduction to Scripture, salvation history, foundational Catholic doctrine, prayer, and the sacramental life of the Church.

Classical Literature & Composition: Foundational reading and writing through significant works of classical literature, with emphasis on grammar, composition, analysis, and discussion.

Algebra I: Core algebraic concepts, equations, functions, graphing, and problem solving for the College Algebra Track.

Geometry: Proof, spatial reasoning, geometric relationships, measurement, and logical problem solving for the Calculus Track.

Earth Science & Astronomy: Earth systems, geology, weather, climate, astronomy, the solar system, stars, galaxies, and the physical universe.

Ancient & Medieval World History: Major civilizations, political ideas, cultures, religions, and historical developments from the ancient world through the Middle Ages.

Foreign Language I: Introductory language acquisition with vocabulary, grammar, reading, speaking, listening, and cultural study.

Speech: Public speaking, organization, delivery, persuasion, audience awareness, and confident oral communication.

Health & Theology of the Body: Physical and emotional health, human development, relationships, sexuality, dignity of the human person, and Catholic teaching on the body and vocation.

Study Hall: Dedicated daily time for independent study, homework, reading, teacher assistance, academic support, and the added demands of athletics, fine arts, service, and extracurricular activities such as choir or debate groups.

Sophomore Year - Grade 10

Year Theme: *Learn to reason.*

Sophomore year develops disciplined reasoning. Students deepen their understanding of Christian faith and Western civilization while learning to distinguish strong arguments from weak ones. Logic, biology, literature, history, language, and visual art work together to strengthen observation, interpretation, and judgment.

Area	Course	Length
Theology	Theology II	Full Year
English	Western / British Literature & Composition	Full Year
Mathematics - College Algebra Track	Geometry	Full Year
Mathematics - Calculus Track	Algebra II	Full Year
Science	Biology	Full Year
History	Renaissance & Modern World History	Full Year
Foreign Language	Foreign Language II	Full Year
Philosophy / Reasoning	Logic - Formal & Informal	Semester
Fine Arts	Foundations of Visual Art	Semester
Academic Support	Study Hall	Full Year / Daily

Short Course Descriptions

Theology II: Study of Jesus Christ, the Church, the Sacraments, and the development of Catholic belief and practice.

Western / British Literature & Composition: Major works from the Western and British literary traditions with continued emphasis on analytical writing and discussion.

Geometry: Proof, geometric relationships, measurement, and logical problem solving for the College Algebra Track.

Algebra II: Advanced algebra, functions, equations, systems, polynomial and exponential relationships, and preparation for precalculus.

Biology: Cell biology, genetics, evolution, ecology, anatomy, physiology, and the scientific study of living systems.

Renaissance & Modern World History: Political, intellectual, religious, economic, and cultural developments from the Renaissance through the modern era.

Foreign Language II: Continued language study with increased emphasis on comprehension, composition, conversation, grammar, and culture.

Logic - Formal & Informal: Deductive and inductive reasoning, syllogisms, validity, soundness, argument structure, logical fallacies, evidence, and clear thinking.

Foundations of Visual Art: Drawing, composition, color, visual design, art appreciation, architecture, and selected sacred and Western artistic traditions.

Study Hall: Dedicated daily time for independent study, homework, reading, teacher assistance, academic support, and the added demands of athletics, fine arts, service, and extracurricular activities such as choir or debate groups.

Junior Year - Grade 11

Year Theme: *Encounter the major ideas of Western civilization.*

Junior year is the intellectual bridge between the classical tradition and the contemporary world. Students engage major Western thinkers, American history, advanced science and mathematics, and the questions that have shaped modern society. The AI, Machine Learning & Robotics course remains a distinct part of the curriculum, giving students practical literacy while teaching them to evaluate emerging tools critically and use them without surrendering independent thought.

Area	Course	Length
Theology	Theology III	Full Year
English	American Literature & Advanced Writing	Full Year

Area	Course	Length
Mathematics - College Algebra Track	Algebra II	Full Year
Mathematics - Calculus Track	Precalculus / Trigonometry	Full Year
Science	Chemistry	Full Year
History	United States History	Full Year
Philosophy	Western Philosophy	Full Year
Technology	AI, Machine Learning & Robotics	Full Year
Elective	Foreign Language III / Fine Arts / Approved Elective	Optional / As Scheduled
Academic Support	Study Hall	Full Year / Daily

Short Course Descriptions

Theology III: Catholic moral theology, conscience, virtue, sin, Catholic Social Teaching, human dignity, and moral decision-making.

American Literature & Advanced Writing: American literary traditions combined with advanced analytical, persuasive, research, and expository writing.

Algebra II: Advanced algebra and functions, with emphasis on college readiness and quantitative problem solving.

Precalculus / Trigonometry: Functions, trigonometry, analytic geometry, and mathematical preparation for calculus.

Chemistry: Atomic structure, bonding, reactions, stoichiometry, matter, energy, laboratory methods, and quantitative reasoning.

United States History: Political, social, cultural, military, and economic development of the United States from its origins to the present.

Western Philosophy: Study of major Western thinkers including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Marx, Engels, and other influential figures.

AI, Machine Learning & Robotics: Digital literacy, artificial intelligence, machine learning concepts, data, programming foundations, robotics, cybersecurity, verification, and ethical use of emerging technology.

Foreign Language III / Fine Arts / Approved Elective: Optional advanced study based on student interest, staffing, and partnership opportunities.

Study Hall: Dedicated daily time for independent study, homework, reading, teacher assistance, academic support, and the added demands of athletics, fine arts, service, and extracurricular activities such as choir or debate groups.

Senior Year - Grade 12

Year Theme: *Learn to judge, defend and apply those ideas.*

Senior year asks students to synthesize what they have learned. Through apologetics, ethics, psychology, government, economics, advanced mathematics and science, and senior-level writing, students practice making reasoned judgments and defending them clearly. Mount Marty University coursework can provide additional advanced options while connecting students directly to college-level expectations.

Area	Course	Length
Theology	Theology IV / Apologetics	Full Year
English	20th Century Literature & Senior Writing	Full Year
Mathematics - College Algebra Track	Statistics / College Algebra	Full Year
Mathematics - Calculus Track	Calculus (Sacred Heart or Mount Marty University)	Full Year
Science	Physics	Full Year
Social Studies	U.S. Government	Semester
Social Studies	Economics & Personal Finance	Semester
Philosophy	Ethics	Semester
Social Science	Human Behavior / Psychology	Semester
Advanced Study	Mount Marty University / Senior Elective / Fine Arts / Advanced Study	As Scheduled
Academic Support	Study Hall / Senior Capstone	Full Year / Daily

Short Course Descriptions

Theology IV / Apologetics: Reasoned defense and explanation of Catholic belief, including faith and reason, Scripture and Tradition, the Eucharist, the Church, Mary and the saints, suffering, morality, vocation, and engagement with contemporary objections.

20th Century Literature & Senior Writing: Major modern and contemporary works with emphasis on interpretation, rhetoric, research, mature writing, and preparation for college-level communication.

Statistics / College Algebra: Quantitative reasoning with emphasis on statistics, data interpretation, probability, modeling, practical applications, and college-algebra topics as appropriate.

Calculus: Limits, derivatives, integrals, applications, and college-level mathematical reasoning; may be offered through Sacred Heart High School or Mount Marty University.

Physics: Motion, forces, energy, momentum, waves, electricity, and foundational physical principles using mathematical and laboratory analysis.

U.S. Government: Constitutional structure, federalism, civil liberties, elections, institutions, public policy, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Economics & Personal Finance: Basic microeconomics and macroeconomics together with budgeting, banking, credit, taxes, insurance, investing, and personal financial decision-making.

Ethics: Major approaches to moral reasoning, including virtue ethics, natural law, deontology, utilitarianism, relativism, and Catholic moral thought applied to contemporary questions.

Human Behavior / Psychology: Introduction to human behavior through major psychological theories, famous studies, cognition, development, learning, personality, social behavior, and critical evaluation of research.

Mount Marty University / Senior Elective / Fine Arts / Advanced Study: Flexible advanced-study period for dual-credit college coursework, specialized electives, fine arts, or other approved academic opportunities.

Study Hall / Senior Capstone: Daily academic support time that may also support a senior thesis, capstone project, Mount Marty coursework, independent advanced study, or extracurricular activities such as choir or debate groups.

Mathematics Pathways

Grade	College Algebra Track	Calculus Track
9	Algebra I	Geometry
10	Geometry	Algebra II
11	Algebra II	Precalculus / Trigonometry
12	Statistics / College Algebra	Calculus

The two pathways are intended to provide a rigorous sequence appropriate to student readiness: the College Algebra Track emphasizes strong quantitative preparation through statistics and college algebra, while the Calculus Track advances through precalculus/trigonometry to calculus.

Catholic Formation and Theology

- Theology required in every grade.
- Weekly all-school Mass.
- Daily Mass available; freshmen expected to attend.
- Weekly Adoration and/or Rosary.
- Regular Confession, retreats, service, and opportunities for spiritual formation.
- Theology curriculum to include Scripture, Salvation History, Christology, Sacraments, the Church, Moral Theology, Catholic Social Teaching, Theology of the Body, Apologetics, vocation, and engagement with the modern world.

Fine Arts and Communication

The working curriculum includes visual arts and should also provide performing-arts opportunities. Students should complete at least one full credit of Fine Arts across high school, which may be assembled from semester or full-year offerings such as Visual Art, Theater, Chorus, Music, Digital/Graphic Art, or other approved courses. Speech is currently envisioned as a required freshman semester course, with Debate available as an elective and extracurricular competitive activity.

Mount Marty University Partnership

Sacred Heart High School intends to take advantage of its proximity to Mount Marty University, particularly for advanced junior and senior coursework. Potential areas include Theology, Philosophy, Calculus, Statistics, advanced sciences, Psychology, business, and other college-level electives. A formal partnership could broaden the academic program while reducing the need for Sacred Heart High School to staff very small advanced classes internally.

Athletics - Proposed Programs

- Proposed Sacred Heart athletic programs: Basketball, Volleyball, Tennis, Golf, Archery, and Cross Country.
- Possible additions as enrollment, staffing, facilities, and student interest allow: Track & Field and other programs supported by student interest and available resources.
- Cooperative opportunities: Sacred Heart High School intends to explore arrangements with Yankton High School or other area schools for activities that may not initially be practical to offer independently, potentially including football, soccer, marching band, and other activities, subject to future agreements and applicable activity-association rules.

Working-Draft Notes

This curriculum is intentionally preliminary. The next phase should confirm graduation-credit requirements, determine which courses are required versus elective, refine the theology sequence, decide the final Fine Arts requirement, identify Mount Marty partnership opportunities, and test the curriculum against an actual master schedule to determine faculty needs and teaching loads.