Benilde-St.Margaret's
A Catholic, college preparatory school

2026-2027 – High School Program of Studies

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Practices and Protocols

The courses listed in this Program of Studies may not be the same as the final courses offered during the school year. The number of students registered for a course, scheduling priorities, and personnel will determine final course offerings.

This Program of Studies has been designed to provide information for students and parents as they make informed decisions regarding course selection during their years at Benilde-St. Margaret's.

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their course selections with their counselors, teachers, and parents/guardians. The high school experience is intended to be a four-year process in which students complete an extensive curriculum in preparation for post-secondary studies. Benilde-St. Margaret's offers a variety of elective courses that enhance a college preparatory curriculum. Students are required to take a minimum of seven academic classes per semester at BSM.

With this philosophy in mind, we will not allow students to complete their studies after the first semester of senior year.

The table at right provides a summary of the courses required for graduation. One credit equals one semester of satisfactory completion of coursework.

BSM Graduation Requirements

English	8 credits
Fine Arts	2 credits
College/Career	.5 credit
Health	1 credit
Mathematics	6 credits
Phy Ed	1 credit
Science	6 credits
Social Studies	7 credits
Theology	8 credits
World Language	4 credits
Electives	13 credits
Total credits	**56.5**

**Transfer students will have their transcripts reviewed on a case by case basis.*

BSM College and School Counselors

Counselors follow the same group of students from 9th grade through graduation.

Amy Larson, last names A – Do	alarson@bsmschool.org
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Grading

Grade Scale	Letter Grade	Standard GPA	Honors GPA (Using 1.0625)	AP/CIS/PACC GPA (Using 1.125)
93-100	A	4.000	4.25	4.5
90-92	A-	3.700	3.93	4.16
86-89	B+	3.300	3.5	3.71
83-85	B	3.000	3.19	3.38
80-82	B-	2.700	2.87	3.04
76-79	C+	2.300	2.44	2.59
73-75	C	2.000	2.12	2.25
70-72	C-	1.670	1.81	1.91
66-69	D+	1.300	1.38	1.46
63-65	D	1.000	1.06	1.13
60-62	D-	.700	0.74	0.79
59 & below	F	.000	.000	.000

BSM GPA

Only courses taken at BSM will have grades factored into BSM GPA.

AP Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses, College in the Schools (CIS) courses, and Program for Advanced College Credit (PACC) courses will carry an additional weighted grade of 1.125%.

Honors Courses

Effective with the start of the 2025-2026 school year, Honors Courses will carry an additional weighted grade of 1.0625%. Honors courses are designed to challenge capable and motivated students by providing them with clearly stated expectations specifying the rigorous nature of the curriculum.

College Credit Options

Refer to pages 8-11 of this document for information regarding courses available to students for college credit. Courses taken at Benilde-St. Margaret's under AP, CIS or PACC will carry a weighted grade and are included in the student's gpa calculation. Courses taken under the PSEO option ARE NOT factored into the student's gpa. These grades will be recorded on the student's transcript under the specific college name, with a grade and credit(s) institution. Students will be responsible for obtaining copies of these transcripts as needed. Students taking the CIS or PACC courses will have the credit fees charged to their BSM tuition account, if they choose to pursue the college credit.

Honor Rolls

Honor rolls are determined at the end of each semester. Honors (3.5-3.79) High Honors (3.8-3.8+)

Practices and Protocols

Students register for courses in the spring of each year, and it is important for students to select courses carefully. This BSM High School Program of Studies contains a listing of all courses offered, and prerequisite information is noted if appropriate. BSM administration may change the semester from which a course is originally offered or cancel any course due to insufficient numbers or personnel changes.

Auditing a Class

Sometimes a student may need to take a course for review or to strengthen their skills to progress through the sequence in an academic area. This can be done through auditing a class.
Although a student receives a grade for this course, no credit is issued when auditing a class. The grade is not computed into a student's cumulative grade point average. The student may plan to audit a class by contacting their counselor. Students can choose to show their grade on their transcript or can leave the grade marking as an "X" indicating an audited course.

High School Course Change Policy

Students register for courses in the spring of each year and it is important for students to select courses carefully. The BSM Program of Studies contains a listing of all courses offered and prerequisite information is noted if appropriate. Course requests are carefully reviewed by each academic department after semester two grades have been posted. Students who do not meet the necessary course prerequisite will be placed in the appropriate level or may initiate a course recommendation waiver. Administration will place a student in a course necessary to fulfill graduation requirements if an alternate selection is not chosen. The administration reserves the right to cancel any course and/or change the semester in which a course is offered due to insufficient numbers or where changes in personnel are required.

The BSM Course Selection process takes place in late February/early March each year, and students select their courses and alternate choices at this time. After this timeframe, students and guardians can review their course requests in their PowerSchool accounts. Students can request elective changes and level changes (e.g., honors to regular) through an online form from the time of course selection in March until the last day of the school year. Starting the first day of summer vacation, no elective or level changes can be made.

Students' schedules will be available to view in PowerSchool the week before school starts. At that point, because classes and teacher schedules are set, no changes will be made for either semester one or semester two, unless there are errors or conflicts with other courses. Note that counselors cannot make changes for periods or teachers. For seniors, the registrar and counselors will do their best to schedule their BSM Hour for 1st, 2nd, 7th, or 8th period, but we cannot make changes to which of those periods they are each semester.

The following windows and criteria apply to course corrections:

- **February/March through the Last Day of School:** Students may request elective and level changes by submitting the online BSM Course Correction form by the last day of school.
- **First Day of Semester through Week 4:** Level changes may be initiated by the teacher. The teacher or counselor will have the student and guardian complete the BSM Level Change form by the end of the 4th week.
- **November 15 – December 15:** Changes for Semester 2 are allowed only if the student failed a first-semester course and needs to fit in a course as a result, a teacher/counselor determined the student was in the wrong level after week 4 of the first semester, there is a computer error or conflict (e.g., two classes only offered during the same period), or the student has an open period to fill or has been accepted to enroll in PSEO for Semester 2.

Some classes meet all year long, and students are expected to finish the entire course. Students should consult with their counselor about any questions, and seniors need to report course changes to colleges. Schedule changes to accommodate teacher requests will not be granted, and requests to change a class for a specific period of the day or lunch time will not be considered. Since we require seven courses each semester, a student who has eight classes and wants to drop a class must meet with their counselor, as they can only drop a course if they are already enrolled in eight courses.

Shortage of Credits

Students are required to be making satisfactory progress toward graduation in order to be allowed to continue enrollment at Benilde-St. Margaret's School.

If a student fails the first semester of a year-long course, they may upon BSM approval earn a "MUP" (Make-Up Pass) for that course by passing the second semester with a "C" or higher. In this case, the original "F" remains on the transcript alongside the "MUP" and the actual grade earned in the second semester, but no additional credit recovery course is required.
For failures in a semester-long course or the second semester of a year-long course, the student must complete a BSM-approved recovery course online or at BSM in subsequent semesters if the credit is required for graduation. These make-up courses are graded and will appear on the transcript, and the original "F" will also remain. It is important to note that only classes taken directly at BSM are factored into a student's GPA; therefore, while recovery credits earned through approved online programs will appear on the transcript and count toward graduation requirements, those grades will not be calculated into the BSM GPA.

Withdrawal from a Course in High School

If, after a conversation with and the recommendation of a student's parent or guardian, counselor, and teacher, it is determined that a withdrawal is in the best interest of the student, the student may withdraw from a course only if the student is enrolled in 8 academic courses. During the first two weeks of each semester, a student may drop a course without any notation appearing on their permanent record.

If a student chooses to withdraw between the end of the second week and the conclusion of the sixth week of the semester, they will receive a grade of "W" (withdrawal) on their permanent record. After the first six weeks of the semester have passed, any student who withdraws from a course will receive a "WF" (withdrawal fail) on their permanent record.

When enrolling in a yearlong course, students should expect to remain in the course both semesters. If a withdrawal from a yearlong course is granted, seniors must be aware that they are required to contact any college they have applied to regarding their decision to withdraw from a yearlong course.

AP Capstone Diploma™

AP Capstone is an innovative diploma program providing students with an opportunity to engage in rigorous scholarly practice of the core academic skills necessary for successful college completion. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar: Biomedical Science and AP Research: Biomedical Science AND on 4 additional AP Exams of the student's choosing to receive the AP Capstone Diploma™. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research but, not on the four additional AP Exams, receive the AP Seminar and Research Certificate™. The AP Capstone Program cultivates curious, independent, and collaborative scholars and prepares them to make logical, evidence-based decisions.

MN Platinum/Gold Bilingual Seal or World Language Certificate

Students in grades 10, 11, 12 who demonstrate required levels of proficiency in a world language may be eligible to receive a MN Bilingual/Multilingual seal or certificate (depending on their proficiency) on their diploma. These awards verify professional-level bilingualism in both English and another World Language. There are two tests available to students for demonstrating proficiency, the STAMP test ($36 and hosted at BSM in May) or the AP language exams. The award is granted in a student's senior year and added to their BSM transcript. It is a rare accomplishment and one that students should consider highlighting on future applications including those for college, graduate school, and on job applications. Also, MN State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) award college credit based on the student's level of proficiency, i.e. their test results. The student is responsible for seeking MnSCU credit by contacting their college advisor upon enrollment in a MnSCU institution.

NCAA Requirements

Students wishing to participate in inter-collegiate athletics on a Division I or Division II level must abide by NCAA guidelines. Students must register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Information about the process can be obtained in the counseling office or athletic office. Students should be aware that there are some courses offered at Benilde-St. Margaret's School that do not meet NCAA core course guidelines. To locate the list of current courses offered at BSM which are approved or denied by the NCAA, go to their website: eligibilitycenter.org Click on: Prospective Student Athletes Click on: List of Approved Core Courses BSM's school code number is: 242202. The NCAA requires all test scores be reported directly from the individual testing agency.

Below are the core curriculum courses offered at BSM **not approved** by the NCAA:

ENGLISH

Editorial Leadership

For additional information about DI or DII course, grade and test score requirements go to the NCAA website: www.eligibilitycenter.org

Select: "enter here>"resources">"US Students">"Eligibility Quick Reference Sheet"

High School Study Abroad

Students choosing to spend one or more semesters studying abroad will need to see their counselor to discuss arrangements. A written plan must be submitted and approved by the appropriate counselor and the principal. This plan must include courses to be studied. Issues concerning transfer of grades, and credits earned through studying abroad will be discussed. The study abroad option is not available to seniors. Prior to leaving, the student must have written consent from the principal. Students should be aware that the Benilde-St. Margaret's School and Minnesota State graduation requirements will not be waived and will need to be completed in order for the student to graduate.

Four-Year Plan

Freshman Year – *Minimum Credit Requirement = 14, Maximum Credits = 16*

First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
English	1	English	1
Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1
Science	1	Science	1
Theology	1	Theology	1
World Language	1	World Language	1
Physical Education or Health	1	Physical Education or Health	1
Human Geography or Elective*	1	Human Geography or Elective*	1
Study Hall/Learning Lab/Elective	0/0.5/ 1	Study Hall/Learning Lab/Elective	0/0.5/1
Total credits per semester	**7 or 8**	**Total credits per semester**	**7 or 8**

**PE and Human Geography are typically in the same semester opposite Health and optional elective*

Sophomore Year – *Minimum Credit Requirement = 14, Maximum Credits = 16*

First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
English	1	English	1
Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1
Social Studies	1	Social Studies	1
Theology	1	Theology	1
World Language	1	World Language	1
Science	1	Science	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
Study Hall/Academic Support	0	Study Hall/Academic Support	0
Total credits per semester	**7 to 8**	**Total credits per semester**	**7 to 8**

Junior Year – *Minimum Credit Requirement = 14.5, Maximum Credits = 16.5*

First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
English	1	English	1
Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1
Science	1	Science	1
Social Studies	1	Social Studies	1
Theology	1	Theology	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
BSM Hour	0	BSM Hour/ College and Career Portfolio	.5
Total credits per semester	**7 to 8**	**Total credits per semester**	**7.5 to 8.5**

Senior Year – *Minimum Credit Requirement = 14, Maximum Credits = 16*

First Semester	Credits	Second Semester	Credits
English	1	English	1
Theology	1	Theology	1
Social Studies	1	Social Studies	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
Elective	1	Elective	1
BSM Hour	0	BSM Hour	0
Total credits per semester	**7 to 8**	**Total credits per semester**	**7 to 8**

Practices and Protocols

Minimum College Requirements

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Math
- 3 years of Science
- 3.5 years of History / Social Studies
- 2 years of a world language
- 1 year of visual or performing arts

Note: These college requirements are **MINIMUM** standards, not recommended coursework.

Colleges Want Students Who Go Beyond the Minimum

What you find published on a college's website should not serve as your course selection guide because the admissions office will be looking for students who have challenged themselves academically and gone beyond the minimum graduation requirements.

Here are some better guidelines:

- **English** — 4 years of English with a mix of literature and composition work.
- **Math** — take math every year in high school. (Note that getting an early start by taking Algebra or Geometry in junior high does not mean you can skip math as a junior or senior.) Colleges will expect to see Algebra II at a minimum and some type of math course every year.
- **Science** — 4 years of science. Most colleges expect to see Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.
- **History / Social Studies** — 3-4 years - Most colleges like to see a geography, history, and government class.
- **World Language** — 2 years of the same language is the minimum; 3 is recommended. If you are applying to highly selective schools, you should give serious consideration to 4 years.
- **Visual or Performing Art** - 1 year

Challenging yourself beyond the minimum requirements is one of the easiest ways to distinguish yourself from other applicants. Some high schools require four years of English, math, science, and social studies, so taking that many years of each puts you on par with those students. BSM requires two years of a world language, so by taking a third or fourth year, you will show your willingness to complete challenging academic work.

High Achievers

The recommendations above apply to all college-bound students, but if you are a high achiever and may consider some of the most highly selective colleges, you need to select courses that will make you competitive with other applicants. BSM offers nine honors courses in English, math, science, and Spanish, and 26 AP courses in English, math, science, social studies, world language, studio art, music and computer science. We also offer college credit courses through St. Mary's University and the University of Minnesota.

Here are some high achiever course selection tips:

- Make sure you are on track to take the highest level of math offered. Depending on where you start at BSM, this means taking AP Calculus AB or AP Calculus BC your senior year. AP Calculus is generally seen as more challenging than AP Statistics, so if you can take only one, make it Calculus.
- Four years of the same language is highly recommended.

College Credit Options

Obtaining College Credit

There are four main options to obtain college credit while enrolled at BSM. A brief explanation of the options are offered below. Be sure to access each website for specific information as well as researching the requirements of any college or university you are interested in.

Advanced Placement

AP course grades are weighted and factored into BSM GPA

Benilde-St. Margaret's School offers over twenty AP courses to interested and eligible students. AP courses at BSM are first year-college equivalent courses, approved by the College Board. BSM does require students who enroll in any AP course to sit for the AP exam OR submit the required portfolio of work. Many colleges and universities will provide college credit based on these test results.

Course descriptions and requirements will be found under each academic department.

Of note:
At an information session presented by Georgetown, Harvard, Penn, Duke and Stanford, the admission reps indicated that whether a college accepts the credit or not, the expectation at highly selective schools is that students have taken AP courses ***and exams*** because these are the best ways to prepare for the rigors of the freshman year in college.

College in the Schools

CIS course grades are weighted and factored into BSM GPA

College in the Schools (CIS) allows motivated juniors and seniors to earn college credits by taking University of Minnesota, Twin Cities courses, at BSM.

Students receive both high school and college credits.

For more information online users select Learn more about CIS

Other users copy and paste this address in your browser:

https://ccaps.umn.edu/college-in-the-schools

* $145.00/ Course if seeking college credit.

PACC

PACC course grades are weighted and factored into BSM GPA

Saint Mary's Program for Advanced College Credit (PACC) offers college-level learning experiences and college credit to participating private high school programs, with the same expectations, workload, learning activities, projects, and exams as the courses taught to first-year students at Saint Mary's.

Students receive both high school and college credits.

For more information:
Online users select:
Learn more about PACC.

Other users copy and paste this address in your browser:
https://www.smumn.edu/admission/undergraduate/college-credit-in-high-school/pacc/

* $300.00/ Course if seeking College Credit.

PSEO

PSEO course grades are NOT weighted or factored into BSM GPA

Post-Secondary Education Options (PSEO) is a program allowing high school students to get a head start by taking college courses at colleges and universities. BSM juniors and seniors in high school may enroll, full-or part-time in courses and will receive concurrent high school and college credit.

Students may apply to the University of Minnesota and all of its branches, all the Minnesota State Universities, community colleges, technical colleges or Minnesota private liberal arts colleges. College tuition, fees and textbooks are paid for by the State of Minnesota.

PSEO students will be required to take a minimum of 6 courses per semester between BSM and PSEO.

For more information:
Online users select:
Learn more about PSEO.

Other users copy and paste this address in your browser:
https://education.mn.gov/mde/fam/dual/pseo/index.htm

College Credit Options

College in the Schools (CIS)

Benilde-St. Margaret's School is partnering with the University of Minnesota College in the Schools to bring undergraduate-level courses into our classrooms. Students choosing to attend University of Minnesota College in the Schools courses will earn college credit. Colleges and universities may recognize coursework completed at other institutions. Check with your college of choice regarding their individual transfer credit policy.

*There is a $145 registration fee per student, plus the cost of textbooks, technology and supplies. Students may also need to pay for transportation to and from Field Day activities. Cost for credits ($145/student) will be charged to BSM Tuition account.

Here are BSM's CIS Options:

Creative Problem Solving (S1 or S2)

One semester, one credit, open to juniors and seniors
Three college credits from the University of Minnesota

Sophomores may register with instructor permission and a 3.0 or better GPA. Full course description and requirements will be found on 54 of the Program of Studies.

Creativity is essential for success across disciplines and highly valued by employers. Embracing creativity gives meaning and value to how you approach your life, solve problems, and pretty much everything you do. A creative mindset not only unveils opportunities but also nurtures an appreciation for the iterative nature of the creative process, embracing growth arising from perceived setbacks or failures. This course is designed to move you out of your existing comfort zones, encouraging you to explore beyond initial solutions and recognize the inherent value of considering multiple perspectives. The only wrong answer is having only one answer. Central to the mission of the course is the development of your personal traits of creativity, thoughtful analysis, ingenuity, experimentation, and the ability to solve problems both individually and collaboratively. The curriculum, provided by the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, awards 3 college credit hours upon successful completion. It will be necessary for students to put in additional time outside of class to fully complete required projects, readings and assignments.

Introduction to Literature: Poetry, Drama, Narrative (LITR, WI)

One semester, one credit, open to seniors.
Four college credits from the University of Minnesota.

This is a writing-intensive course that also meets the Literature Core requirement. From epic battles against monsters in legendary kingdoms to stories about characters in worlds like our own, literature engages us with the diverse perspectives and experiences that make up our communities and world. This course introduces students to ways of understanding and appreciating literature in English across cultures and historical periods. Through this course, we will develop skills to help us understand literature, especially the ability to read language closely (a skill valuable in many disciplines beyond literature).

We will explore how writers use language and literary aspects, such as genre, voice, tone, symbol, motif, theme, imagery, narrative, and form. We also will learn how to write about literature, sharing our interpretations of how and why literary works have meaning for ourselves and others, while viewing them through critical cultural lenses, including ways to understand how gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and class can function in literary texts.

St. Mary's University of Minnesota
Program of Advance College Credit

Benilde-St. Margaret's School is partnering with Saint Mary's University of Minnesota Program of Advanced College Credit (PACC) to bring undergraduate-level courses into our classrooms. Students choosing to attend Saint Mary's University will earn college credit. Colleges and universities may recognize coursework completed at other institutions. Check with your college of choice regarding their individual transfer credit policy.

*Students can choose whether to earn PACC Credit. The cost is $100.00 per credit. Fee will be charged to tuition at BSM and sent to St. Mary's. The PACC courses we offer are 3-credit courses, so total cost for taking a PACC course for college credit will be $300.00

PACC: Accounting II (S1) or (S2)

One semester, one credit, open to juniors, and seniors

Prerequisite: Accounting I

This course may be taken for college credit through St. Mary's PACC program (see page 10). Accounting II builds on concepts from Accounting I to provide a more complex understanding of financial accounting with sections on inventory, specialized journals, and corporate accounting. The class also introduces students to managerial accounting concepts.

AP Chemistry (YR)

Two semesters, two credits, open to juniors and seniors

Prerequisite: Completion of Chemistry or Honors Chemistry.

This course is available for PACC credit. This course is a second-year chemistry course, designed to be the equivalent of the general course taken during the first year of college. This course prepares students for the Advanced Placement exam. It is structured around the six big ideas as described in the AP Curriculum Framework: including the structure of matter, properties of matter, chemical reactions, the rates of chemical reactions, thermodynamics, and equilibrium. A special emphasis will be placed on the seven science practices, which capture important aspects of the work in which scientists engage. Learning objectives will combine content with inquiry and reasoning skills during multiple hands-on laboratory investigations.

AP Statistics (YR)

Two semesters, two credits

This course may be taken for college credit through St. Mary's PACC program (see page 10)

Prerequisite: Completion of two semesters of one of the following courses with the required grade indicated Algebra II with a grade of "A" in both semesters.

FST with a grade of "A-" or higher. Precalculus with a grade of "C+" or higher.

This is a rigorous writing intensive course designed to teach students how to organize, display, and interpret data. An emphasis will be placed on the four major themes of the AP Statistics curriculum: exploring data, sampling, and experimental design, anticipating patterns with probability and simulation, and statistical inference. A TI-Nspire graphing calculator is required.

PACC: Spanish IV (YR)

Two semesters, two credits, open to all grade levels

Prerequisite: Spanish III

This course may be taken for college credit through St. Mary's PACC program

This fourth-year Spanish course is designed to start developing intermediate skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing through conversations, discussions, authentic readings, and composition writing. The study of Spanish speakers and their culture will include units on conflict resolution and relationships, the workplace, Aztec and Mayan civilizations and their myths and legends, the fusion of cultures in Spain before 1492 and in the Americas after the arrival of Europeans, the environment, civil rights as well as government. Participation and conversation are key components of this course, and one focus will be speaking in Spanish. Students will be engaged in a variety of activities by means of authentic materials, interactive technology, music, and movies.

PACC: Spanish V (YR)

Two semesters, two credits, open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors

Prerequisite: Spanish IV or Pre-AP Spanish

This course may be taken for college credit through St. Mary's PACC program

This fifth-year Spanish course is designed to continue developing intermediate skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing through conversations, discussions, authentic readings, and composition writing. The study of Spanish speakers and their culture will include units on fashion trends, the environment, human rights, personalities and conflict resolution, entertainment, diversity, the culinary arts, our societal issues, the economy, our free time, and 21st century challenges and advancements. Participation and conversation are key components of this course, and two main focuses will be speaking and writing in Spanish. Students will be engaged in a variety of activities by means of authentic materials, interactive technology, music, and movies.

PACC: Thinking Theologically (S1) or (S2)

One semester, one BSM credit, open to seniors

Prerequisite: satisfactory completion of Theology 10 Discipleship and Theology 10 Morality with a "B" in both semesters.
Three credit college level options

This course is eligible for PACC credit (see page 58). This **college-level** course introduces students to the methods and practices of thinking theologically through an examination of some of the major questions people have asked and found answers to within religious contexts, especially the Judeo-Christian narrative. This course pays particular attention to the human experience of suffering, and how those different experiences shape our theological questions, both past and present. The course also embeds how theology is examined at a university defined by multidisciplinary approaches to truth and knowledge.