

SAINT MONICA ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES

Introduction

The education of children is, in the first place, the responsibility of their parents.¹ Parents have the right, and the duty, to choose a school which corresponds to their own convictions.² In furtherance of this right, and in fulfillment of this duty, a group of parents in 2001 founded Saint Monica Academy. As the school has expanded to include the high school grades, the governing Board has adopted the following charter of principles, to guide the school's headmaster and teachers, and to enable parents considering the school to understand our convictions, our curriculum, our culture, and the unique capabilities that have been and will be achieved by our graduates.

College Preparatory *Par Excellence*

Saint Monica Academy high school is a college preparatory school with a classical pedagogy and a traditional liberal arts curriculum. Parents looking for a place to prepare their children to excel at top colleges will find that here. They will find comprehensive instruction in the conventional subjects of mathematics, English, languages, history and the sciences.

But they will find these subjects taught in a way that we believe no other school in our area provides. They will find English classes brimming with literature and poetry of the classical canon -- works whose characters ennoble and entertain, written in prose and verse that our students will learn to analyze, admire and emulate. Parents will find their children coming home knowing authentic history, beginning with ancient civilizations and continuing through the American constitutional republic. Parents will visit classrooms where the instruction in subjects like chemistry, physics, biology, geometry, algebra and pre-calculus is as lively as it is rigorous, reflecting the teachers' own excitement and sense of wonder, and instilling that in their students.

The product of this curriculum and pedagogy is graduates who excel in college because they are excited about learning. They are scholars of history, lovers of culture, knowledgeable and curious about the sciences. They are observant, discerning, and independent thinkers. They are their generation's rare masters of the vanishing crafts of fine writing and speaking. They are creative problem-solvers. They are leaders.

Catholic Faith and Morals

The Catholic faith as taught at Saint Monica's is the Church's official *magisterium*, based on Sacred Scripture and 2000 years of Christian tradition, from the earliest Church Fathers to the modern popes. Rather than evade or water down orthodox Catholic teachings, Saint Monica's celebrates and defends them. Non-Catholic students, too, are edified to see the Catholic faith presented in a full and fair light, from which vantage point they are better able to exercise their own freedom of religious and moral conscience. Students will come to see that Christianity is affirmed by knowledge and reason, not threatened by it.

In the high school, students explore the Church's rich intellectual heritage. They study great works of apologetics and theology, beginning with accessible writings of the Fathers of the Church, including St. Augustine, and culminating in an introduction to parts of St. Thomas Aquinas's masterpiece, the *Summa Theologica*. They continue to deepen their knowledge of Sacred Scripture. This overlaps with the English curriculum when the students follow the path of Abraham Lincoln by mastering stirring passages from the

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2221, 2223.

² *Id.* 2229.

³ Latin being the historical language of the Church, its study opens the rich world of Catholic culture to our students.

Bible, with its incomparable verse. Students practice their rhetorical skills by addressing the heated moral issues of our day from the standpoint of both Catholic doctrine and opposing critiques.

In keeping with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, students learn that by excelling as students, they are giving glory to God and preparing themselves for His service. They see that they can turn their study into prayer, sanctifying their work, sanctifying themselves in their work, and sanctifying others in the process. They are taught that one cannot be a “Catholic” only on Sundays or in times of explicit prayer, but that the Catholic faith must be lived consistently at all times. This “unity of life” is manifested in how the students and their teachers practice both supernatural piety and human virtues. Our teachers are men and women of prayer who frequent the sacraments. Our students are expected to be kind to each other, respectful of those in authority, modest in dress, chaste in behavior, courageous and persevering in adversity, and leaders of their underclassmen. They will see that Catholic morality leads to true freedom and joy.

Social Atmosphere

The ideals we have described here -- the search for truth; love of learning; discernment of genuine beauty; virtue; service; and the Christian faith itself -- are at odds with the prevailing ethos of our popular culture and even of most elite educational institutions. Parents struggle to instill these ideals in the face of the contrary culture, and worry even more about the influences on their children when they leave home for college.

Saint Monica Academy reinforces the virtues and ideals that parents are trying to instill at home. Even though the school has grown far beyond the original founding group, encompassing diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, the families are united in a common bond of shared values and goals. The children form a peer group in which the exercise of faith and virtue brings admiration, not derision. Yet social interactions are also characterized by naturalness and good humor. Friendships are formed that will continue across the years and miles, as the students go their separate ways but maintain their contacts and solidarity, leavening their new peers while reinforcing the faith and morals of the old.

An important aspect of the social interaction at Saint Monica’s high school is the relationship between the sexes. Modesty governs the norms of attire in the classroom and in extracurricular activities. Students are thereby influenced to regard each other with respect appropriate to their human dignity, not as bodily objects. Young men and women enjoy swing dances and other forms of entertainment where friendships can develop in a wholesome way.

What is a Classical Education?

There are several traditional elements of what is called a classical education. Among these is what is called the “trivium”, a cluster of three liberal arts traditionally viewed as the fundamentals of clear thinking and effective communication. Another element is the reading of great literature, sometimes called the Great Books. Finally, where appropriate, a pedagogy employing the Socratic method is employed allowing high school students to discuss a text or problem and progress to a conclusion together in a participatory manner.

The Trivium – The Foundation of the Liberal Arts

For centuries, if not millennia, one was not considered to be educated unless he had first mastered those liberal arts known as the “trivium”, the arts necessary to clear thinking and effective communication. The three arts that comprise the “trivium” are grammar, logic and rhetoric. Saint Monica Academy expects its students to gain a beginning in the mastery of these arts in a variety of ways, some formal and others more informal. Because this tradition of learning is now little known it is helpful to review what these three arts concern and their importance to critical thinking and argument.

Grammar. We associate “grammar” today with certain rules generally taught in English or foreign language classes. It is widely assumed in modern philosophical circles that these rules are arbitrary human constructs. While that is true to some extent – whether one uses colons or semi-colons may be more a matter of convention than anything else - traditionally the principles of grammar were considered to be connatural to man because the fundamentals of speech conveyed something about the reality around us. Because grammar focused on the building blocks of a meaningful predication (what we call a sentence or statement), it is a necessary and preliminary foundation for logic, the science of deduction from statements.

Saint Monica Academy offers Latin³ as the prime vehicle for the teaching of grammar because Latin is a highly structured language, requiring students to be facile in identifying the parts of speech as well as verb tenses and moods. Understanding well the parts of speech greatly improves the student’s English. Of course, grammar is also stressed in English instruction as well.

Logic. Logic is the formal study addressing when and how one can reach necessary and indisputable conclusions from premises that have already been established or conceded. Logic was once formally a part of higher education. Unfortunately, the formal study of logic is rarely found anymore at the university level and is virtually nonexistent in high schools. Should anyone be surprised why so few people can follow a complex argument or recognize a false one?

Every young person, merely by virtue of sharing in the intellect which distinguishes man from beast, knows without quite knowing why, what it means to deduce necessary conclusions from premises. Even before high school, students have unwittingly practiced logical deduction repeatedly in their application of math skills to problems. High school students are therefore ready to learn to think more critically about what necessary conclusions may be drawn from a given set of premises. That is precisely what a study of formal logic provides. The Saint Monica student learns what forms of syllogism lead to necessary conclusions and which do not. The Saint Monica student learns to identify fallacies in arguments. The study of logic is universally applicable and therefore crosses into different disciplines, including mathematics, science and English, where opportunities arise to develop more learning about logical thinking

Rhetoric. Rhetoric was traditionally understood as the art of persuasion, which, like any skill or art, can be used for good or ill. A neglected study, it has come to be associated with the meretricious, as if persuasion could not serve to advance more noble goals. Much of the effectiveness of our communication depends upon how well we can persuade. Men and women do not respond to bare bone logical exercises. People’s biases and desires get in the way of their appreciation of truth. Then too, not all human action can rest on undisputable conclusions and therefore logic takes one only so far. It is for these reasons that the art of persuasion makes all the difference. Moreover, to avoid being misled, it is helpful to understand the rhetorical devices employed in the media and elsewhere. Our forebears, therefore, concluded that to be persuasive, one ought to study the liberal art of rhetoric.

Rhetoric is best learned from wide reading of great speeches and essays. Students are expected to not only memorize passages from great speeches but encouraged to carefully examine what it is that makes a speech effective. The models are easy to find: Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, and the speeches Shakespeare puts in the mouth of Mark Anthony, Henry V, Portia and Shylock, etc. Great essays also deserve the student’s attention. St. Monica Academy expects its students to have read and discussed essays by Belloc, C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton and others. Rhetoric is an important ingredient of essay writing and St. Monica Academy students are expected to incorporate what they have learned about rhetoric into their essay writing. Of course, the most effective learning is accomplished through participation. Hence Saint Monica Academy expects its students to engage in classroom debate.

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The Three Stages Of Learning. It has been observed that the three arts which comprise the trivium describe the three phases of learning that children naturally progress through: the Receptive, the Analytical and the Expressive (or “Rhetorical”). In a child’s early years his learning is receptive (corresponding to the art of grammar) and fostered through recognition and repetition. Hence the memorization of poetry and geographical features is especially easy and appropriate for younger children. The next stage, corresponding to the liberal art of logic, is the Analytic phase, where young people have assimilated enough experience to desire to reason and argue about things. While this phase begins before high school, it is truly appropriate for high school students. Last of the phases of development is the Expressive (corresponding to the art of rhetoric) where young people are interested in language that moves the soul (for better or worse).

Under the pedagogy of the trivium, students learn not just particular subject matters, but also acquire the “tools of learning” that will equip them for a lifetime of independent learning, creativity and effective problem-solving. These basic tools of learning will enable Saint Monica Academy students to make the most of their later education at the college level.

The Great Books

Saint Monica Academy seeks to advance its students in as many of the various subjects as is feasible through great literature or what are sometimes called the “Great Books.” There are many things that may make literature or a book “great.” Time tests literature as it does all things. What is great endures. Why? Because it speaks to man across the ages and therefore is deemed to contain something of abiding interest. Shakespeare is perhaps one of the best examples because he addressed virtually every aspect of the human condition with profundity through marvelously drawn characters that have taken on a life of their own, and did this all with a cadenced choice of words that still moves us centuries later. Homer, Plato, Plutarch, Cicero, St. Augustine, Seneca, Dante, Chaucer, Cervantes, Milton, Austen, Solzhenitsyn, et al., likewise continue to speak to us in words that are as fresh and vivid as when they lived and wrote.

The alternative to reading “great books” in school is to read “not so great” books and even bad books. That should be answer enough. Too often the great writers are thought too difficult. Saint Monica Academy believes that well prepared high school students are capable of reading appropriate texts of the greatest thinkers and writers.

Socratic Method

The Socratic method is taken from the Dialogues of Plato where Socrates taught through questioning rather than formulating answers for the student. Socrates’ goal was to teach his students to think for themselves. For that reason, it has long been the hallmark of good law schools to teach would-be lawyers how to think through the Socratic method. While high school students cannot be expected to progress solely in this manner, where appropriate Saint Monica Academy encourages disciplined discussion of texts in class by and among its students. Learning by participation is critical. Hence Saint Monica teachers eschew mind-numbing cramming and look for opportunities to teach through observation, discussion, and experimentation.

These classical principles of education permeate Saint Monica’s curriculum and pedagogy. Always, the goal is to foster not only the mastery of the subject at hand but a love of learning, whose benefits will be lifelong. To that end Saint Monica’s seeks a balance with respect to homework assignments to ensure that they serve classroom progress and do not so overwhelm the student that his natural interest in learning and reading is crushed or dampened.

Mathematics

Students progress through the standard sequence of college-preparatory courses in mathematics: Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Geometry (including Euclidean proofs), Algebra II, Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus, and AP Calculus AB.

The Sciences

Students will study general science, biology, chemistry, and physics. Chemistry, physics and biology are standard college-preparatory offerings, including laboratory experimentation. A highlight of the biology course is a snorkeling field trip to Catalina Island, where students can observe the marine life they have studied in class.

Saint Monica's science teachers have an infectious love for the subjects they teach. They regard themselves as ongoing learners, carrying the students along on a journey of exploration. The students are thereby reawakened to a natural sense of wonder at the world and universe around them. iPods and iPads give way to microscopes and field work. Students increase their powers of observation. They learn not just science, but the classical scientific method, beginning with observation and then testing hypotheses to fit a theory to the phenomena. They will acquire the habit of learning from the world around them, finding joy at its beauty and seeing God's glory in creation.

English Literature and Composition

Recruiters at a top law firm recently observed that, despite their selection of the best students from the very best law schools (which had previously culled from the highest echelons of the most prestigious colleges), the new incoming lawyers were glaringly unable to write. Saint Monica's high school is an oasis in today's expressive wasteland. Our students are well on their way to becoming masters of the English language, superb writers and speakers.

Good writing begins with good reading. In too many schools the canon of great English literature has been corrupted by modern fashions of what is acceptable or representative. Saint Monica high school graduates are steeped in great literature -- prose and poetry -- from Shakespeare to Evelyn Waugh, from Chaucer to Twain. They thrill to vivid narrative and delight in beautiful imagery. They learn the power of the well-chosen word, and practice the discipline of finding it. They come to appreciate the lapidary sparkle of literary devices like parallelism and alliteration.

Imbibing great literature is not limited to the English curriculum. When studying ancient civilizations, students read Gibbon, the master of antithesis, and thereby not just learn, but never forget, that "Augustus was accustomed to boast that he found his capital of brick, and that he left it of marble." When studying the history of Europe, students read Churchill's vivid account of the Hundred Years War, discovering that he incorporated elements of Shakespeare's style into his own narratives. Our students enjoy Francis Parkman's compelling account of the Battle of Quebec; Henry Adams' description of the Naval Battles of 1812; Theodore Roosevelt's perspective on the westward expansion; De Tocqueville's observations on religion in the U.S.; and Winston Churchill's marvelous summarizations of the Civil War. In religion class, students read the brilliant prose of the apologists Newman, Chesterton, Knox and Lewis, and of course great verse in the Bible. In apologetics, our students read Henri Fabre, who brought the insect world to life through his masterful powers of observation and his remarkable descriptions.

Then the students write, and re-write, and learn that the greatest writers have always been, above all, relentless self-editors. Reinforced in this process are the fundamentals of grammar, syntax, conciseness, and organization. And in this subject, as with all aspects of our school, students are trained in striving for the beautiful, in exposition of the truth, and in persuading an audience to choose the good.

History

History has been another casualty of modern pedagogy. Even where it has not been altogether replaced by “social studies” or some other trendy specialized “study,” what remains is often a morass of relativism and cynicism, where great epochs and institutions are caricatured by their worst actors, and heroes are laid low. Recent surveys of Ivy League graduates showed appalling ignorance of rudimentary facts about even our own nation’s past.

Saint Monica’s history is, in the first place, history. The touchstone is the presentation of truth, but in a way that exalts, not just pointing out faults. The failings of people and periods are presented, but in just proportion, sometimes as a *chiaroscuro* of their heroism, a heroism all the more remarkable for transcending faults and rising to courageous deeds.

Saint Monica graduates know the history -- and the culture -- of the great ancient civilizations: Egypt, Israel, Babylon, Greece, Persia and Rome. They learn the history of the so-called Dark Ages, the medieval period, and the Renaissance. They attain a balanced understanding of the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Reformation, recognizing the abuses in the Church, yet seeing the continuous consistency of her doctrines in the midst of corrupt kings and bishops as paradoxical proof of her theological inerrancy.

American history is taught from the colonial period to the present. It is taught in detail. Students attain a command of every era. They simultaneously learn related geography and (in their English classes) the contemporary literature. They study in depth the founding of our constitutional republic, the competing ideas of government and liberty that blended into our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They read from the Federalist Papers. They study how the founding principles of limited government and individual rights have been interpreted over two centuries of Supreme Court jurisprudence, and the crossroads at which they stand today.

In keeping with the principle of teaching through great literature, Saint Monica students are introduced to the great historians such as Thucydides, Plutarch, Gibbon, Parkman, Churchill, and Belloc.

Fine Arts and Music

The high school student should make a formal study of music and art. A Catholic education that orders all learning ultimately to the knowledge of God, should familiarize the student with beauty. The true, the good and the beautiful are all reflections of God’s perfection, and are thus all ways to come to Him.

The basics of appreciating fine art are introduced at Saint Monica Academy and reinforced by field trips to our many excellent local museums: the Norton-Simon, the Huntington Library and Art Galleries, the Getty, and LACMA, for example. The emphasis is on the training of the mind and eye by familiarity with beautiful works of art, rather than on learning how to produce art.

Music is an area that requires particular attention by parents and the school, for here more than anywhere modern culture drives a wedge between parent and child. Saint Monica Academy provides a balance to the frequently dark and ugly world of today’s popular music. In daily morning assembly and weekly music class, students become familiar with beautiful music from our rich sacred tradition, our patriotic songs and

secular classical music. The power of music to move us to holiness, gladness, sorrow and bravery are experienced. School dances are more balanced than is usually presented to high school students, involving the music of many eras, including folk dancing, swing and ballroom, as well as current popular music. In these ways Saint Monica Academy hopes to help parents widen the musical experience of their children, so they become sensitive to its beauty and emotive power.

From its founding, Saint Monica Academy has recognized that not all things a student needs to learn can be learned at school. For this reason, Saint Monica Academy firmly strives to avoid overburdening students with academic homework in order to leave students afternoon and evening time for the cultural education so important to the development of their souls, for music lessons and practice, for art study and for wider reading of literature.

Sports and Extracurricular Activities

While not its primary focus, sports as well as other extracurricular activities at Saint Monica Academy are important contributors to the overall development of the student's character. A student's participation in various sports and extracurricular activities develops discipline, the ability to undertake difficult tasks in order to achieve a goal; fosters teamwork, the willingness to act for the good of the whole/others; and requires an attitude of sportsmanship/courtesy that ensures that the dignity of each participant is preserved and respected. These are important in developing within the student a balanced and well-rounded character. In addition, they enhance the student's ability to succeed in the academic life of the school. Consequently, Saint Monica Academy integrates various activities into its school program including:

A. Sports St. Monica offers CIF varsity and junior varsity team sports such as basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, and cross-country.

B. Debate. Saint Monica high school students may compete individually in debate tournaments.

C. Drama. Saint Monica Academy students will have the opportunity to participate in one Shakespeare play each year under the direction of a drama coach.

D. Crusaders for Life. St. Monica's pro-life club strives to protect the sanctity of every human life, especially the unborn, through prayer, sacrifice, and community outreach.

D. Service. For several years, Saint Monica students have adopted a parish in Tijuana, Mexico where they have gone to serve the poor. They have also participated in pro-life rallies, inner-city camps, fundraising for poor parishes in Kenya and Cuba, and other initiatives.

E. Biannual travel tour. To bring their studies to life, especially history, a biannual trip to historic places is organized for all high school students at Saint Monica Academy. In the spring of 2005, the high school students spent five days touring historic sites near Washington, D.C. They did similar trips in 2007, 2009, and 2011, chaperoned by teachers and parents. Another trip to D.C. is scheduled for March 2014.

College Placement and Achievement

A. College Preparation. Saint Monica Academy's high school program is college preparatory. The course offerings are structured so that students who graduate will meet or exceed the requirements of highly selective colleges. All courses are taught at the honors level. Students are able to take the SAT II and Advanced Placement exams in Calculus, Latin, and English.

B. Guidance. Saint Monica Academy works with parents to identify the most appropriate college to attend and assist the student and family in the college admission process.

C. Advantages of a small excellent high school for college admission. Colleges and universities find Saint Monica Academy graduates very attractive. Selective colleges look for diversity in the composition of their student body. Saint Monica Academy students are unique on many counts. Through their immersion in the classical curriculum, they will bring to their college years a knowledge of Western history and literature well beyond the norm. Their writing skills, passion for great literature, and speaking skills, developed through drama and rhetoric, will further make them top candidates.

D. Accreditation. Saint Monica Academy is presently accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Western Catholic Education Association.

Conclusion

The world around us cries out for great leaders. Everywhere we see a decline in morals and the debasement of truth. And yet we find rays of hope, and where it appears, it shines forth in leaders—men and women in all walks of life who reflect character, learning and faith. Hope dawns as well in young people eager to learn truth and grow in virtue. It is to teach truth and form virtue in tomorrow's leaders that Saint Monica Academy was born. And it is to prepare future leaders to excel in college and thereafter that we dedicate our high school.

OVERVIEW OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

St. Monica Academy provides a single program of college-preparatory study that includes English, history, mathematics, science, religion, foreign language, and visual/performing arts. Each high school student takes four years of each subject, except for two years of visual/performing arts.

Integrated Humanities Cycle: History and Literature

Each year, the high school students focus on the history and literature of a specific era of Western civilization. The freshman year covers the Ancient World; the sophomore year, the Middle Ages. In the junior year, the subject is the Renaissance and Modern Europe, while the senior year's subject is the United States. Literature from and about the period is chosen from the classic canon of great books, poems, plays and speeches. Each year of the integrated humanities cycle is equivalent to a full-year course in history and a full-year course in English.

History: Saint Monica's four-year odyssey of history begins with the teaching of Ancient History and accompanying literature. The course covers the ancient world, from Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations to Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. Medieval History follows, with a focus on Western Europe and the Catholic Church from the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the Hundred Years War. Renaissance and Modern History covers the Renaissance and World History from about 1500 to the present. American History is taught in detail from the colonial period to the present, including pertinent geography and governmental principles.

Principal Authors Covered:

Ancient - Herodotus, Thucydides, Cicero, Julius Caesar
Medieval - Belloc, Chesterton, Churchill, Shakespeare: *Henry V*
Renaissance/Modern - Erasmus, Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke, Marx, Freud
U.S. - Tocqueville, Grant, Roosevelt, Solzhenitsyn, Chambers

Literature: Introduction to great works of literature hardly needs justification. It is here that the student approaches the good, the true and the beautiful through his imagination. Consistent with our goal of integrating studies as much as possible, students are challenged with great literature in their Literature, History and Religion classes. The Literature class is especially focused on developing not only reading comprehension but an appreciation of what are often called the elements of style. We are confident that through reading, reciting, hearing and analyzing great examples of English literature (see list attached), the student learns how to communicate well in English, develop an extensive vocabulary and a focused comprehension. While we expect the student to already know the basics of grammar and punctuation, the student's knowledge of grammar can only be strengthened by exposure to the greatest English stylists.

Vocabulary Building. There is hardly a better way to develop vocabulary than through reading and hearing new words used in the context of a story. The teacher is expected to choose at least 10 words weekly from the literature readings for special focus on vocabulary building and students are expected to define and properly use those vocabulary terms.

Reading Aloud. The virtues of reading aloud are often overlooked. Reading comprehension cannot be better tested than by listening to a student read aloud. Reading aloud requires a student to "hear" the cadences and rhythms of a particular passage. Reading aloud by the teacher or some of the students should occur in every class for at least a few minutes. Each student is also expected on a weekly basis to choose a paragraph or short text from the assigned literature readings as the student's "gem of the week." Students are chosen on a

random basis to read aloud a chosen text before the class and explain the figures of speech employed and the structure of the passage. Teachers are also encouraged to read aloud to the students from the literature texts or to have the students listen to recorded readings of challenging texts.

Grammar: For the first semester of the year, freshman and sophomore students are led in a weekly tutorial on sentence diagramming. They begin this study from a text on diagramming but as soon as they have developed basic familiarity with diagramming, the teacher is expected to choose examples for diagramming from the English literature readings or for from the literary readings used in History or Religion. Discussions regarding the diagramming exercises should afford the teacher the opportunity to reinforce the basic principles of grammar. After more complex sentences are analyzed and diagrammed, students are asked to write their own sentences, employing the same sentence structure (“sentence modeling”).

Writing: Short weekly writing exercises are expected. The student is expected to master writing focused and informative paragraphs. Six papers are assigned per year on some aspect of the literature readings assigned. The length generally does not exceed 500 words so that the student works on concision rather than worrying about length. These papers are coordinated with the assignment of papers in History, Religion and other courses so that the student is not required to be writing multiple papers simultaneously.

A thesis topic is chosen by the student in the third quarter and submitted for approval by the teacher. The teacher requires submission of a précis followed by at least one outline and at least one rough draft. This is a longer paper (5-7 pages for Freshmen and Sophomores and 7-10 pages for Juniors and Seniors) and requires some research and the citation of at least three sources. Length, however, should be dictated by the subject and the discussion rather than some arbitrary imposition that tempts students to bloviate.

Recitation: The memorization and recitation of verse and memorable prose passages cannot be underestimated. Besides filling young minds with noble, beautiful, dramatic, and compelling images which will be with them for the rest of their lives, committing these words to memory develops an understanding of meter, stress, rhythms, alliteration, and the other elements of poetry and great rhetoric. Students are expected to commit to memory over the course of the year at least ten short poems and parts of great speeches or, some comparable number if longer poems or passages are chosen or assigned. Students are expected to recite in front of their classmates regularly and, when sufficient preparation has been accomplished, at least twice a year before the morning assemblies.

Principal Authors Covered:

Ancient - Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristotle, Vergil, Ovid, St. Augustine, Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Medieval - *Beowulf*, Mallory, Dante, Chaucer, Petrarch, Shakespeare: *Sonnets*, *Richard III*

Renaissance/Modern - Cervantes, Milton, Dickens, Austen, Donne, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

U.S. - Hawthorne, Poe, Whitman, Twain, Fitzgerald, O'Connor, Hemingway, Steinbeck

Mathematics

The St. Monica Academy mathematics follows the standard college preparatory sequence. Students begin with either Algebra 1 or Geometry as freshmen, depending on whether they have taken Algebra as 8th graders, and then progress through Algebra 2, Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus, and AP Calculus (AB) if they are ready for a 5th year of mathematics as seniors. In keeping with our classical approach, the Geometry course includes a significant unit on Euclidian proofs (books i-vi).

The Saxon Math program provides the basic texts for all lower math courses except Geometry, which is the McDougal-Littell text. Pre-Calculus and Calculus use the Larson-Hostetler text.

Science

Four years of science are divided as follows. Freshman take General Science or Biology, Sophomores study Biology or Chemistry, Juniors take Chemistry or Physics, and Seniors study Physics or an AP science class.

General Science

This course is a survey of the sciences, especially physics, chemistry, biology, and geology. It is designed to stimulate a lively interest in the sciences, and to prepare students for future high school science classes.

The basic text is Hewitt's *Conceptual Physics* – 3rd ed. (Addison Wesley, 1977) and Robinson's *Laboratory Manual to Accompany Conceptual Physics*, 8th ed. (Addison Wesley, 1998). A supplemental manual covers Biology and other topics in science.

Biology

Biology is designed to impart a detailed knowledge of the living world and its systems, including the concepts of Cell Biology, Genetics, Evolution, Physiology, and Chemistry. Dissections and other laboratory work supplement the readings and lectures. There is also a project of field study to develop students' skills in observation and sense of wonder at the intricacies and richness of nature. This is preceded by readings from the classic monograph on field observations of insects by the French entomologist Fabre. Highlights of the course are cat dissection, insect hunting, and a marine biology field trip to Catalina Island.

The basic text is Miller and Levine's *Biology* - 5th edition, student text and lab manual (Prentice Hall).

Chemistry

Chemistry covers the composition of matter and the changes that matter undergoes, including chemical reactions, stoichiometry, thermodynamics, molecular bonding, solutions, and biochemistry. The lab component of this course gives students a hands-on appreciation for the principles and applications of chemistry.

The basic text is Wilbraham and Staley's *Chemistry*, student text and CD-ROM (Addison-Wesley).

Physics

Physics, a course for high school upper classmen, covers the major concepts, principles, methods and development of physics, both classical and modern. Methods include readings, lecture, demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and problem sets.

The basic text is Hecht's *Physics: Algebra and Trigonometry* - 3rd edition, student text and CD-ROM (Brooks-Cole).

Religion

The Catholic faith is taught according to a four-year cycle in which Freshmen study Dogmatic Theology; Sophomores, Sacred Scripture; Juniors, Moral Theology; and Seniors, Christian Apologetics.

Dogmatic Theology

A study of selected doctrines of the Christian faith, dealing with such subjects as Creation, the Sacraments, the Trinity, and Christology. Particular attention is given to the biblical foundations and historical development of each doctrine, and to the relation between the various doctrines. One of the primary sources for the course is *On the Incarnation*, by St. Athanasius.

Sacred Scripture

This course is an introduction to the study of the Bible. The class starts with a discussion of how the Bible is inspired and interpreted. Students learn the four senses of Scripture, as understood by the Catholic Church. Then students read selected texts from the Old and New Testament, identifying and discussing the principal themes of each biblical book.

Moral Theology

This course is an introduction to the basic principles of morality in the Roman Catholic tradition, as well as the foundational concepts and methodologies for moral discernment. Particular attention is given to the human act, knowledge and freedom, sin and conversion, virtue and character, nature of conscience, natural law and values and norms for moral decision-making.

Christian Apologetics

The Christian Apologetics course surveys 20 centuries of the greatest Christian writers, presenting the students with robust explanations of the Faith written in sterling style. The aim of the course is twofold: to prepare students to go forth into the world confident that great thinkers have endorsed Christianity and to expose the students to beautiful writing that inspires and strengthens their own writing and speaking skills.

The course follows a great books approach which consists of a close reading of the text, Socratic discussions of the readings, and critical essays based on those readings. Ancient world readings include selections from the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church, culminating in St. Augustine. Modern authors include Newman, Hopkins, Chesterton, Greene, Waugh, Flannery O'Connor, Tolkien, Lewis and Williams.

Foreign Language

In keeping with its classical approach, St. Monica Academy has its students study Latin each year. By senior year, students should have the equivalent of three years of high school Latin.

Visual/Performing Arts

Each high school student takes two years of Visual/Performing Arts as per University of California a-g requirements. At St. Monica Academy, this requirement is spread out over four years. Students at Saint Monica have available to them an unusual opportunity to participate in the excellent Crown City choirs which meet after school on Fridays at Neighborhood Church, where Saint Monica Academy presently resides. Besides being a superior singing experience, these choirs also serve as a wonderful opportunity for socializing and cooperation with the local Catholic home school group, and with students from other local Catholic and public schools. This widens our community and opens other cultural opportunities for our children, such as the Los Angeles Master Chorale High School Choral Festival and the St. Andrew's annual Bach to Broadway Benefit.

Course Sequence Table:

Subject	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Theology	Dogmatic Theology	Sacred Scripture	Moral Theology	Christian Apologetics
Integrated Humanities Cycle	Ancient (through 500 AD)	Medieval (500-1500 AD)	Renaissance & Early Modern (1500-present)	U.S. History, Government and Literature (1600-present)
Mathematics	Algebra 1 or Geometry	Geometry or Algebra 2	Algebra 2 or Pre-Calculus	Pre-Calculus or AP Calculus AB
Laboratory Science	General Science or Biology	Biology or Chemistry	Chemistry or Physics	Physics or AP Science
Foreign Language	Latin 1	Latin 2	Latin 3	Latin 4
Visual/Performing Arts	Concert Choir I	Performance Choir I	Concert Choir II	Performance Choir II