

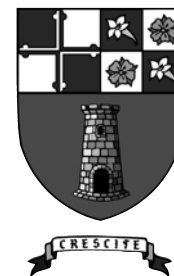


The Heights

UPPER

CURRICULUM GUIDE

SCHOOL



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Academics at The Heights: *An Overview*

CRESCITE

The Heights School provides a traditional liberal arts curriculum grounded in the western canon, the body of learning on which western civilization rests. By incorporating the many noble aspirations and developments of the modern world into this classical context, The Heights School strives to achieve the goal of the full human development of each student. The school motto, *Crescite*, is the Latin translation of the Creator's first words to man, increase and grow. Indeed that divine command is the foundation of the Heights mission: to assist parents in the intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual education of their sons.

A liberal arts curriculum is essential to this mission. The liberal arts have been traditionally grouped into two broad disciplines: the *trivium*, consisting of grammar, logic, and rhetoric and the *quadrivium*, consisting of astronomy, music, geometry, and arithmetic. At the Heights, these disciplines are represented by a core of courses in ten academic departments: English, Mathematics, Classics, History, Religion, Science, Spanish, Art, Computers, and Music.



WHY HEIGHTS STUDENTS STUDY THE LIBERAL ARTS

The primary focus of a liberal arts education is the development of true freedom that will enable one to live a more complete human life, as opposed to the mere attainment of some technical skills or knowledge. The root of the word “liberal” is the Latin word “liber,” meaning “free.” A liberal arts education increases one’s freedom, understood as the ability to embrace the Good, wherever it is truly recognized. It imparts the freedom necessary to join with the great minds of history, rising above one’s current situation and culture, to appreciate what is deepest in our human condition: the meaning of love, suffering, sacrifice, death, and generous service to others. Acquiring a liberal education is a life-long process; The Heights School strives to form life-long learners who have what educator and philosopher John Henry Cardinal Newman called a “habit of mind” in pursuit of intellectual excellence and the contemplative life.

Liberal arts teach, among other things, a respect for the proper and responsible use of words, the sincere asking of questions, the recognition and appreciation of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. A liberal arts education also opens the door to many professional opportunities. The fruits of a liberal arts education – a broad understanding of reality, clarity in thought, excellence in writing, and effective speaking skills – are very important in many professions, especially for those in positions of leadership.

THE VISION OF THE WORLD TAUGHT AT THE HEIGHTS

The curriculum of The Heights School is rooted in a perspective that sees the abundant goodness of the world, of all creation, as a fundamental governing principle. In the words of Saint Josemaria Escriva, “The world is not evil, because it comes from the hands of God, because it is His creation, because Yahweh looked upon it and saw that it was good. It is we ourselves, men and women, who make it evil and ugly with our sins and unfaithfulness.” This truth naturally leads us to study, to reflect upon and to contemplate all the human riches of our past and the world of today as ways to discover God in the ordinary things, to know and “serve Him in and from the ordinary, secular, and civil activities of human life.” The Heights will thus refrain from narrowly embracing one ideology, political agenda, philosophical

school or approach to the rich drama of human history and thought. Grounded in the western tradition, a Heights education values the abundant goodness of the world as created by God and sees the nobility and heroism in struggles of individuals, both men and women, throughout history.

HEIGHTS EDUCATION IMPARTS KNOWLEDGE WITH TRAINING IN VIRTUES

Education is much more than the delivery of a curriculum, however outstanding such a curriculum may be. Authentic education involves a forming of the mind and heart so that students and teachers embrace the riches of a liberal arts curriculum, constantly striving to delve into these riches. A strong part of the school culture is a recognition that focused, serious study is an important professional obligation for students. Indeed, the sense of schoolwork as the beginning of one's professional life and thus an important means of serving others informs the way study is viewed in the Heights community. Furthermore, the relationship between The Heights School and Opus Dei helps to foster the sense that doing even the most ordinary things, like studying, extraordinarily well for a noble motive enables us to offer our best to God and so draw close to Him.

Concentrated study, especially in our fast-paced, entertainment-driven culture, requires practice in building up one's ability to focus, memorize, analyze and contemplate with a sense of wonder. Students need to foster the strenuous silence of living at a slower, more contemplative pace – to be comfortable with the pace of a page turning. Living an intellectual life today requires a certain amount of asceticism. Students need to limit time spent in front of television or computer screens, with their fast-paced barrage of images, and spend time every day in real study in an environment free from distractions. Fortitude and temperance lead to a well-ordered soul, one that is capable of living a studious life. But this strength of mind must also be accompanied by real wisdom of the heart – the appropriate fostering of the imagination and intuition so that the heart is attuned with the attractiveness of the goodness of reality. Intellectual virtue is perfected when it leads to true contemplation.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT IS FOSTERED

The Heights faculty strives to foster an environment that focuses on friendship and cheerfulness as essential to the education process. Friendship involves being concerned for the good of the other. It often begins through sharing similar interests. Friendships among students are necessary for emotional stability and genuine human development. The Heights faculty works to create an environment where these friendships can naturally develop. The faculty member also, in a manner consistent with the proper teacher-student relationship, seeks to be a friend to his students. This means striving to convey what is objectively necessary for full human development.

Teaching is not simply the passing on of information but of a vision of life rooted in a noble understanding of human nature. The teacher readily exposes the rationale behind the material to his students and seeks to help his students relate what they know already to further knowledge. The personal relationship between teacher and student is rooted in an understanding of the students as fundamentally free to embrace truth and take ownership of the great intellectual heritage that is our common inheritance. The teacher serves the dynamic process of passing on this great treasure to yet one more generation. The freedom necessary for this process must be respected and fostered by allowing appropriate expressions of personality in the classroom. A cheerful tone provides the optimum environment for such development. A Heights teacher will thus never be an authoritarian figure but will rather exercise his legitimate authority through the personal relationships he establishes through his teaching.



PARENTS AS PRIMARY EDUCATORS

The reality that parents are in fact the primary educators of their children informs the entire educational philosophy at The Heights School. Not only are parents the first teachers of their children but, through establishing a home with its specific culture, they continue to form a grounding from which a growing boy learns to assimilate and value the education and formation available at school. It is absurd to think that any school, even the best possible school, can take on the task of passing on the riches of a liberal arts education in only the time a student is at school, about seven hours per day for roughly half the calendar days of a year. A liberal arts education must be supported by good habits of reading, conversation, and study; and these are fostered in the home. To any impartial observer of our culture it is easy to see that one of its defining characteristics is entertainment. We live in an entertainment culture. The most common forms of entertainment, especially for our children, are video games, television, movies, certain types of music, and aspects of the Internet. All of these mediums have contributed to a faster, less contemplative pace. The fast-paced nature of these entertainment media makes focused study and contemplation difficult.

The Heights School relies on parents who are fully-activated primary educators to establish a home environment that is in unison with the formative and educative mission of the School. The faculty members of The Heights are under no illusion that it is possible to accomplish our noble goal without the active support of parents in this area. When parents establish a home where each child is truly valued as a person and the personal relationships between the members of the family have precedence over material things and entertainment, they are establishing the necessary conditions that make acquiring a liberal arts education possible. Parents who are fully activated primary educators will foster a variety of worthwhile cultural endeavors, such as reading and discussing good literature, taking family excursions, and living family traditions in the home. These good endeavors will only grow through the example and encouragement of parents and the prudent limiting of modern forms of entertainment that otherwise would tend to take the place of reading and other cultural pursuits. For this reason, The Heights School seeks to enter into a partnership with families to work together to accomplish this mission. In the School's admission process, through the family interview and in other ways, the School actively seeks boys whose parents share this vision and strive to put it into practice.

II. *The Upper School* Academic Program

A SOLID LIBERAL ARTS CURRICULUM TAILORED TO EACH STUDENT'S ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Keeping in mind the medieval saying, "Everything is received according to the mode of the receiver," the academic programs for Heights students often differ significantly based on each student's abilities and interests. While the core curriculum is strong and includes several required courses, there is considerable flexibility among certain core requirements and among elective choices. The overall academic program is ideal for students of above average to truly exceptional ability.

Each student meets personally with the Head of the Upper School every year, often more than once, to work out an academic schedule for the upcoming year. Students are encouraged to discuss options with their parents and sometimes parents also join students in meeting to discuss scheduling options. All academic programs are given final approval by the Head of the Upper School and sometimes approved changes are made after the school year begins. A good schedule is one that follows the core requirements outlined below, engages areas of academic interest, and provides the appropriate level of challenge. While the spirit of study intensifies in the classroom, a good schedule will require a consistent average of two to three hours of focused study outside of regular school hours each day.

The amount of flexibility in the academic program increases in the junior and senior years. Options to pursue some studies in a more focused discipline increase. Options include advanced language classes, several AP courses, more flexibility in selecting history courses, computer programming courses, and other elective classes.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- **English** **4 years**

- **Mathematics** **4 years**

- **History** **4 years**

- **Science** **3 years**
(Includes 1 year of biology and 1 year of chemistry)

- **Latin** **3 years**

- **Electives and additional** **4 years**
 foreign language(s)

- **Athletics** **4 years**
(Students are required to participate in at least one
varsity, junior varsity, or intramural sport per year.)

Students who successfully complete Algebra II, Latin II, or Spanish II (usually in their freshman year) will automatically earn credit for Algebra I, Latin I, or Spanish I, respectively. These credits will not impact a student's grade point average (GPA).

With the approval of the Head of the Upper School, a student may take a course at another institution for credit. The Heights can note on the transcript that a course has been taken elsewhere, and that credit has been received. This course, however, will not be factored into the student's grade point average for The Heights School.

Freshmen, sophomores and juniors are required to take at least 7 credits. Seniors are required to take at least 6 credits.

The Head of the Upper School can, with good reason, modify the above requirements for particular situations. Any student who successfully completes four years of an approved academic program can assume he has met all necessary graduation requirements unless he specifically is informed otherwise.

GRADING, REPORT CARDS, AND TRANSCRIPTS

While grades for each quarter, the mid-year exam, and the final exam show up on a student's report card, only the final course grade or current average is shown on the transcript that is sent to colleges. A student's final grade in a course is determined by averaging the two semester grades with each semester grade being the weighted average of the two quarters counting 37.5% each and the exam (either mid-year or final) counting 25.0%.

GPA's are given separately for each academic year and a cumulative GPA is given at the bottom of the transcript. In calculating these GPA's a standard 4.0 scale is followed:

A+	4.0	B+	3.3	C+	2.3	D+	1.3	F	0.0
A	4.0	B	3.0	C	2.0	D	1.0		
A-	3.7	B-	2.7	C-	1.7	D-	0.7		

The Heights School does not weight its GPA.



III. Courses by Department

THE FRESHMAN CORE

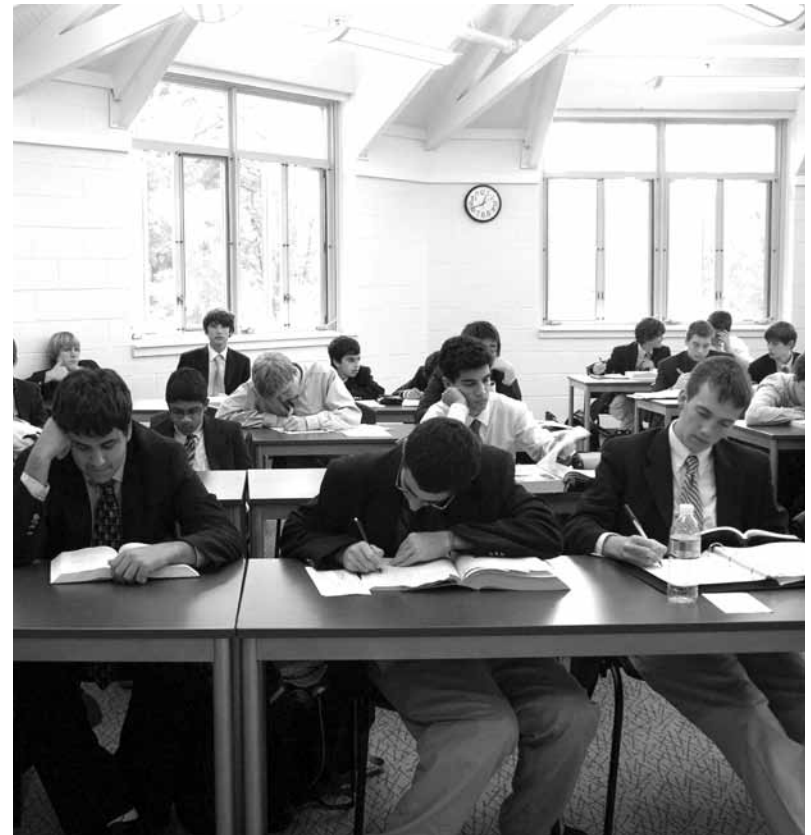
Each freshman takes his English and History class as a block double period taught by the teacher who will also serve as his advisor. The literature read in the English portion of the core program complements the history course, which covers the Roman Empire up to about 1800. Likewise each freshman core teacher and advisor is able to devote personal attention to the mentoring of each freshman. Particular attention is given to the development of what the ancients call “presence of mind.” There is a strong focus on developing superior writing and speaking ability.

ENGLISH

Heights English teachers share a common love for the beauty of the written word and appreciation for the wisdom, moral vision, and truth that it can convey. Each class focuses on delving into the riches of the literary tradition of western civilization and helping students master the skills necessary to appreciate literature. Each grade has its standard literary works that do not change from year to year along with a few options for the teacher to introduce works he deems beneficial. The dynamic literary culture of The Heights School overflows on festival clan days and through several popular extracurricular opportunities, such as reading and discussion groups and other literary societies. Substantial work is also done on improving each student’s writing.

COURSE OFFERING:

- **English I** (9th grade): **Presence of Mind**—Students study classic works, that span the period studied in their history class, including *The Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. There is continuing work in grammar and vocabulary and a strong focus on improving writing skills.
- **English II** (10th grade): **Conscience and the Consciousness of Evil**—The 10th grade English course continues to review grammar and helps students improve their writing skills and vocabularies. Texts include *The Odyssey*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *A Man for All Seasons*.



- **English III** (11th Grade): **Mortality and Immortality**—This junior course continues to foster the development of superior grammar and writing skills. Students delve into a rich selection of literature including *Moby Dick*, *Njal’s Saga*, *The Inferno* and *King Lear*.
- **English IV** (AP English Literature—12th Grade): **Coming of Age: Claiming Adulthood**—This senior course caps an outstanding program with an in-depth treatment of a variety of literary forms: novels, short stories, plays and poetry. Students read *Antigones* by Sophocles, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Hamlet* by Shakespeare, *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and more. Students work on fine-tuning their writing skills on the collegiate level. Most students will take the AP Literature exam at the end of the course.

MATHEMATICS

Math is important for all students, not merely for those who aspire to a profession that will require its use. Indeed, the primary reason for studying math is its proven role in a liberal arts education, not its utility. Math helps students develop into clear and logical thinkers and to recognize systemic and dynamic relationships in the world. These relationships are closely connected to the order and beauty in creation. Typically, studies in math are a student's first introduction to abstract thought. This prepares students well for the rigors of later studies in philosophy. The famous inscription above Plato's academy recalls this relationship between math and philosophy, "If you do not know geometry, you cannot enter here."

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- **Algebra I:** This course is offered for 9th grade students who need one more year to master the concepts in Algebra I before moving on to higher math.

- **Algebra II**

- **Geometry**

- **Pre-Calculus** (honors and standard)

- **Calculus H**

- **Calculus I:** AP AB

- **Calculus II:** AP BC and Differential Equations

- **Calculus III:** Differential Equations continued / Multi-Variable Calculus — This course is offered on a need basis for extremely advanced students.

- **AP Statistics:** This is an elective math course that is open to juniors and seniors.

CLASSICS

The Classics Department at The Heights School seeks to further the human and intellectual development of each boy through the discipline of learning Latin and Greek and through contact with the riches of classical culture. This department has always been and will always remain a fundamental part of the education offered at The Heights School.

Many students entering the Upper School from the Middle School have already mastered the basics of the Latin language. Regardless of previous studies, all Upper School students are required to take at least two years of Latin. The curriculum ends with advanced courses offered on Vergil and Lucretius.

Greek may be taken as early as the freshman year in the Upper School. Again, the student is first drilled in grammar and basic vocabulary, then introduced to original texts. It is necessary to study two years of Latin before taking Greek.

The classical languages are seen as the key to the academic curriculum because of their connection pedagogically and linguistically to the liberal arts. The mastery of English is greatly facilitated by the study of Latin and Greek. Students are forced to know the meaning of words and their syntactical use in a sentence. Reflecting the nature of their respective cultures, the classical languages instill Roman discipline, simplicity and clarity and Greek subtlety and harmony into the mental habits of the boys. The classical languages are fixed and clear, naturally leading to superior habits of thought. Finally, they are the conduit of classical culture. They are the "mother tongues" of the western canon, the possession of every educated man throughout western history. They enable the student to speak with the great minds of history on an equal footing.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ■ Latin I | ■ Latin Literature Honors | ■ Greek I Honors |
| ■ Latin II | ■ Latin: Vergil AP | ■ Greek II Honors |
| ■ Latin Language and Culture | ■ Latin Seminar | ■ Greek III Honors |
| | | ■ Greek IV Honors |

HISTORY

The History Department at The Heights School offers courses that help students understand the riches of the past. The focus is primarily on the western tradition, though not exclusively. Each teacher helps his students to understand and appreciate the common heritage of our past and to improve in research and writing skills. The focus is on history as a narrative story that cannot be explained away by any one perspective, whether economic or political. The course of history is strongly influenced by individuals exercising their freedom, for heroic ends or otherwise.

The 9th grade standard course begins where the 8th grade ancient history class ended, around 500 A.D. Thus all students are exposed to ancient and modern European (and some world) history and a full year of US History and Government during grades 8 through 10. Juniors and seniors are required to choose at least one history elective per year. In addition, each student is required to pass either AP US History or AP Modern European History to graduate.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- **Medieval and Early Modern History** (9th grade)
- **United States History and Government** (10th grade)
- **AP US History** (elective)
- **AP US Government** (elective)
- **AP Modern European History** (elective)
- **World War II / Cold War** (elective)
- **AP Economics**, includes both micro and macro (elective)
- **AP Art History** (elective)
- **Cold War** (elective)
- **Russian History** (elective)

RELIGION

The Religion Department at The Heights School provides a full program of Catholic practice and doctrine for Catholic students (and non-Catholics who freely choose to participate) at every grade level. In addition, an Ethics program is available for non-Catholic students in grades 9 through 12. All religion teachers at The Heights School strive to provide solid doctrinal formation in full agreement with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and magisterial teachings. In addition, the Religion Department teaches basic prayers and sacramental practices.

In accord with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the spirit of Opus Dei, the Religion Department at The Heights School places emphasis on the reality that all men and women are called to holiness. This focus on the universal call to holiness and apostolate in the Church is rooted in a keen awareness of one's divine filiation, the realization that we are all children of God.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- **Overview of Catholicism** (9th grade)
- **Sacred Scripture and Church History** (10th grade)
- **Christian Moral Life** (11th grade)
- **Apologetics** (12th grade)
- **Ethics I**
- **Ethics II**
- **Philosophy: Survey Course**
- **Philosophy: Class of Controversies**

SCIENCE

The science program at The Heights School contributes to a liberal arts education by helping students understand the world around them. Careful observations and thoughtful analysis lead to a sense of wonder at the complexity and order both in nature and in the artifices of man. The Heights science program lays a good foundation for students interested in science, medicine or engineering as possible careers. All students are required to pass biology, chemistry and one other elective science.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- **Biology** (9th grade)
- **Chemistry** (10th grade)
- **Environmental Science** (elective)
- **Anatomy and Physiology** (elective)
- **AP Biology** (elective)
- **AP Chemistry** (elective)
- **AP Physics** (elective)



SPANISH

The Spanish Department at The Heights School offers a variety of Spanish classes for students in grades 7 through 12. All Spanish teachers seek to teach the technical aspects of the Spanish language as well as conversational Spanish and cultural information. Students with ability and interest may take AP courses in Spanish Language (usually in grade 11) and Spanish Literature (usually in grade 12). Learning Spanish further reinforces knowledge of grammatical structures taught in Latin and English classes.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- **Spanish I**
- **Spanish II**
- **Spanish III Honors**
- **Spanish Language AP**
- **Spanish Literature, V Seminar**



ART

The Art Department at The Heights School follows a classical approach to art, stressing that art should be based in reality and beauty. Students learn the discipline of drawing using perspective and using color appropriately. Several students excel and develop their natural talents. Carpentry and AP Art History meet daily for a full credit.

COURSE OFFERINGS

- Art
- Art II
- Art III
- Art IV
- AP Studio Art
- Carpentry and Practical Building Skills
- AP Art History

COMPUTERS

The Heights School offers an elective course in computers to juniors and seniors who are interested in learning about computer programming. Computer programming helps the boys to think analytically and reinforces the benefits of math classes.

In addition, the Internet is available in the library for students to use in a closely-monitored environment. The Heights School has refrained from relying too heavily on computers in education, especially in the lower grades. While computers can certainly be a very useful tool, the key academic struggles that young students face relate not so much to accessing information in an efficient manner as to processing and synthesizing the information that is available to them from so many sources. A liberal arts education must first help students to learn how to be critical readers, thinkers and writers.

MUSIC

As one of the four subjects in the quadrivium, music is integral to a liberal arts education. In order to truly be well educated, a man must achieve an integration of his passions with his reason. Music educates the passions and, when done properly, helps one to place them at the service of right reason. Education in music works on many levels, helping to spur intellectual and moral development in a manner that complements other academic subjects.

Students in the Upper School have the option of choosing a cappella singing as an elective class. The cappella program has grown to approximately 60 Upper School students who perform admirably in competitions and at several school functions, including the Christmas concerts and solemn Masses.

In addition, the Music Department offers formal classes in Music History and

AP Music Theory on alternating years. There are also band programs in which several Upper School students participate. Each music course counts for a full credit except band, which counts for half of a credit.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

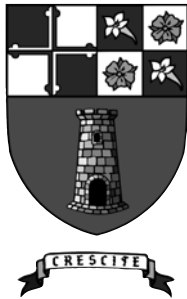
- **Men's Chorus** (can be taken each year for a full credit)
- **Chamber Choir** (half credit option for students in Band course)
- **Band** (can be taken each year for a full credit)





MISSION STATEMENT

The Heights School is a private, independent, preparatory school for boys, grades three to twelve. The School assists parents in the intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual education of their sons. Dedicated teachers impart rigorous academic training in all the major areas of the liberal arts. Formation in virtue fosters respect for every person, a desire to serve God and others, and an optimistic attitude towards life's challenges. The School's Christian orientation and spiritual formation are entrusted to Opus Dei, a Personal Prelature of the Catholic Church.



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