

St. Ambrose Academy Course of Study

The St. Ambrose curriculum is designed to provide an outstanding foundation in the critical academic disciplines of math, science, history, literature, logic, rhetoric, composition, and Latin, crowned by regular study of and growth in the Faith. Our approach to learning includes in-depth study of the classical works of the western world and the great works of Christendom. Our religion studies focus on the analysis and understanding of the Scriptures and significant Church documents (such as papal encyclicals and the Catechism). Our classes revolve around discussion, debate, presentations, and regular papers.

Our dedicated faculty use a variety of methods to give our students the tools they need to master our curriculum with an enthusiasm that comes from true understanding of the profound ideas of the ages. Works are studied in an introductory manner suited to the intellectual capacity of the students; students are not expected to display exceptional ability or college-level understanding. One of the characteristics of "great books" is that they are accessible, like Sacred Scripture, on a wide variety of levels. One needs no specialized training to see their beauty and experience their power.

There are six core subject areas at St. Ambrose Academy: English, history, Latin, math, religion, and science. The topical studies that roughly follow a historical progression are taught in a three-year cycle for the junior high (Cycle A, B, and C). The historical topic for each cycle is integrated in these courses (history, English, and religion), with the other courses reinforcing these topics when possible, resulting in a unified and interdisciplinary approach to each historical period.

Students at St. Ambrose are enrolled in courses based on grade level, placement testing, and mastery of prerequisites. Certain courses may have prerequisites, such as an acceptable grade in the preceding course, which must be fulfilled for the student to progress in the course sequence. Junior High students who take Senior High courses may be eligible for Senior High credits, at the discretion of the instructor and principal.

	English	History	Latin	Math	Religion	Science
JH A		America	Latin A	Math 6	Following Christ	Earth Science
JH B		World	Latin B	Math 7	Life of Grace	Life Science
JH C		Church	Latin C	Pre-Algebra	Our Life in the Church	Physical Science

The junior high school curriculum organizes, contextualizes, and summarizes the growing body of knowledge that students are acquiring as they make the transition from grammar school to secondary school studies. They review American, World, and Church History over the three-year course of study. Literary studies focus on original works of literature and historical documents from the periods they study. Rather than plod through dry summaries in textbooks, students thrill to the actual accounts of Lewis and Clark as they encountered their first grizzly, to the words of Frederick Douglass as he describes his experience with the institution of slavery, to the Founding Fathers as they frame the Constitution. Junior high students, many of them for the first time, begin to grapple with the really great ideas of civilization. Students survey English grammar and gain exposure to the primary genres of composition. The study of Latin gives students a strong and thorough understanding of the grammatical structures of language.

Studies in Religion provide a basic framework for future in-depth studies of the Catechism, introducing students to Scriptures, the basic articles of our Faith, the Sacraments, the Christian life and how it applies to modern culture, and prayer. Junior high students, who are embarking into a new world of logical discourse, really enjoy the apologetics debates that the discussion-based classroom provides.

In Math, junior high students test into the level that is most appropriate for them: they may take standard Junior High math courses, or they may test into the Senior High courses. In Science, the junior high students rotate through Earth, Life, and Physical Science.

English

St. Ambrose English courses emphasize grammar, composition, logical thinking, analysis of the great literary works of the ages, genre studies, and topics from rhetoric such as memory, literary figures, style, and delivery. Students develop oral and written expression according to the principles of rhetoric. Literature is drawn from reading lists that are integrated with the history course.

St. Ambrose students learn composition by studying good writing. Students use a variety of examples from literature to study the *progymnasmata*, pre-rhetoric writing exercises from the ancient Greeks that familiarize the students with the elements of rhetoric: Fable, Narrative, Chreia, Proverb, Refutation, Confirmation, Commonplace, Encomium, Vituperation, Comparison, Impersonation, Description, Thesis, Defend or Attack a Law. Junior high English classes begin a study of the *progymnasmata*, along with a thorough study of grammar. Junior high courses may use the following:

Grammar: Harvey's *Elementary Grammar* or *Voyages in English* 6, 7, or 8

Classical Writing Series:

Grade Level	Basic Course		Poetry/Fiction
6	Aesop & Homer	Narrative writing	Poetry For Beginners
7	Diogenes: Maxim	Expository writing	Intermediate Poetry
8	Diogenes: Chreia		

Better Sentence Structure Through Diagramming or *Moutoux Diagramming*

"Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing" CD

Zaner-Bloser *Penmanship*

Paideia Spelling

American Heritage Student Dictionary

Catholic National Reader

Junior High English A, America

Required:

Longfellow, *Song of Hiawatha*

Irving, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*

Longfellow, *Paul Revere's Ride*

Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Additional Selections From:

Building Thinking Skills and *Mind Benders* texts for logic skills

Alcott, *Little Women*, *Little Men*, *Jo's Boys*

London, J., *Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*

Cather, W., *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, *O Pioneers*

Reiss, *The Upstairs Room*

Junior High English B, World

Required:

Aesop Fables and Proverbs

Zeman, L., *Gilgamesh the King*, *The Revenge of Ishtar*, and *The Last Quest of Gilgamesh*

Book of Job

Roger Lancelyn Green's *Tales of Ancient Greece* or d'Aulaire, *Greek Myths*

Colum, *A Children's Homer*

Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* (Geraldine McCaughrean, Puffin Classics)

Additional Selections From:

Shakespeare's Sonnet 116 & Johnson's "Hymn to the Belly" or "A Fit of Rhyme Against Rhyme"

Kipling's *Kim*

Chi-Lin Purse, *A Collection of Ancient Chinese Stories*

Tolstoy or Chekhov short stories

Poems of Robert Frost

Junior High English C, Church

Required:

Beowulf the Warrior, retold by Ian Serrailier, Bethlehem Books, ISBN 1-883937-03-5

Shakespeare, *Henry V* or *Twelfth Night*

Stevenson, Robert Lewis, *Black Arrow*

Dickens *Christmas Carol*, *Oliver Twist*, or *Tale of Two Cities*

C. S. Lewis, *Chronicles of Narnia*

Swift, Jonathan, *Gulliver's Travels*

Twain's *Joan of Arc*

Additional Selections From:

Chesterton's *Father Brown*

Belloc's *Cautionary Tales*

Lewis' *Out of the Silent Planet*

Crane, Stephen, *The Red Badge of Courage*

Wilde, Oscar, *Stories for Children*

Poetry selections from Robert Louis Stevenson, Alfred Lord Tennyson,

Shakespeare's Sonnets, Dryden, Edward Lear, G.K. Chesterton

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Scott, *Ivanhoe*

Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*: Prologue and Pardoner's Tale

History

The history courses emphasize historical trends and especially the role of the Church in the world through the study of the great historical documents of the ages.

Junior High History A, America

The history class follows the text *From Sea to Shining Sea* as an introduction to American history.

Required:

From Sea to Shining Sea. Catholic Textbook Project, Ignatius Press
 "Declaration of Independence"
Constitution of the United States
 Washington, *Rules of Civility*
Abraham Lincoln: Great Speeches

Additional Selections From:

Saints biographies
 Carroll, W.H., *Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Conquest of Darkness*
 Franklin, *Way to Wealth; Poor Richard's Almanac*
Diary of Anna Green Winslow, Sally Wister's *Journal*, Martin, J. *Yankee Doodle Boy*
 DeVoto, B., *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*
 Douglass, F., *Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass: An American Slave*
 Keller, H., *Autobiography*
 Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*

Junior High History B, World

History B follows the text *All Ye Lands* for a broad view of the cultures of the world.

Required:

All Ye Lands: World Cultures and Geography. Catholic Textbook Project, Ignatius Press
 Genesis, excerpts
 Biblical books of Daniel and Jeremiah, excerpts
Little Flowers of St. Francis (excerpts from St. Francis' writings)
 Hippocratic Oath

Additional Selections From:

McGraw, *The Golden Goblet*
 Green, *Tales of Ancient Egypt*
 Speare, *Bronze Bow*
 Muggerridge, *Something Beautiful For God*
 Stone, *Mother Teresa: A Life of Love*
 Twain, *Roughing It*, excerpts
 Windeatt, *St. Rose of Lima*

Junior High History C, Church

Studies the history of the Church from its founding in the days of the Roman Empire into modern times, emphasizing how the Church has preached the Gospel to the nations through the centuries and how the Church has bestowed treasures of art, literature, music, knowledge, and learning on the world.

Required:

Light to the Nations. Catholic Textbook Project, Ignatius Press
 Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* (www.litpress.org)

Additional Selections From:

Selections from the Vision Series by Ignatius Press, a 26-book set on the lives of the saints
 Molla, Pietro, *St. Gianna Molla, Wife, Mother, Doctor* (www.ignatius.com)
 Perego, Jeanne, *Joseph and Chico* (www.ignatius.com, about Pope Benedict XVI)

Latin

The study of an inflected language such as Latin lays a grammatical foundation for the study of any language. A knowledge of Latin aids in the study of the Romance languages, enhances a student's ability to express himself well in English, hones logical and organizational thinking skills, and assists students who continue in science, medicine, and the humanities.

Latin A B C

Latin A-B-C is a three-year course for junior high students. For most students, this study will provide a solid foundation for high school Latin. After completing the three-year Junior High sequence, students will be placed into high school Latin based on ability.

Required:

Oerberg, *Lingua Latina* and selections from *Colloquia* or Classical Academic Press, Perrin, *Latin For Children* Primer A-C

Additional Selections From:

Greek and Latin Roots (derivatives)
Latin for Children, Primer A
 Latin hymnody
 Church, Alfred, *Virgil's Aeneid*
 Haaren/Poland, *Famous Men of Rome*
 MacDonald, *The Roman Colosseum*
 Maccaulay, *City: A Story of Roman Planning and Construction*
 Connolly, *The Ancient City: Life in Classical Athens and Rome*
 Poulton, *Augustus and the Ancient Romans*
 Corbishley, *Ancient Rome*
 Usbourne. *Make This Roman Fort, Roman Amphitheatre, Rome and Romans*
 MacDonald, *A Roman Fort*
 Scarre, *Historical Atlas of Ancient Rome*
Winnie Ille Pu
Cattus Petasatus
Quomodo Invidiusulus Nomine Grinchus Christi Natalem Abrogavert

Math

The Academy's math courses help students learn to solve problems by providing them with computational skills and an understanding of the ideas underlying those skills. Advanced math courses also help students understand and engage in formal reasoning. Students will be placed based on prior performance and placement testing. Junior high students who test into a course higher than Pre-Algebra (such as Algebra I or Geometry) may take that course for high school credit.

Math 6

Uses the Singapore Primary Mathematics series, which emphasizes concept development, mental techniques, and problem solving. Singapore *Primary Mathematics*, *Intensive Practice*, *Extra Practice*, and Singapore math drills

Math 7

Dolciani, M. *Mathematics Structure and Method*, Course 1 and math drills

Pre-Algebra

Dolciani, M. P., Sorgenfrey, R., Graham, J. *Mathematics: Structure and Method*, Course 2 and math drills

Religion

Religion is, of course, not just a subject at St. Ambrose Academy, but the golden thread tying all the courses and lives of the faculty and students together. All courses rely on:

The Holy Bible, RSV 2nd edition
Catechism of the Catholic Church
Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
The Baltimore Catechism, Catholic Book Publishing Company

Junior High courses use the *Faith and Life* series as a spine. The three years of *Faith and Life* are on separate topics (Ten Commandments and Order of the Mass in Grade 6, the Creed and Sacraments in Grade 7, and the history and structure of the Church in Grade 8), so they can be taught in any order.

Junior High Religion A, Following Christ

This course offers the blueprint for a life of love: the law of God, especially in the Ten Commandments, and the presence of Jesus in the Holy Mass. The interaction of the challenges of God's law and his gifts of grace help us fulfill his law through love.

Following Christ. Faith and Life Series, Book 6, Ignatius Press
Children's Bible. Golden

Junior High Religion B, The Life of Grace

This course emphasizes grace as our link with God, his gift to us to bring us to Himself and his eternal life, with an emphasis on transmission of grace through the seven sacraments and on God's loving gifts of revelation, of himself through the prophets, the Incarnation, and the Church. Also studies the role of grace in developing the virtues.

Life of Grace. Faith and Life Series, Book 7. Ignatius Press
Life of Grace. Activity Book, Book 7. Ignatius Press

Junior High Religion C, Our Life in the Church

Follows the history of the Church: its founding by Christ, its birth in the Holy Spirit, the marks of the one, true Church, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the saints and the role of the religious and laity up to the present. The structure of the Church Jesus planned, the role of the Magisterium, the clergy, the religious and the laity and our own vocations are also considered.

Our Life in the Church. Faith and Life Series, Book 8. Ignatius Press.
Our Life in the Church. Activity Book, Book 8. Ignatius Press.

Science

The St. Ambrose Science program helps students understand and marvel at the natural world while preparing for college and life in a technologically and scientifically advanced culture. The Academy's science courses help students appreciate the scientific method and learn what a scientist means in making a claim about the nature of the world. Guided by the Catechism's assertion that "there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason" (#159), our courses seek to resolve any apparent conflict between science and Catholic teaching.

Junior High Life Science

The course studies topics in life science from the inner workings of the cell to ecology. Topics include life's structure and function, life from bacteria to plants, animal diversity, human body systems, and ecology.

Glencoe Life Science. McGraw-Hill, 2002

Junior High Earth Science

Earth Science covers minerals, rocks, the earth's surface and erosion, plate tectonics, geologic history, the atmosphere and oceans, and astronomy.

Glencoe Earth Science, McGraw-Hill, 2002

Junior High Physical Science

The Physical Science course studies motion, energy, electricity, magnetism, radioactivity, waves, light, solids, liquids, gases, atoms, elements and the periodic table, chemical bonds, organic compounds, solutions, and chemical reactions.

Glencoe Physical Science, McGraw-Hill, 2002

Electives

Art

Art studies include historical and modern works of art, medium technique study, basic anatomy, 3-dimensional study, and cultural art. Influencing each of these areas of study is the beautiful "Letter to Artists" of Pope John Paul II.

Band / Orchestra

These elective courses include individual instrument lessons, group lessons, end-of-semester performances, and other opportunities for playing publicly. Students in these programs also prepare for Solo/Ensemble competitions. These courses are offered depending on student interest.

Music and Drama

This elective course focuses on choral, solo, and ensemble singing and dramatic performance. Past performances include:

Theatrical Pot-Pourri
Fiddler on the Roof
Into the Woods, Junior Edition
Wilde, Importance of Being Earnest

Physical Education

The "good, true and beautiful" can be learned through physical exercise and sport as well as in the academic courses. Physical education classes are held once a week at local facilities, such as the Bishop O'Connor Center gym, pool, and playing fields, the Keva Sports Center, SwimWest, Harbor Athletic Club, and Capitol Ice Arena.

Technology in the Classroom

St. Ambrose students build skills with modern technological tools throughout their years at St. Ambrose. Teachers require the use of these tools regularly in student work, relying on technology in the home, at local libraries, or through equipment loans from St. Ambrose. (For example, we provide graphing calculators, computer and printer use, and Internet access to students who need it to complete assignments.)

SKILL	SKILL DEVELOPMENT
Keyboarding	Junior high students use typing training software during study hall periods using school computers. Senior high students are expected to develop these skills independently if they haven't attained them already.
Word Processing	Junior high students use word processing software to compose and edit short papers using simple paragraph and font attributes. High school students use more advanced word processing features such as footnotes, headers and footers, page numbering, headings, styles, and tables.
Online Learning	Advanced students take specialized online courses, such as AP Latin. In some courses teachers may direct students to websites that feature specialized learning tools.
Calculators	Calculators are not used in junior high math courses so that students develop mental facility with basic mathematical operations, without which most students will not succeed in upper-level math. Facility with scientific calculators is required in upper level math and science courses. The pre-calculus course includes direct and detailed instruction in the use of graphing calculators.
Multimedia	Students use audio files to record certain verbal assignments; teachers use audio files to record drills. A variety of classroom projects offer students the opportunity to master videography skills. Latin skits, dramatizations of plays in English class, and skits bringing historical periods to life in history have all been the subjects of student-produced videos where filming and film editing skills are honed.
Presentation Software	Senior high students use PowerPoint for presentations in various courses.
Spreadsheets	Science courses involving data collection and analysis give students the opportunity to learn column and row operations and the basic functions available in spreadsheet software packages.
Web Search Tools	Religion, history, and science courses regularly require students to use web search tools for research.
Communications	Some teachers communicate with students through email and the St. Ambrose website. Each teacher has a webpage on the St. Ambrose website for posting course-related materials.

The St. Ambrose graduate will be prepared to use technology to succeed in future endeavors. However, the focus of the St. Ambrose curriculum is developing skills of the mind and encouraging a thirst for truth. Technology rapidly changes; truth is permanent. To meet these changes requires adaptable skills. Instead of training our students to specific applications that are outdated in a few years via courses specifically focused on technology, we train minds and hearts in the permanent things. We train students to learn independently. Thus, we are confident that they have the skills necessary to learn whatever new applications arise.