



# sophieconnect

## **Network of Sacred Heart Schools On-Line Course Program**

**What is it?** This program, which began in the 2015-16 school year, was initiated by the Network of Sacred Heart Schools to allow students to have opportunities to grow and expand in a nontraditional online educational environment. These on-line courses are designed for highly motivated and very self-directed, disciplined students. Tuition for a full year course is \$800, and tuition for a semester course is \$500. More information can be found on the Sophie Connect website: <http://www.sophieconnect.org/courses>.

**Who teaches these courses?** Faculty members of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools will teach these courses. Grades will be given and will be computed into a student's GPA. For the AP courses, students will take the AP exams in May 2022.

**Who can take these courses?** Sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have the approval of the Principal may enroll in these courses. International students must also seek the approval of the International Student Advisor. Only courses not offered here at Woodlands will be available to students.

Please refer to the attached information for course descriptions, registration policies and fees. Please see Mr. Gargiulo if you have any questions.

### **Courses offered in 2021-22**

- AP Art History (full year)
- AP Computer Science A (full year)
- AP Microeconomics (full year)
- AP Macroeconomics (full year)
- AP Human Geography (full year)
- AP Comparative Government & Politics (full year)
- Financial Literacy CP1 (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> semester)

### **AA305 – AP Art History (full year)**

This course will help students develop an understanding and knowledge of diverse historical and cultural contexts of architecture, sculpture, painting and other media. Students will examine and critically analyze major forms of artistic expression from the past and the present from a variety of cultures. Art history emphasizes understanding how and why works of art function in context, considering such issues as patronage, gender, and the functions and effects of works of art. Students will be prepared to take the Advanced Placement Art History exam in May.

### **MA335 – AP Computer Science A (full year)**

**(Prerequisite: MA221 at Woodlands Academy or principal's approval)**

This course is equivalent to an introductory college-level course in computer science. Students will learn object-oriented programming methodology using Java with an emphasis on problem solving and algorithm development. Topics of study include data structures, programming design, abstraction, computer system components, and computer science history. Students will work collaboratively on pair programming projects and engage in group discussions of the ethical and social implications of computer use. Students will be prepared to take the Advanced Placement Computer Science A exam in May.

### **SS505 – AP Microeconomics (full year)**

The Advanced Placement course in microeconomics will give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to the functions of individual decision makers, both consumers and producers, within the economic system. It places primary emphasis on the nature and functions of product markets and includes the study of factor markets and of the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy. Students will be prepared to take the Advanced Placement Microeconomics exam in May.

### **SS525 – AP Macroeconomics (full year)**

The purpose of the AP course in macroeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole. The course places particular emphasis on the study of national income and price-level determination, and also develops students' familiarity with economic performance measures, the financial sector, stabilization policies, economic growth, and international economics.

### **SS535 – AP Human Geography (full year)**

Human geography can be seen as a cross study between cultural anthropology (the study of human culture) and geography (the study of our natural world). This course encompasses a wide study of our natural world (landscape, surface, resources, etc.) and the socio-political, economic, and cultural developments of humankind through our time on this earth. Specifically, it seeks to analyze these developments throughout history in order to better define and understand its impact on our natural world. For instance, looking at the socio-economic and cultural phenomenon that was the Industrial Revolution, and seeing what its impacts are on our environment today and what they could be tomorrow. This understanding will provide us with insight toward the future of our civilization in relation to our physical space. Moreover, it underscores the importance of the social responsibility we have to ourselves and the natural world, which is in keeping with our mission, philosophy, and goals of the Sacred Heart.

**SS545 – AP Comparative Government and Politics (full year)**

AP Comparative Government and Politics is a one-credit course that introduces students to fundamental concepts used by political scientists to study the processes and outcomes of politics in a variety of country settings including Iran, Nigeria, China, Russia, Mexico, and Great Britain. The course aims to illustrate the rich diversity of political life, to show available institutional alternatives, to explain differences in processes and policy outcomes, and to communicate to students the importance of global political and economic changes. Comparison assists both in identifying problems and in analyzing policy-making. For instance, *why are some countries stable democracies and not others?* Students will be regularly engaged in debate, research and analysis and problem-solving scenarios to explore and evaluate political systems around the world. This course prepares students for both AP exams in the spring.

**MA221 – Financial Literacy CPI (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> semester)**

This one-semester course is designed to alert, inform, and educate students in concepts of personal finance and money management. Students will begin to develop the skills and strategies that promote personal and financial responsibility related to financial planning, savings, investment, and charitable giving in the global economy. Effective money management is a disciplined behavior. It is difficult to master, and much easier when learned earlier in life. This course will start students on a path toward being in control of their financial futures. Five broad topics will be the foundation of the course: college and career planning, money management, savings and investing, income, and spending. The course will teach students to search and assess college and career opportunities, identify and prioritize their personal money management goals, develop personal spending and savings plans, comprehend the impact of time on the value of money, understand the cost of using credit, and protect assets.

## **Sophie Connect Program Policies and Procedures**

### **Tuition Payments**

If the minimum number of registered students for a particular course is not reached by June 7, 2021, the course will be cancelled. 100% tuition reimbursement will be issued for any cancelled courses unless the student wishes to transfer to another online course.

Tuition for a full year course is \$800, and tuition for a semester course is \$500.

### **Additional Expenses**

Course materials/textbooks/AP testing fees are not included in the tuition. Acquiring books and course materials are the responsibility of the individual student. AP testing fees will be billed to students by Woodlands. Some courses will require other subscriptions/software that students will have to purchase and download. A list of required resources will be sent in June.

### **Registering Students for Classes**

Students must have the approval of the Principal to enroll in a Sophie Connect course. International students must also seek approval of the International Student Advisor. The principal will register all students in Sophie Connect courses.

### **Add/Drop a Course**

The last day to withdraw with a 50% tuition refund is September 3, 2021. No refunds will be issued after September 4, 2021. The add/drop period ends September 20, 2021. Students withdrawing from a course after this date will receive a "Withdraw – W" on their transcripts.

### **Technical Requirements**

In general, students with a computer that is regularly updated and less than four years old should have no trouble completing the coursework required through Sophie Connect. Computers and laptops should have a webcam with a microphone, speakers, and a high-speed WiFi network. The recommended browser is most updated version of Chrome or, alternatively, Firefox.

## **Registering a Technical Difficulty / Asking for Help**

If students or parents have questions about the technical requirements, they should contact Karl Haeseler, Co-Director at (203) 532-3159 or [haeselerk@sophieconnect.org](mailto:haeselerk@sophieconnect.org) for help. To request help with passwords, students should use the “Forgot your password?” link on the Sophie Connect login screen.

## **Learning Management System**

Students will be given access to Blackboard Learn and Blackboard Collaborate, our learning management system on orientation day or before.

## **Student Enrollment**

Sophie Connect courses are available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Students may enroll in only one full-year course (or two individual semester courses) per academic year.

## **Course Size**

The maximum number of students per online class is 18. If more students want to enroll, another section may be opened. The minimum number of students will vary depending on the overall student enrollment in Sophie Connect courses.

## **Courses**

Course selection is amended every year. Sacred Heart teachers are invited to submit proposals in November for the following academic year.

## **Course Design**

Course design is based on the latest research in the field of distance learning. Sophie Connect courses are delivered following an asynchronous mode of instruction. All courses are built by faculty in advance so there are common outcomes/objectives for all students taking courses. Building courses in advance affords the instructors time during the year to provide students with individual attention and support. Additional resources may be added to enhance student learning and to meet specific student needs. Sophie Connect faculty bring courses to life by making them relevant in today’s world. Faculty are expected to evaluate and give feedback to students engaged in discussion boards, review and monitor assessments in a timely fashion and identify content areas where individual students are struggling and proactively engage students in these areas. Courses reflect all of the Goals as well as a conge, hidden in the course somewhere. Each course has a social justice component embedded in an assignment as well.

## **Course Facilitation**

All exams are online. With the exception of AP courses, proctors should not be needed. All courses are delivered asynchronously, requiring minimal participation in real-time instruction. Faculty may include optional synchronous elements to their courses (office hours, review sessions, extra help, etc.) but will accommodate students in different time zones.

## **Course Length**

Courses offered are either full year or semester classes. Sophie Connect Directors set the calendar dates for all courses. Semester end dates and breaks may not coincide with the calendar at Woodlands.

## **Time Commitment**

There is no minimum required logins per week, but individual teachers may have specific requirements for the number of postings in any given week and firm deadlines (usually Sunday at 11:59pm) for weekly assignments. Students must plan on spending about 6-8 hours per week on an AP level course and 4-6 hours on a non-AP elective course.

## **Parent Involvement**

Sophie Connect offers parents an opportunity to engage with their student's teacher via Open House at the beginning of the school year (September 30, 2021) and an opportunity for parent-teacher conferences mid-year. These events are real-time facilitated through Blackboard Collaborate.

## **Grades**

The first semester ends on January 14, 2022, later than the end of the semester at Woodlands. Final semester grades will be issued shortly thereafter. The second semester ends on May 20, 2022. Grades are calculated out of 100 (percentage) and will be reported and recorded on My Backpack. Grades earned are computed in a student's GPA. A student who withdraws from a course after the add/drop period ends, will earn a "W" mark on her transcript. All Woodlands Academy rules regarding academic integrity apply to Sophie Connect courses.