



## Frequently Asked Questions: Choosing Courses for Freshman Year at BSM

### What do I consider when picking classes (requirements, course rigor, etc.)?

The most important thing to consider when picking classes is BALANCE. A balanced schedule will include classes you need and classes you like at levels that will challenge you but not overwhelm you. You will want to take into consideration your outside commitments. Students should think about which areas they feel the most confident. Core classes typically provide about 30-45 minutes of homework a night, whereas honors core classes can assign 45-90 minutes of homework a night.

### Should I take a study hall?

Freshmen must take seven courses each semester, but they can choose to fill all eight periods each semester with courses. Freshmen may need or want time to work on homework during the school day. In those cases, students can choose seven courses both semesters, or they can choose seven courses one semester and eight courses the other semester. If a student chooses eight courses for one semester, we will do our best to schedule PE during that semester rather than Health, as there is no homework for PE.

### Do freshman grades count?

**Yes.**

When applying to college, grades earned in ninth grade are considered in the admission process. Colleges look at your cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA), standardized test scores (SAT/ACT) and course selection. A poor performance in ninth grade can be difficult to dig out from in later years. However, the most recent work is the most important to colleges and while they look at grades earned in ninth, they also look at the progression of grades from freshman to junior year. They will look at the applicant's performance over time and at that student's most recent achievements. College admissions counselors want to see that you are making the best course choices possible for your ability level in preparation for the college experience. Most applicants to highly selective colleges and highly selective scholarships earn high grades all four years.

### When should I take an honors course?

This answer is different based on the student. If a student does not take an honors course in ninth grade, he/she still has the option to take an honors course later on. Honors level courses are great for students who want to go more in depth into a given area of interest. Strong reading and comprehension skills are vital to being successful in an honors level course.

### Is it better to have an A in a regular class than a C in an honors course?

It is important that you choose the level of course that challenges you but does not overwhelm you and that provides the learning experience you desire. Honors courses go into more depth at a faster pace. Choose honors courses in your better subjects and areas you are most passionate about.

## What if I have an IEP, 504 or accommodation plan?

If you did not already submit documentation, please email a copy to Kristin Gilbertson, Director of Learning Support, at [kgilbertson@bsmschool.org](mailto:kgilbertson@bsmschool.org). Student accommodation plans will be updated before the start of school.

## Where can I find registration information and how do I know if a course has a prerequisite?

Benilde-St. Margaret's registration information, including course descriptions and prerequisite information can be found in your copy of the Program of Studies or at <https://www.bsmschool.org/senior-high>.

## What if I change my mind about the courses that I registered for?

If you change your mind about course selection, email your counselor at BSM with the change as soon as possible, before the end of the school year. After May, few schedule changes will be made. All efforts are made to assign the courses the student requests. Staffing allocations are based on student registration. In an effort to provide an equitable experience for all students, classes are balanced and changes are not allowed after the start of a term. Schedule changes must be requested prior to the term starting and will only occur if space is available. Students may request to change levels of a course prior to midterm (for example, moving from Honors English 9 to English 9), provided there is available space in the desired course.

## What is the biggest change between junior high/middle school and high school?

Students have shared that they find the transition to high school is challenging due to lacking time management, study skills and communication with their teachers. Students can expect between 30-90 minutes of homework per night depending on the amount of regular and honors courses they enroll in during a semester. It is vital that you have the ability to manage your time and have some form of organization to keep yourself on track (i.e. student planner). Learning to reach out to teachers before and after school should become habit and preparing for tests 4-5 days in advance will be necessary.

## Who is my counselor and how can I contact my counselor?

Your high school counselor is support, a resource and your advocate for academic, emotional and social needs. During your four years at BSM, your counselor works with you and your parents to guide you, answer questions and help create an environment to find your path and be successful in, and beyond, the classroom. You are assigned to work with a specific counselor based on your last name as outlined below

Your Last Name	Counselor	Contact Information	
		952-927-4176	email
A - Do	Amy Larson	Ext. 2029	alarson@bsmschool.org
Dr - I	Kate Berry	Ext. 2017	kberry@bsmschool.org
J - McE	Heidi Wessman	Ext. 2028	hwessman@bsmschool.org
Mi - Sa	Vicky Haas	Ext. 2021	vhaas@bsmschool.org
Sc - Z	Amanda Anderson	Ext. 2030	aanderson@bsmschool.org