

College Considerations for Course Planning and Selection

The following document is meant to be a guide for students so they can think ahead to create a schedule that aims for their college major and career goals. The suggestions are just that, suggestions. There is always nuance and there are no black and white answers when it comes to admissions. However, there are paths we know that can help make an applicant more competitive, and beyond that help prepare a student best for their future college curriculum. Each student will still need to decide their individual capacity, work within their parameters, and not stress if a prerequisite or where they are at in a subject hinders them from doing the recommended course load. Many of these courses will have prerequisites, so look at the [course description book](#) to see what may be doable for you. Do not stress if you can only get to a certain level in a course but do your part to plan out what you can and make intentional choices.

Your school counselor will help you create the best schedule that makes sense for you, but please use this document as your guide as you look forward to your future class schedule(s)!

General Tips:

Rigor: Colleges are looking for students to be academically prepared and want to see that a student challenged themselves within the context of their school and within their abilities. Taking a rigorous load for some students means taking all 4 years of standard level courses in the 5 core academic subjects (math, science, English, history, and foreign language). For others it means taking a full or nearly full AP/IB courseload. Find the challenge that makes sense for you. Pursue an advanced course or two in areas of interest or subject areas that you may want to major in. ***If you think you can get a B or higher in an Honors, AP or IB course without sacrificing your mental health, we recommend you try the Honors/AP/IB course!***

Math: Taking 4 years is highly encouraged. There are many schools, even very admissible ones, that want to see a student get to a math class above Algebra 2 (or above Geometry in SM sequencing cases). In general, if a student can get to precalculus, that course leaves the most doors open for different majors, especially if a student is undecided. However, the precalculus/calculus route is not the only great route. Statistics and Trigonometry and Probability/Statistics tend to be great options for many students and majors as well. See more major-specific info below.

Science: Biology and Chemistry are a must. That third year (or 4th if you choose to take it) should be an upper-level (meaning it has a prerequisite), lab-based science. Some great options are Physics, Environmental Science (AP or standard level), Anatomy/Physiology, AP or IB Biology, Chemistry IB SL.

Foreign Language: Most colleges require 2 years of the same language. We tend to recommend 3 years for the student getting As or Bs in their language. A 4th year shows added rigor and can help the student be prepared if their college requires them to take a language while in college.

English: 4 years are required.

History: 3 years required.

Tips based on Major:

Engineering/Computer Science:

- You want to get to the highest math possible and be on the precalculus, calculus, AP Calculus route. If you are full IB, taking the course route that will get you to Math AA IB HL 1 and 2 (if possible) would be ideal. *You will want to get to the highest Calculus-based course you can reach based on your math trajectory.*
- You will need to take physics! Preferably at the AP level. AP Physics C would be most ideal.
- If there is space in the schedule, consider filling electives with courses like IB Design Tech, IB Chemistry (if pursuing chemical engineering), Introductory Programming, AP Computer Science A, Cyber Security, or doubling up on math/science.

Business:

- You will want to get to precalculus at a minimum. Many business programs look for students to be calculus ready, so going this route over statistics or another math route is preferred. If you are advanced in math, continuing math all 4-years on the Calculus route is recommended.
- If there is space in the schedule, consider filling electives with courses like IB Business HL 1 & 2 (must start junior year), Fundamentals of Business/Intro to Law, Accounting/Finance, Social Media Marketing, AP Marco/Microeconomics, or even doubling up on math and taking statistics or AP statistics alongside your calculus-based math course.
- If interested in international business, consider taking a language all 4 years as that will likely be built into your college curriculum.

Nursing/Health Sciences/Biology/Kinesiology:

- The health science fields tend to use statistics more, so going to statistics or AP Statistics after Geometry would prepare you best for the college curriculum you will use.
- You will want to focus heavily on science. Filling some elective space/doubling up on science would be a smart move. Some great courses to consider: AP Biology, Anatomy/Physiology, Sports Med 1 and 2 (more for the athletic training route. Most other majors, we would recommend anatomy over sports medicine).

Other Majors:

Most other majors leave a little more wiggle room on their course criteria. **However, it is always smart to try and build a rigorous and intentional schedule, so think of the courses where you may want to challenge yourself in ways that make the most sense to do so. Choosing electives/more rigorous courses that align with your interests and potential major is advised.** Some more examples below.

- Psychology
 - o AP Psychology
 - o Forensic Science/Intro to Forensic Psychology
 - o Sociology/Psychology
- Political Science/Law/Global & International Relations
 - o Debate and Argumentation
 - o Intro to Law/Fundamentals of Business
 - o Advanced level social science courses: AP Government, Global Politics IB SL, History IB, AP US History, MUN.
- English/Journalism
 - o Journalism 1 H, Advanced Journalism H
 - o Advanced English courses: AP English Language, AP English Literature, English IB HL
- Environmental Sciences
 - o AP Environmental Science, Oceanography/marine biology, environmental science
- Performing or Visual Arts; Broadcast Journalism:
 - o Pursuing rigorous courses in your intended area of interest (pages 41-54 of [course description book](#))
 - o While you may be pursuing an art major and taking intentional and rigorous courses within your art focus is important, you will also want to maintain a strong level of rigor in your other core academic courses, as you often need to be admitted to both the university and the art department. You want to make sure you are still academically competitive in other subject areas, by university standards.