

Freshman (Class of 2029) Course Placement Guide

Introduction to the Curriculum

La Salle College High School offers over 170 courses to our students each year. Our liberal arts-based curriculum provides a solid foundation for our students to grow both intellectually and spiritually, develop their critical thinking skills, maximize their learning experience, and pursue particular interests. The freshman year is essentially prescribed in order to provide a firm base in the sciences, humanities, religion, and a variety of skill areas. Some individualization of the academic program is made from the start to accommodate differences in levels of ability in Mathematics, Science, English, and World Languages. Also, for those students who are already focused on Engineering/STEM or the areas within the Innovation and Design Department (multimedia, networking, programming, or web design), there are potential electives available. In the sophomore and junior years, students continue to satisfy requirements in the six core academic areas, but they are eligible for more elective courses. Senior year is designed to be wide open; the only two required courses are in Religion and English.

The progression from a highly prescribed program of study to a program that allows for individual interests and natural curiosity gradually introduces the student to the need for planning, accurate self-assessment, and responsibility. A student's strengths, interests, and future plans factor into the selection of a number of courses in addition to the required courses during his junior and senior years. The student, with guidance from parents and guardians, teachers, and counselors, can elect multiple courses in addition to the required courses in the sophomore, junior, and senior years.

Some of those electives might eventually line up to form a "concentration" in our Concentrations Program, a program that connects learning and reinforces and expands it through experiential learning on-campus in clubs and activities, research, and reflection, plus off-campus practical experiences like site visits, interviews, and internships. During sophomore year, students will be invited to think about the pathways they will take at La Salle and if the pursuit of a concentration is of interest. During junior year, interested students will commit to pursuing a concentration and register for a senior-year seminar that requires an independent capstone project.

Freshmen almost always carry a minimum of 7.5 credits: 6 core academic courses, plus Introduction to Technology and Design, and a half credit for Physical Education/Aquatics. We run a side-by-side block schedule with typically sixty-minute classes that alternate every other day. Seven blocks are filled with the core courses and the tech course. In addition, there are blocks in the schedule that are filled in with a combination of courses freshman year: Group Advisory, physical education/aquatics classes (.5 credit), and Freshman Proseminar. Of course, we have many freshmen who want to take advantage of our music offerings, are interested in our freshman art class, or are in the David Program. These special elections, along with a lunch period each day, fill in additional slots in the schedule. More information about course placements will be provided in March at the Welcome and Academic Orientation session. The required courses and electives and the placement information are assembled below to outline the possibilities.

Course Descriptions and Details about Placement

Religion (1 credit) – Course Description	Placement information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion 9: Catholic Lasallian Identity <p>This introductory course is designed to explain in detail what it means to be Catholic and Lasallian. The course explores the rich heritage of the Roman Catholic Church and will demonstrate that in and through the Church people encounter the living Body of Jesus Christ today. This Body has both divine and human elements. In this course, students will learn not so much about events in the life of the Church but about the sacred nature of the Church. The course also serves as an introduction to life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the Lasallian Mission and Lasallian educational philosophy that is imbued in our school.</p>	<p>All freshmen take this course.</p>

Mathematics (1 credit) – Course Descriptions	Placement information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra 1 <p>This course provides a thorough foundation in elementary algebra by developing an understanding of the central ideas of variable and function, and the ability to use the language and tools of algebraic thinking to describe mathematical relations and analyze problems of many types. In addition, focus and emphasis are placed on enabling students to integrate the concepts of functions, equations, and graphs in order to apply the concepts to a variety of mathematical and real-world situations, thereby further developing their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.</p>	<p><i>(All incoming freshmen need to take a placement test in late April that we will use as another data point to select the best Math course.)</i></p> <p>A majority of freshmen will be placed into Algebra 1, but the placement test results could move some into Accelerated Algebra 1 and Geometry or Algebra 1 (Y). See below.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra 1 (Y) <p>Algebra 1Y is a course provided for ninth-grade students who, in the opinion of the math department, would benefit from a first-year algebra course fortified by extra time and attention to building key skills. This course gives special attention to the reinforcement of basic arithmetic concepts while covering the foundations of elementary algebra. The pace of this course is drawn out by providing more class time than a traditional Algebra 1 course to give more support, practice, and feedback.</p>	<p><i>(All incoming freshmen need to take a placement test in late April that we will use as another data point to select the best Math course.)</i></p> <p>Select students will be recommended for this course based on their Math scores on the Entrance Exam and placement test in math.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated Algebra 1 and Geometry <p>This is a course in elementary Algebra 1 and geometric concepts intended for freshmen who have a strong foundation in some Algebra 1 topics but do not qualify to take Algebra 2. The usual topics of Algebra 1 are treated with an emphasis on concepts and structure rather than on how to proceed. Students will end the year with a focus on geometric concepts that are generally not covered in an elementary curriculum that would have been covered in a full-year course at La Salle. Most important is that this course introduces the student to abstract mathematical thought and also to solving problems from Algebra 1 concepts. By the end of the year, the students should reach a level of insight and mathematical instinct that will enable them to proceed comfortably through Algebra 2.</p>	<p><i>(All incoming freshmen need to take a placement test in late April that we will use as another data point to select the best Math course.)</i></p> <p>Students with transcripts that include Algebra and/or Geometry at the 7th and 8th grade level will be considered for this advanced course. Those students will have to show a basic knowledge of Algebra 1 on the placement test and meet a threshold on their Math scores on the Entrance Exam.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra 2 <p>This course continues the arithmetic generalizations begun in Algebra 1 and explores more deeply the operations that relate numbers to one another. The students are encouraged to think of algebra as a symbolic language and to use it as a modeling tool to explore other areas of mathematics. The students gain an understanding of number systems by examining and using the operations for relating numbers. The use of graphing calculators helps students to visualize algebraic concepts.</p>	<p><i>(All incoming freshmen need to take a placement test in late April that we will use as another data point to select the best Math course.)</i></p> <p>Students who score well on the Entrance Exam and on the math placement test but not well enough to handle the pace of Algebra 2 Honors qualify for this course.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra 2 Honors* <p>This is an accelerated algebra course intended for students who have a high degree of ability in math. The usual topics of Algebra 2 are covered, along with topics in Probability, Mathematical Modeling, Data Analysis and Matrix Theory. One of the goals of this course is to move students to a more independent learning style. There is emphasis on integrating skills and procedures with the logical thinking needed to solve more challenging problems. The skills acquired during this course enable the student to advance to AP Precalculus and Advanced Placement Calculus courses.</p>	<p><i>(All incoming freshmen need to take a placement test in late April that we will use as another data point to select the best Math course.)</i></p> <p>Students who score very well on the Entrance Exam and the math placement test qualify for this course.</p>

English (1 credit) – Course Descriptions	Placement information
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Literature and Composition <p>The purpose of the freshman English course is to enhance and broaden reading, discussion, composition, and vocabulary skills. Students begin learning critical thinking skills by reading and doing close textual analyses of appropriate short stories, novels, plays, poetry, and essays. The writing program emphasizes the process of writing, stressing mastery of the concise analytical paragraph as the essential component of the complete essay. Vocabulary enrichment comes through the discovery of words in the context of the readings. Grammar instruction focuses on improving foundational skills to promote effective communication. Core works include: <i>Of Mice and Men</i>, <i>The Odyssey</i>, and <i>Fences</i>, among others.</p>	<p>The majority of freshmen will be placed in this course.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Literature and Composition (Y) <p>Introduction to Literature and Composition (Y) is offered to freshmen who, based on the recommendation of the English department, would benefit from a course fortified by extra time and attention to practicing foundational skills. The purpose and content of this course do not change from the course description above. This course is designed to enhance and broaden reading, discussion, composition, and vocabulary skills. However, adjustments to classroom pacing are made to aid the students' learning.</p>	<p>Select students will be recommended for this course based on their Entrance Exam scores on the Verbal, Language and Reading Comprehension sections.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Literature and Composition Honors* <p>A more intensive version of Introduction to Literature and Composition, this honors-level course accelerates the study of writing, while examining literature in a more rigorous and comprehensive manner. Core works include: <i>Of Mice and Men</i>, <i>Julius Caesar</i>, and <i>The Odyssey</i>, among others.</p>	<p>Students who score in the 80th percentile or higher on the (1) Verbal section, on the (2) Language section, and on the (3) Reading Comprehension of the Entrance Exam will likely qualify for this course.</p>

World Languages (1 credit) – Course Descriptions	Placement information
<p>Note: Students must complete a three-year sequence of high school-level study in one of the three languages that we offer: Chinese, Latin, and Spanish.</p>	<p>In order for a freshman to advance to the Level 2 or the Level 2 Honors course, he must have had a full year of a language course that meets every day and earn a good score on the corresponding placement test.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese 1 	<p>(See above.)</p>

<p>This is an introductory course for <i>motivated students who are open to a very different language-learning experience of a non-Romance language</i>. The dialect taught is Mandarin as spoken in Beijing, which is accepted worldwide as the standard for Chinese. Students will develop the ability to engage in conversations on every-day topics with emphasis on proper grammar, pronunciation, and colloquial expressions. There will be a gradual introduction to reading and writing the Chinese characters. Chinese customs and culture will be explored throughout the course.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latin 1 or Honors Latin 1* <p>Latin I introduces students to the foundational elements of the Latin language and Roman culture, highlighting their profound influence on the English language for over 2,000 years. Through carefully sequenced reading selections, students gradually build confidence and expand their vocabulary, progressing towards reading and comprehending Latin with minimal translation. Classroom activities include oral practice to reinforce learning and deepen engagement with the language. Students explore Roman history and culture through their readings, while a strong emphasis on vocabulary development and structured grammar exercises enhances their understanding of English through Latin derivatives. By the end of the course, students will have a solid foundation in Latin and an enriched English vocabulary.</p>	<p>(See above.)</p> <p>Students who have had success studying Latin in grade school should consider seeking entrance into Latin 1. Once students enroll for their World Language, we will check the entrance test scores and invite additional students into Honors Latin 1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish 1 <p>This proficiency-oriented course focuses on developing the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The principal objectives of the course include practicing learned oral language skills in structured conversation, acquiring a strong foundation in Spanish vocabulary and grammar, and becoming familiar with the varied aspects of Hispanic culture.</p>	<p>(See above.)</p>

Science (1 credit) – Course Descriptions	Placement information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biology <p>This course provides the opportunity for students to study the biochemical basis of life, evolution, animal, and plant morphology and systemics, using the scientific method as a mode of investigation. This course is designed to follow Integrated Science and uses an introduction to biochemistry to help explain the process of life.</p>	<p>All students who are not recipients of an academic scholarship are eligible to take the Science Placement Test. The score on that test will determine whether a student qualifies for Biology or Honors Biology.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors Biology* This course provides an opportunity for students to study life with a detailed emphasis on the biochemical processes. (An introduction to Biochemistry is used to help explain the processes of life.) Using the scientific method, the students investigate evolution, animal, and plant morphology and systemics. Student assessment is determined by tests, lab work and reports, homework, independent and group projects. The student is expected to express himself in detailed essay answers in order to show a higher level of concept recognition. Satisfactory performance demands a minimum daily allotment of 30 minutes of study time. 	<p>Students who are awarded an academic scholarship (Presidential or Principal; the Leadership scholarships do not automatically apply) based on the Entrance Exam scores automatically qualify for this honors-level course.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering Design – ELECTIVE – Freshman/Sophomore* (elective) – 1 credit / full year <i>This course is intended for students interested in investigating the broad disciplines of engineering and design. Students will be introduced to the engineering design process, applying math, science, and engineering standards to identify and design solutions to a variety of real problems. They will work both individually and in collaborative teams to develop and document design solutions using engineering notebooks and 3D modeling software. Students will also be introduced to the additive manufacturing process known as 3D printing and have the opportunity to pursue an industry level certification in Computer Aided Design (CAD). Class size will be restricted due to the design of the course.</i> 	<p><i>Yearlong ELECTIVE course for students already eager to take extra courses in the Science Department and specifically the Engineering courses.</i></p>

History and Political Science (1 credit) – Course Descriptions	Placement information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World History 1 This is the required course for freshmen. The course surveys the history and cultures of the world from the dawn of civilization to 1800, with attention to major cultural, social, religious, economic, and political trends within each civilization. The course follows the rise of great civilizations across the globe, and analyzes how they flourished, as well as the problems they encountered. The emergence of European civilization is set within a larger framework of civilizations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and interactions between or among civilizations are emphasized. Special topics include exploring cultural diversity, technological achievements, competition for supremacy, and the influence of religion among different civilizations in the ancient world. By the end of freshmen year each student should have a strong sense of how civilizations developed and flourished as 	<p>The majority of freshmen will be placed in this course.</p>

<p>people from different civilizations interacted through migration, conquest, and trade. The student will also gain an understanding of human, cultural, social, economic, intellectual, religious, and political development of world civilizations.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Placement Human Geography* <p>This course is an elective course for selected freshmen as an introduction to the study of Human Geography. The course prepares the students to take the Advanced Placement Human Geography exam in the spring. AP Human Geography introduces students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human use, understanding, and alteration of Earth's surface. Students employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. They also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice. The course goals include the use and analysis of maps and spatial data, recognizing and interpreting the relationships among patterns and processes in multiple scales, defining regions and evaluating the regionalization process, and characterizing and analyzing changing interconnections among places. The course seeks to accomplish these goals while blending the academic rigor and challenge of an introductory college course at a pace and academic maturity level for advanced high school freshmen.</p> 	<p>Students who are awarded an academic scholarship based on the Entrance Exam (Presidential or Principal; the Leadership scholarships do not automatically apply) automatically qualify for this college-level course.</p> <p>Space in this course is limited, but additional select students who score in the 90's (national composite) on the Entrance Exam may also be eligible for this course.</p>

<i>Innovation and Design (1 credit) – Course Description</i>	<i>Placement information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Technology and Design <p>Content for the course is divided into four major units of study that include: an introduction to La Salle College High School's computer network and technology resources; essential skills and application of both desktop and cloud-based productivity tools used to gather, evaluate and publish information in various digital formats; digital citizenship, where students will study the human, societal, and academic/scholarly issues related to the legal and responsible use of social media, technology, artificial intelligence, and resources obtained online; and, an introduction into numerous disciplines within the information science and technology field, including computer programming, digital image editing, web site design, network administration, and engineering design principles. This course is delivered utilizing a student-centered approach, where a combination of guided practice, independent investigation, and collaborative inquiry will be</p> 	<p>All freshmen are placed in this course unless they are eager to pursue more electives in the area of Innovation and Design in freshman year. In that case, they can sit for a placement test to bypass this first course. What we are looking for in a student who his ready to take advanced electives and the content of the placement test will be posted on the Class of 2029 webpage. If a student successfully completes the placement test, then he can select a course that is open to sophomores in this department, e.g., Emerging Technologies or AP</p>

<p>utilized to assist students with the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as the demonstration of their learning through various work products and assessments.</p>	<p>Computer Science Principles. He will have to take 2 half-credit courses or 1 full-year course. More guidance can be provided after the test results are shared.</p>
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<i>Physical Education/Aquatics (.5 credit) – Course Description</i>	<i>Placement information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education/Aquatics – Freshman – .5 credit/full year <p>These courses provide students with the proper techniques for physical development. These courses take into account the needs of both the individual and the group, and as such, permit each student to progress to his own level of ability. Students take one semester of gym and one semester of aquatics.</p>	<p>All freshmen are placed in this course.</p>

<i>Group Advisory (0 credits) – Course Description</i>	<i>Placement information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Advisory – Freshman – full year (meets 1/8 days a cycle) <p>Freshman Group Advisory meets once per cycle and mainly focuses on helping students adjust to life in high school. The Grade Level Counselor facilitates these lessons and throughout the year guest speakers interact with the students to cover relevant topics. The speakers include the Dean of Students, the School Nurse, the Director of Diversity, and the Director of Strength and Conditioning. Major topics include study skills, preparation for and interpretation of standardized testing, academic and social adjustment, peer relationships, health, mental health, drugs and alcohol, fitness, healthy choices, sophomore year course selections, and student/teacher relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshman Proseminar – Freshman - full year (meets 2/8 days a cycle) <p>The Freshman Proseminar promotes La Salle’s culture, reinforcing behaviors that lead to personal and academic success while building strong moral character. Through interactive lessons, discussions, and activities, students will develop essential skills in communication,</p>	<p>All freshmen are placed in this course.</p>

professionalism, time management, and leadership. Emphasizing Lasallian values, brotherhood, and integrity, the course challenges students to act as mature gentlemen, make responsible choices, and cultivate a legacy of respect, service, and excellence.	
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* **Note:** Students who qualify for multiple honors-level/Advanced Placement courses are not required to register for all of them.

In addition to the core courses above, a few electives are available to freshmen. While an elective or multiple electives complicate a student’s schedule, more often than not we are able to meet a student’s requests. Having said that, naturally, there are logistical limitations inherent to the master schedule. Here are some typical scenarios regarding adding electives:

- Students who enroll in Instrumental Music receive private instruction for one period per cycle. Scheduling this course is typically not problematic.
- Students who are in the David Program will be scheduled for Academic Support and will meet their learning specialist essentially on a daily basis. Combining any special course, e.g. Algebra Y, or an elective with the David Center can be complicated.

<i>ELECTIVE: Foundations Art (1 credit) – Course Description</i>	<i>Placement information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foundations Art <p>This course is offered to students interested in a variety of authentic art making experiences. The focus is on design as students gain experience in idea development through research and experimentation. Drawing is the lead off to assembling, painting, sculpting, ceramics, printmaking, paper crafts, and presenting.</p>	<p>All freshmen are <i>invited</i> to discover, explore, and develop their artistic talents in this elective course.</p>

<i>ELECTIVE: Music – Course Descriptions</i>	<i>Placement information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introductory Music Performance (1 credit) <p>This course provides the beginning student musician an opportunity to develop his musicianship through ensemble performance of jazz and related idioms. The student rehearses and performs beginners’ arrangements from the big band repertoire. The course introduces the student to the fundamentals of music theory, jazz improvisation, and the early history of jazz.</p>	<p>Placement in music courses varies and is contingent upon a music evaluation in the spring.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instrumental Instruction (.5 credit) 	

<p>Instrumental Instruction provides the student individual lessons on the instrument of the student's choice. Students are instructed in the techniques specific to his instrument and to his own ability level. Weekly assignments are given at each lesson and the student is expected to prepare these assignments to be evaluated at the following lesson. Because each student brings a different level of competency, progress is closely monitored as to keep the student advancing at a pace appropriate to his ability level. Within this course, and in addition to individual instruction, students are expected to participate in Concert Band and/or Pep Band, excluding strings, piano, and guitar. Both ensemble rehearsal schedules do not conflict with any other classroom activity.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshman Chorus (1 credit) <p>This course is designed to equip freshmen with the musical tools necessary to be an active participant in the music department at La Salle. Issues covered include the changing voice, reading music, and vocal production in addition to rehearsing and performing as a choral ensemble. Most repertoire is sung in two to four parts. Students are expected to memorize music when requested and are to attend all rehearsals and performances.</p>	

<i>ELECTIVE: Academic Support – David Program (.5 credit) – Course Description</i>	<i>Placement information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Support 9 <p>The students in the David Program meet with a learning specialist almost daily to focus on compensatory strategies for their learning difference to help meet academic success. The support will emphasize teaching the learning strategies using the students' curriculum. Students will begin the process of identifying and understanding their learning difference and of fostering self-advocacy skills to allow them to become independent learners. This is a pass/fail course.</p>	<p>Students with documented learning differences are selected for the David Program during the admission process through interviews and by providing documentation of learning differences.</p>

Contact Information

After reading the course descriptions and placement details, if you are seeking additional information about placements or music evaluations, you should contact the appropriate Department Chairperson.

- Math – Mr. Gary Nolan: nolang@lschs.org, 215-402-4185
- Science – Mr. Ryan McDowell: mcdowellr@lschs.org, 215-402-4376
- World Language – Mrs. Jennifer Worthington: worthingtonj@lschs.org, 215-402-4173
- Fine Arts –
 - Chorus – Mr. Mark Norman: normanm@lschs.org, 215-402-4181
 - Art – Mr. Michael Hearn: hearnm@lschs.org, 215-402-4167
 - Music – Mr. Chris Mele: melec@lschs.org, 215-402-4908
- English – Mrs. Christine Meko: mekoc@lschs.org, 215-402-4391
- History and Political Science – Mr. John Young: youngj@lschs.org, 215-402-4198
- Innovation and Design – Mr. Rob Johnson: johnsonr@lschs.org, 215-402-4884
- David Program – Mr. John Keenan: keenanj@lschs.org, 215-402-4853

Along with the Department Chairperson, next year's Freshman Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Sara Martin (martins@lschs.org, 215-402-4885) is a resource for you.