CARDINAL SPELLMAN

HIGH SCHOOL

Advanced Placement Program
Parent and Student Information Guide
2026-2027

Table of Contents

Letter from the AP Coordinator 3
Overview of Spellman's Advanced Placement Program 4
AP Exams and Fees 5
Supporting Students and Partnering with Families 5
AP Courses Offered at Spellman for the 2026-2027 School Year 6
- AP English 10: Seminar 7
- AP English Language & Composition 8
- AP English Literature & Composition 9
- AP World History: Modern 10
- AP United States History 11
- AP United States Government & Politics 12
- AP European History 13
- AP Psychology 14
- AP Comparative Government and Politics 15
- AP Art History 16
- AP Human Geography 17
- NEW: AP African American Studies 18
- AP Precalculus 19
- AP Calculus AB 20
- AP Statistics 21
- AP Computer Science Principles 22
- AP Computer Science A 23
- AP Chemistry 24
- AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based 25
- AP Biology 26
- AP Environmental Science 27
- AP Art Studio 28
- NEW: AP Research 30
- NEW: AP Cybersecurity 30

Frequently Asked Questions 31
AP Course Contract 35

Spellman's Mission & Vision

Excellence in Education, Rooted in a Vibrant Lived Catholicism, Inspiring Students to Maximize their Unique Potential as Learners and Leaders, Serving their Community, their Church and the World.

Spellman's Philosophy: *Sequere Deum - Follow God*

As a college preparatory school, Cardinal Spellman High School is dedicated to offering its students the opportunity to develop personal potential, to pursue truth in knowledge, to participate fully in worship of our Lord and to acquire the principles needed to live in society as caring citizens and followers of Jesus Christ.

The school's motto, 'Sequere Deum' - 'Follow God', challenges all members of the school to compassion, community and service. These values, introduced at home and nurtured in school, come to fruition as students take their places as caring citizens of the world.

Letter from the AP Coordinator

Dear Students and Families,

At Spellman, we believe each student is called to grow in wisdom, character, faith, and leadership. Advanced Placement (AP) courses offer motivated students the opportunity to engage in college-level learning while in high school. AP courses challenge and transform students by strengthening study habits, deepening critical thinking, and building confidence for their future.

I, in partnership with the Associate Head of School for Academics Christine Evans, and the School and College Counseling department invite families to review this information guide together with your student as you discern the level and type of challenge that will help your student thrive academically while maintaining a healthy and balanced course-load. We look forward to partnering with you on your child's AP journey.

In faith and partnership,

Erin Benson
Academic Dean & AP Coordinator

Overview of Spellman's Advanced Placement Program

The AP program at Spellman is designed to offer students meaningful academic challenges within a supportive environment. Through carefully structured college-level coursework, students strengthen their capacity for critical thinking, disciplined study, and intellectual curiosity. Our goal is not simply to accelerate content but to help students grow as confident, capable learners who can navigate complexity, manage demanding workloads, and engage deeply with ideas. We believe that rigorous academics and personal wellbeing can coexist, and that students thrive when they are challenged appropriately and supported consistently. The AP program invites students to stretch themselves in ways that prepare them for future academic success while remaining mindful of balance, reflection, and healthy decision-making.

At Spellman, students in AP courses are supported as whole persons, not just academic performers. Our Catholic identity reminds us that each student is created in the image of God and called to grow in both intellect and character. We encourage AP students to approach their studies with a sense of purpose, humility, and balance. While AP coursework is rigorous, it should never come at the expense of wellbeing. Students are guided to develop healthy habits, reflect on their choices, maintain perspective, and ask for help when they need it. Success is not about taking the highest number of AP classes, but about making thoughtful decisions that honor each student's unique strengths, aspirations, and capacity for healthy challenge.

Placement into AP Courses is based on the following:

- Prior academic performance
- Teacher recommendations
- Demonstrated responsibility and time management skills
- Prerequisite courses as listed in the Program of Studies
- Student motivation and interest
- AP Potential data

Students may be required to:

- Complete summer work for each AP course they are enrolled in
- Participate in a placement process (writing samples/assessment/interview)
- Attend mandatory informational meetings

AP students must:

- Attend class regularly and actively participate
- Complete readings, assignments, projects, presentations, assessments, etc.
- Manage time effectively
- Proactively seek help when needed
- Take the AP exam associated with the course
- Join AP Classroom for each AP course they are enrolled in
- Adhere to the academic integrity policies listed in the student handbook

Typical homework time expectations range from 60-90 minutes per class per week, depending on subject.

AP Exams and Fees

All AP students are **required to take the AP exam** associated with the AP course that they are enrolled in. The exam dates and times are determined by the College Board. AP Exams are typically held during the month of May.

Exam fees are billed in the fall, typically due in November. The approximate price for each exam is between $100-$110. This includes the pricing set forth by the College Board plus an administrative fee. Fee assistance may be available for eligible students - contact the AP Coordinator Erin Benson for more information about this. Late registration, late exam fee payment, or absence from an exam may incur additional fees.

Accommodations for College Board exams may be requested with appropriate documentation. Please contact your student's counselor for more information. All accommodation requests must be made by January for the May exams.

Supporting Students and Partnering with Families

At Spellman, we understand that students succeed in AP courses when challenge is paired with meaningful support. Our teachers and counselors work together to help students manage demanding coursework, build strong study habits, and maintain healthy balance. Students are encouraged to seek help early, communicate openly with their teachers, attend extra support sessions when needed, and reflect honestly on their workload and wellbeing. We want every AP student to feel known, supported, and capable of growth.

Our partnership with families is an important part of this process. Parents and guardians play a vital role in helping students maintain routines and support learning by promoting healthy routines (sleep, nutrition, downtime), providing space for independent work, and establishing time for rest and personal interests. Open communication at home about stress, time management, and overall wellbeing helps students make responsible choices about their commitments. We encourage families to reach out to their child's teacher and counselor whenever concerns arise; early collaboration often leads to the best outcomes.

Together, we aim to create an environment where students can engage in rigorous coursework without feeling overwhelmed, and where academic challenge strengthens, not strains, their confidence and sense of purpose. The goal is not perfection, but steady growth supported by a strong network of caring adults at school and at home.

AP Courses Offered at Spellman for the 2026-2027 School Year

Spellman offers a broad and expanding range of AP courses. Offerings may vary based on student enrollment and staffing. Course descriptions, prerequisites, and requirements are found in the Program of Studies and as well as this guide.

AP Courses by Department 2025-2026

English • English 10: Seminar • English Language & Composition • English Literature & Composition **Math & Computer Science** • Precalculus • Calculus AB • Statistics • Computer Science Principles • Computer Science A **Science** • Environmental Science • Physics 1 • Chemistry • Biology	**History & Social Studies** • World History: Modern • U.S. History • European History • U.S. Government & Politics • Comparative Government & Politics • Human Geography • Psychology **Art** • Drawing

AP Offerings by Department 2026-2027

English • English 10: Seminar • English Language & Composition • English Literature & Composition **Math & Computer Science** • Precalculus • Calculus AB • Statistics • Computer Science Principles • Computer Science A • Cybersecurity • Business with Personal Finance **Science** • Environmental Science • Physics 1 • Chemistry • Biology	**History & Social Studies** • World History: Modern • U.S. History • European History • U.S. Government & Politics • Comparative Government & Politics • Human Geography • Psychology • Art History • African American Studies **Art** • 2-D Art and Design • 3-D Art and Design • Drawing **Interdisciplinary** • Research

AP English 10: Seminar

Course Description: AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies, and foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team. This course is closely aligned with 10 English, in that the students study many of the same texts. However, the course is significantly more challenging and is an excellent choice for students who want some experience before attempting a higher-level AP course.

This course will enable students to:

- Conduct scholarly, academic research.
- Synthesize information from multiple sources.
- Develop your own perspectives in written essays.
- Deliver group and individual presentations.
- Evaluate sources based on relevance and credibility.

Students who are successful in this course…

- Can break a larger task into smaller parts.
- Keep detailed, accurate notes on readings and research.
- Bring together multiple perspectives to synthesize your own conclusions.
- Revise and refine your writing through multiple drafts.
- Design and deliver effective presentations.

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Developing research skills that are essential to success in college.
- Working with a team to organize and execute complex tasks.
- Improving as a writer and public speaker.
- Exploring and evaluating solutions to real-world problems.

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Reading novels, plays, and poetry, and writing literary responses and essays.
- Developmental research and writing workshops
- Performance Task 1: Develop a team research question, write a 1,200 word individual research report, and deliver an 8-10 minute team presentation.
- Performance Task 2: Develop your own research question, write a 2,000 word individual written argument, and deliver a 6-8 minute individual presentation.
- AP-exam style readings and essays to prepare for the AP exam.

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Seminar Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Seminar
- English 10: AP Seminar
- AP Capstone Diploma Program

AP English Language & Composition

Course Description: As an equivalent to a first-year university course, AP English Language and Composition requires a commitment to independent learning and strong study skills. The focus of this course is on becoming a critical thinker and an individual aware of the world around him/her and capable of communicating one's ideas about it strongly and purposefully.

This course will enable students to:

- Think critically about the use and purpose of a writer's choices.
- Communicate your own ideas and arguments strongly and purposefully.
- Develop a wide-ranging vocabulary that you use appropriately and effectively.
- Move effectively through the stages of the writing process, while writing for a variety of purposes.
- Create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and personal experience.
- Analyze a wide range of readings, including argumentative and literary works.
- Produce writing equivalent to what is expected of a first-year university student.

Students who are successful in this course…

- Read extensively.
- Seek to improve as writers.
- Seek to understand different perspectives.
- Are willing to take a position and defend it.

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Becoming a more effective and stylistically mature writer.
- Understanding the importance of rhetoric, arts, and persuasion
- Being an informed and concerned citizen.
- Literature, film, music, history, current events, and journalism

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Readings, including novels, plays, speeches, essays, and poetry.
- Writing assignments ranging from 1-page assignments to extended essays.
- Presentations on famous speeches and speakers.
- Researched presentations and writing assignments.
- AP exam-style essays and multiple choice passages, to prepare for all aspects of the AP exam.
- Structured class and group discussions.

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP English Language and Composition
- AP English Language and Composition

AP English Literature & Composition

Course Description: Intended to prepare highly qualified students for the Advanced Placement Examination in English. Students will be required to analyze, discuss and critique major works of literature. The nature of the course requires that class size be limited. A reading list will be provided in the spring to allow the student time for initial reading during the summer. Course requirements include a term paper.

This course will enable students to:

- Read, analyze, and interpret complex literary texts through multiple critical lenses
- Develop defensible, thesis-driven arguments supported by textual evidence
- Write coherent, analytical essays modeled on AP English Literature free-response questions
- Recognize and explain how literary elements contribute to meaning

Students who are successful in this course…

- Read actively and independently, engaging with challenging texts
- Participate thoughtfully in discussion and written analysis
- Revise writing to improve clarity, sophistication, and argumentation
- Manage time effectively for sustained reading and writing tasks

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Exploring how literature reflects and shapes human experience
- Discussing complex themes, moral questions, and ambiguities
- Preparing for the rigor and expectations of the AP English Literature exam and college-level coursework

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Close reading, annotation, and discussion of prose, poetry, and drama
- Timed analytical writing aligned with AP free-response prompts
- Practice multiple-choice questions
- Literary analysis essays
- Creative group projects
- Socratic Seminars
- Interactive lectures

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP English Literature and Composition Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP English Literature and Composition
- AP English Literature and Composition

AP World History: Modern

Course Description: In AP World History: Modern, students investigate significant events, individuals, developments, and processes from 1200 to the present. Students develop and use the same skills, practices, and methods employed by historians: analyzing primary and secondary sources; developing historical arguments; making historical connections; and utilizing reasoning about comparison, causation, and continuity and change over time. The course provides six themes that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places: humans and the environment, cultural developments and interactions, governance, economic systems, social interactions and organization, and technology and innovation.

This course will enable students to:

- Analyze historical sources (primary and secondary)
- Make connections across time periods
- Craft historical arguments using reasoning about comparison, causation and continuity and change over time

Students who are successful in this course…

- Keep notes organized
- Complete daily readings
- Practice self advocacy
- Practice written skills

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Modern historical connections
- Creatively expressing their understanding of concepts
- World Geography
- Historical debates/discussions

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Interactive lecture
- Writing skill workshops
- Written and Multiple choice questions on AP classroom
- Persuasive presentations on historical topics
- Creative group projects
- Group debates
- Socratic Seminars

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP World History: Modern
- AP World History: Modern

AP United States History

Course Description: This course focuses on developing students' understanding of American History from 1491 to the present. Students investigate the content of United States history for significant events, individuals, developments, and processes throughout nine historical periods. Students develop and use thinking skills and methods employed by historians when they study the past, including analyzing primary and secondary sources, making historical comparisons and connections between causation/effects of events, continuity and change over time, chronological reasoning, and argumentation. The course is structured around several themes: American and national identity, migration and settlement, politics and power, work exchange and technology, America in the world, geography and environment, culture and society. Students explore the themes throughout the course in order to make connections between historical developments in different times and places.

This course will enable students to:

- By gaining a robust understanding of the American "story", students can better decipher history as it unfolds before their eyes.
- Confidently interact with history and use its lessons to overcome obstacles that may be personally presented to them.
- Work with those who may have a different world view in order to learn from different perspectives and experiences

Students who are successful in this course…

- Do not flinch at challenges
- Work well with others
- Self-advocate
- Are not afraid to hear/take on the role of different perspectives
- Retain the whole "story" from beginning to end

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Our nation's History
- Law
  Politics/government
- Philosophy
- Military history
- Teaching
- Earning college credit

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- College-style Lecture/discussion
- Socratic seminar
- Creative projects
- Debates
- Public speaking assignments
- Document analysis
- Essay writing

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP United States History Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP United States History
- AP United States History

AP United States Government & Politics

Course Description: In AP United States Government, students will have an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. Students cultivate their understanding of U.S. government and politics through analysis of data and text-based sources as they explore topics like constitutionalism, liberty, and order, civic participation in a representative democracy, competing policy-making interests, and methods of political analysis. The course aligns with the AP exam and will cover the five major units: foundations of American democracy, interactions among branches of government, civil liberties and civil rights, American political ideologies and beliefs, and political participation.

This course will enable students to:

- Understand the origins of the American governing institutions
- Understand the relationship between the branches of government
- Understand our civil liberties and civil rights
- Understand the workings of non-government institutions such as the media, interest groups, and political parties
- Evaluate the role of the citizen in our governing system.

Students who are successful in this course:

- Complete all readings and assignments
- Participate fully in class discussions and debates
- Keep an open mind and accept all points of view

Students who take this course and interested in:

- The origins and workings of our government
- Current events and how they relate to our government institutions
- An understanding of our political culture
- An understanding in how their political views develop
- Debate and discussion

Typical activities, assignments, assessments include:

- Engaging class discussions and debates
- Group projects
- AP Classroom work
- Unit exams and quizzes using actual APGAP exam questions

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP United States Government and Politics Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP United States Government and Politics
- AP United States Government and Politics

AP European History

Course Description: The AP course in Modern European History is for motivated students who demonstrate knowledge of basic chronology and of major events and trends from the High Renaissance Period (1450) to the present. This course will introduce students to cultural, economic, political, and social developments that played a fundamental role in shaping the world. Students will learn about and make connections between various themes in Modern European History, and demonstrate skill in analyzing historical evidence and historical interpretation. Students' mastery of content and ability to think analytically will be assessed in a variety of ways, including tests, research papers, free response question essays (FRQs), document-based question essays (DBQs), quizzes, and presentations.

This course will enable students to:

- Know key events from history in order to create a better picture of their place in human history
- Develop more confidence in asking questions
- Garner a better understanding and patience for opposing viewpoints
- Compare historical events across time periods
- Craft historical arguments using reasoning about comparison, causation and continuity and change over time
- Contextualize history in order to better appreciate and learn from it rather than simply dismiss it for not abiding by modern standards

Students who are successful in this course…

- Are attentive during class lectures -
- Know the "characters" and REMEMBER THE STORY!
- Participate regularly during class discussion
- Prepare for class seminar
- Take accountability during collaborative assignments
- Think outside the box/are creative and think for themselves
- Lead when given the chance to do so
- Are not afraid to ask questions or of making mistakes

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Learning from the past
- The "drama" of history
- Modern historical connections
- Debate/public speaking
- Artistic expression
- The human experience from previous generations of peoples
- Understanding the development of the modern world
- Art history/how art and history are connected

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Interactive lecture
- Socratic seminar
- Written and Multiple choice questions on AP classroom
- Persuasive presentations on historical topics
- Creative group projects
- Art projects

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP European History Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP European History
- AP European History

AP Psychology

Course Description: As outlined by the College Board, Advanced Placement Psychology introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of the human mind as well as of other animals. Students will be exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology (neuroscience, development, learning, personality, etc.). Students will also learn the various methods that psychologists use in their research and study. This course requires independent reading, projects, hands-on experiments, and extensive class participation. Emphasis will be placed on the ability to think, read, and write in a critical fashion.

This course will enable students to:

- Understand how the science of psychology is studied and reported- or misreported
- Use information learned in class to apply in their daily lives- ex. Study techniques for memory/studying
- Gain a more full understanding of how our brains interact with the world around us, and how external and internal events craft our realities

Students who are successful in this course…

- Take comprehensive notes and review information on their own time
- Participate daily in class, in either formal discussions or informal Q & A
- Complete daily homework assignments and stay on top of the workload

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Social Work- psychology, education, nursing, social services
- The human brain- how it works, and what is going on inside their head
- Challenging themselves with an AP level course

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Interactive lecture
- Daily practice worksheets/practice activities
- Group discussions/Socratic seminars
- AP Style multiple choice and writing tests

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Psychology Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Psychology
- AP Psychology

AP Comparative Government and Politics

Course Description: AP Comparative Government and Politics is an introductory college-level course in comparative government and politics. The course uses a comparative approach to examine the political structures; policies; and political, economic, and social challenges of six selected countries: China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Students cultivate their understanding of comparative government and politics through analysis of data and text-based sources as they explore topics like power and authority, legitimacy and stability, democratization, internal and external forces, and methods of political analysis.

This course will enable students to:

- Compare the political systems of the course's required countries
- Compare the political values the course's required countries
- Understand the work of a political scientist
- Compare the political systems of the course's required countries to the political system of the United States

Students who are successful in this course:

- Complete all readings and assignments
- Participate fully in class discussions and debates
- Keep an open mind when discussing the values, ideologies, and systems of the course's required countries

Students who take this course are interested in:

- Examining the political systems of other countries
- Examining the political cultures and values of other countries
- Understanding America's role in the world in regards to the course's required countries.
- Debate and discussion

Typical activities, assignments, assessments include:

- Engaging class discussions and debates
- Group projects
- AP Classroom work
- Unit exams and quizzes using actual APCOMP exam questions

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Comparative Government and Politics Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Comparative Government and Politics
- AP Comparative Government and Politics

AP Art History

Course Description: Students will explore the history of art across the globe from prehistory to the present. They will analyze works of art through observation, discussion, reading, and research, and develop skills in: Evaluating works of art from different eras and cultures, identifying connections to artistic traditions, styles, or practices in a work of art, and developing a theory about the meaning of a work of art and explaining and supporting your interpretation.

This course will enable students to:

- Develop a strong understanding of how art, and visual culture has functioned within social, political, historical, and economic contexts
- Analyze works of art and architecture from diverse cultures, time periods, and geographic regions using appropriate art historical terminology
- Construct well-supported arguments about the context and meaning of art works using both visual analysis, and primary and secondary sources
- Recognize how art and architecture has both shaped and reflected the human experience

Students who are successful in this course…

- Manage a substantial workload that includes memorizing and identifying the AP 250 (250 required art works)
- Enjoy looking closely and forming arguments based on visual analysis incorporating rigorous historical analysis
- Think critically about the relationships between the forms art takes, the functions it has, the content/ story it tells, and context it emerges from

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Exploring how art reflects and influences society, politics, religion, and cultural values across global civilizations
- Developing visual literacy and analytical skills that are useful for literary analysis, history, other humanities (economics, social sciences), as well as those who might be interested in fields like, museum studies, architecture, or studio art
- Becoming familiar with the global history of art: western art history (European) as well as artistic traditions from Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Writing assignments that employ visual and contextual / comparative analysis of art works
- Research projects (may research: artistic techniques, patronage, cultural context, critical interpretations)
- Museum visits that include observational sketching and analytical writing
- Presentations
- Creation of visual timelines
- Socratic Seminars and Structured Debates

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Art History Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Art History
- AP Art History

AP Human Geography

Course Description: AP Human Geography is an introductory college-level human geography course. Students cultivate their understanding of human geography through data and geographic analyses as they explore topics like patterns and spatial organization, human impacts and interactions with their environment, and spatial processes and societal changes.

This course will enable students to:

- Understand the numerous ways in which to evaluate a country
- Analyze human migration patterns
- Evaluate the impact of governmental policies on birth rates, immigration, work force, and more
- Compare geographic implications across countries and areas

Students who are successful in this course…

- Take comprehensive notes and review information on their own time
- Are relatively up-to-date on current world events/interested in learning more about the world
- Have a baseline understanding of world geography and impact of locations across the world
- Participate daily in class, in either formal discussions or informal Q & A
- Complete daily homework assignments and stay on top of the workload

Students who take this course are interested in…

- World Geography
- Foreign Policy
- A broader understanding of how to study and look at the world
- Challenging themselves with an AP level course

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include..

- Interactive lecture
- Daily practice worksheets/practice activities
- Country Exposés
- AP Style multiple choice and writing tests

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Human Geography Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Human Geography
- AP Human Geography

NEW: AP African American Studies

Course Description: AP African American Studies is an interdisciplinary course that examines the diversity of African American experiences through direct encounters with varied sources. Students explore key topics that extend from early African kingdoms to the ongoing challenges and achievements of the contemporary moment. Given the interdisciplinary character of African American Studies, students in the course will develop skills across multiple fields, with an emphasis on developing historical, literary, visual, and data analysis skills. This course foregrounds a study of the diversity of Black communities in the United States within the broader context of Africa and the African diaspora.

This course will enable students to:

- Analyze the diverse experiences, contributions, and perspectives of African Americans from the pre-colonial period through the present
- Examine the social, political, economic, and cultural forces that have shaped African American history and communities
- Develop critical thinking skills through the study of primary and secondary sources
- Make connections between historical events and contemporary issues affecting African American / Black communities
- Engage with interdisciplinary approaches drawing from history, literature, political science, geography, and the arts

Students who are successful in this course…

- Demonstrate strong analytical reading and writing skills
- Actively participate in discussions about complex and sometimes sensitive historical and contemporary topics
- Manage a rigorous schedule of reading and writing assignments
- Think critically about multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events
- Synthesize information from various sources to develop well-supported arguments

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Understanding the African American experience and its central role in American history
- Exploring questions of identity, culture, social justice, and civic engagement
- Preparing for college-level coursework in history, ethnic studies, sociology, political science, or related fields
- Developing skills in critical analysis, primary and secondary source research, and academic writing

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Analysis of primary source documents (speeches, letters, legal documents, and visual materials)
- Research projects
- Socratic seminars and structured debates
- Essay writing in various formats (document-based questions, long essays, argumentative essays)

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP African American Studies
- AP African American Studies

AP Precalculus

Course Description: The curriculum for this course is based on the College Board Standards. Topics include Polynomial and Rational Functions, Exponential and Logarithmic Functions, Trigonometric and Polar Functions, and Functions Involving Parameters, Vectors, and Matrices. This course is recommended for students planning to pursue a mathematics-based major; engineering, health, or science studies. The course is designed for highly qualified students with substantial previous Algebra experience and an aptitude for Mathematics with intentions to proceed to AP Calculus or Calculus Honors.

This course will enable students to:

- Model real-world situations using a variety of functions
- Analyze and interpret graphs, tables, equations, and verbal descriptions
- Translate between different representations of the same function
- Work fluently with trigonometry and function transformations
- Understand rates of change and use them to interpret real data
- Communicate mathematical thinking clearly and logically
- Build conceptual readiness for calculus topics such as limits and derivatives

Students who are successful in this course…

- Have a strong foundation in algebra, geometry, and basic trigonometry
- Enjoy logical thinking and structured problem-solving
- Are willing to persist through challenging, multi-step problems
- Manage time effectively and complete work consistently
- Show curiosity, attention to detail, and a growth mindset

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Preparing for AP Calculus, AP Statistics, and other advanced math courses
- Building skills essential for STEM fields such as engineering, science, computer science, and/or economics
- Strengthening analytical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning skills
- Understanding concepts rather than memorization

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Regular homework and problem-solving practice
- Projects and applications that connect math to real-world situations
- Quizzes and cumulative tests that assess both skills and understanding
- Explaining reasoning and justifying answers

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Precalculus Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Precalculus
- AP Precalculus

AP Calculus AB

Course Description: AP Calculus AB is a rigorous, introductory college-level calculus course that develops students' understanding of differential and integral calculus. Students explore concepts of change, limits, and the analysis of functions through real-world problems represented graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally. Emphasis is placed on using definitions and theorems to build logical arguments, justify conclusions, and strengthen mathematical reasoning. This course prepares students for the AP Calculus AB exam and for continued study in mathematics, science, engineering, and related fields.

This course will enable students to:

- Analyze rates of change, motion, growth, and decay
- Solve optimization and accumulation problems
- Interpret and create graphs to understand mathematical behavior
- Apply calculus concepts to real-world situations
- Explain their thinking clearly using correct mathematical reasoning

Students who are successful in this course…

- Have strong algebra and precalculus backgrounds
- Are comfortable with functions, graphs, and trigonometry
- Are willing to work consistently and manage a heavier workload
- Show persistence, responsibility, and a growth mindset

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Preparing for college-level math and STEM majors
- Earning college credit or placement (based on AP exam score and college policy)
- Strengthening critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Engineering, science, computer science, economics, or other math-based fields, as well as students seeking academic challenge

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Regular homework and practice
- Quizzes, unit tests, and AP-style free-response questions
- A strong emphasis on showing work and explaining reasoning
- Practice exam(s)

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Calculus AB Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Calculus AB
- AP Calculus AB

AP Statistics

Course Description:The purpose of the AP course in statistics is to introduce students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Students are exposed to four broad conceptual themes:

1) Exploring Data: Describing patterns and departures from patterns
2) Sampling and Experimentation: Planning and conducting a study
3) Anticipating Patterns: Exploring random phenomena using probability and simulation
4) Statistical Inference: Estimating population parameters and testing hypotheses

This course will enable students to:

- Analyze and interpret data using graphical and numerical methods
- Draw conclusions and make predictions using statistical inference
- Design and conduct experiments to collect data responsibly
- Use probability models to understand random phenomena

Students who are successful in this course…

- Stay organized and keep up with daily practice and review
- Are comfortable working with real-world data and context-based problems
- Are willing to think critically and explain their reasoning
- Persist through multi-step problems, even when answers are not immediately clear

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Strengthening problem-solving and analytical thinking skills
- Learning how to evaluate claims made using statistics
- Understanding how data is used to make decisions

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- AP style multiple-choice and free-response questions
- Analyzing data sets using graphs, tables, and statistical software or calculators
- Collaborative in-class activities and review
- Formal assessments
- Projects that require data collection, analysis, and written reflection

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Statistics Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Statistics
- AP Statistics

AP Computer Science Principles

Course Description: AP Computer Science Principles introduces students to the breadth of the field of computer science. In this course, students will learn to design and evaluate solutions and to apply computer science to solve problems through the development of algorithms and programs. They will incorporate abstraction into programs and use data to discover new knowledge. Students will also explain how computing innovations and computing systems, including the Internet, work, explore their potential impacts, and contribute to a computing culture that is collaborative and ethical. It is important to note that the AP Computer Science Principles course does not have a designated programming language. Teachers have the flexibility to choose a programming language(s) that is most appropriate for their students to use in the classroom.

This course will enable students to:

- Understand the big picture of how computer science shapes our world!
- Learn to design and evaluate solutions to problems
- Develop algorithms and programs using a programming language
- Work with data to uncover new insights
- Explore how the internet and other computing innovations actually work, consider their real-world impacts, and contribute to building a computing culture that's collaborative, ethical, and inclusive

Students who are successful in this course…

- Are collaborative problem-solvers who enjoy working with others to tackle challenges they care about.
- Think creatively about how technology can address real problems
- Are comfortable learning through hands-on exploration
- Are thoughtful about the ethical and social implications of technology

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Understanding how technology impacts our daily lives
- Being creators, not just consumers, of technology
- How the Internet works, how apps and programs are built, and how computing can solve meaningful problems
- Making technology more accessible and ethical, and many are excited to explore whether computer science might be part of their future—whether or not they've ever programmed before!

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Developing and testing your own algorithms and programs
- Collaborating with classmates to solve problems
- Analyzing and evaluating code
- Exploring how computing systems like the Internet function
- Investigating the potential impacts of computing innovations on society, using data to discover new knowledge, and engaging in discussions about responsible and ethical computing practices
- The class culminates in a creative programming project that students submit for the AP exam

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Computer Science Principles Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Computer Science Principles
- AP Computer Science Principles
- About AP Computer Science Courses

AP Computer Science A

Course Description: AP Computer Science A introduces students to computer science through programming. Fundamental topics in this course include the design of solutions to problems, the use of data structures to organize large sets of data, the development and implementation of algorithms to process data and discover new information, the analysis of potential solutions, and the ethical and social implications of computing systems. The course emphasizes object-oriented programming and design using the Java programming language.

This course will enable students to:

- Design creative solutions to real-world problems
- Develop and implement algorithms to process data
- Organize information using data structures
- Think critically about the ethical and social impact of technology
- Gain hands-on programming skills in Java while learning to analyze, test, and refine your code like professional developers do!

Students who are successful in this course…

- Are problem-solvers who enjoy tackling challenges from multiple angles
- Aren't afraid to learn from mistakes
- Are willing to experiment
- Collaborate well with others during lab activities
- Think logically about how to break down complex problems into manageable steps
- Are curious about how programming can be used to discover new information and solve meaningful problems

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Understanding how technology works behind the scenes
- Creating their own programs and solutions
- Computer science- they are excited to learn programming, and thoughtful about how computing impacts society.
- Considering careers or fields where computational thinking is valuable, such as technology, engineering, game theory, and life sciences. Others simply want to develop valuable problem-solving skills for college and beyond, or apply it to a specialized interest.

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Writing Java programs to solve specific problems
- Completing at least 20 hours of hands-on lab experiences (both individual and collaborative)
- Designing and testing algorithms
- Debugging code to identify and fix errors
- Comparing different solution approaches
- Working with data structures to organize and process information.
- There will also be opportunities for artistic/graphic design. You'll also engage in discussions about the ethical implications of computing systems and complete assignments that mirror the types of problems you'll encounter on the AP exam.

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Computer Science A Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Computer Science A
- AP Computer Science A
- About AP Computer Science Courses

AP Chemistry

Course Description: AP Chemistry provides students with a college level foundation to support future studies and advanced coursework in chemistry and related fields. Students cultivate their understanding through a series of nine inquiry based units, including topics such as atomic structure, chemical and physical properties of elements and compounds, chemical reactions, kinetics, thermochemistry, equilibrium, acid and base reactions and electrochemistry. There is a significant laboratory component to successfully completing the course. Professors often request to view AP laboratory notebooks before granting full lab credit at the college level.

This course will enable students to:

- Use mathematical skills to solve problems related to chemical reaction rates, heat change, stoichiometric changes, pH, equilibrium shifts, etc.
- Develop problem solving skills, utilizing many tools, processes and formulas learned in class
- Have a deeper understanding of the importance of chemistry in terms of its relevance in manufacturing, industry and health
- Analyze data and draw conclusions from the data
- Critically analyze lab procedures, results and errors and make adjustments to improve on future runs
- Enhance their perseverance and ability to overcome challenges

Students who are successful in this course…

- Excellent study habits
- An ability to view and solve problems by approaching them from a variety of angles
- Have a willingness to reach out and seek extra help when needed. The course material is cumulative and it is important to successfully master key concepts as the course proceeds
- Have a solid mathematical foundation in algebra, logarithms, graphing and analysis, unit conversions, scientific notation and exponents

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Future college majors in medicine, engineering, nursing, physics, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, chemical engineering, and other related science fields that require a solid foundation in the periodic table and the substances that come from it.

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Typical students will have one hour of homework per night.
    - Multiple choice problems similar to AP exam, FRQ related to AP exam and its style, Video notes, Laboratory reports
- Following unit lectures in class and taking notes
- There is usually one major in-class lab for each unit (a full lab report is required at the data collection completion point for each lab)
- There is one exam at the end of each of the nine units covered

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Chemistry Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Chemistry
- AP Chemistry

AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based

Course Description: AP Physics 1 is an algebra-based, introductory college-level physics course. Students cultivate their understanding of physics through classroom study, in-class activities, and hands-on, inquiry-based laboratory work as they explore concepts like systems, field force interactions, change, conservation, and waves. Limited Enrollment.

This course will enable students to:

- Think and work like physicists, not just perform calculations
- Explain physical phenomena using fundamental principles of Newtonian mechanics
- Apply models (free-body diagrams, energy bar charts, and motion graphs) to describe and predict the behavior of physical systems.
- Reason qualitatively and quantitatively about motion, forces, interactions, and conservation laws.

Students who are successful in this course…

- Use mathematical relationships (algebra, ratios, slopes, areas under curves) to support physical reasoning.
- Develop and justify claims using evidence and scientific reasoning.
- Communicate physics ideas clearly, both verbally and in writing.

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Understanding how the physical world works, especially motion, forces, energy, and interactions they see in everyday life.
- Solving challenging, real-world problems that require logical reasoning rather than memorization.
- Hands-on experimentation, data collection, and making sense of evidence through graphs and models.
- Developing critical-thinking skills and learning how to justify answers with clear scientific reasoning.
- Preparing for STEM pathways, including engineering, physics, computer science, life sciences, and related fields.

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Interactive lecture
- Practice tests
- Laboratory experiments
- Data analysis
- Group work
- Written and Multiple choice questions on AP classroom
- Persuasive presentations on problem solutions

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based Course and Exam Description
- AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based

AP Biology

Course Description: This is a college-level laboratory course geared to the intensive study of cells, energy and enzymes, taxonomy, genetics, botany, and ecology. Research/ independent work is an integral part of this course. The curriculum for this course is based on the College Board Standards. Limited enrollment.

This course will enable students to:

- Develop a deep understanding of core biological concepts including evolution, cellular processes, genetics, information flow, energy transfer, and biological systems
- Apply scientific reasoning and quantitative skills to analyze data, interpret graphs, and evaluate experimental results
- Design and conduct inquiry-based laboratory investigations aligned with AP Biology science practices
- Communicate scientific ideas clearly through written analyses, data-driven arguments, and collaborative discussions
- Prepare for the AP Biology exam through mastery of content, lab skills, and exam-style questioning

Students who are successful in this course…

- Are highly motivated, organized, and willing to engage in challenging academic work
- Demonstrate strong reading comprehension and analytical writing skills
- Persist through complex problems and use feedback to improve understanding
- Actively participate in laboratory investigations and collaborative learning
- Are prepared to manage a rigorous workload comparable to an introductory college biology course

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Understanding how living systems function at the molecular, cellular, organismal, and ecological levels
- Pursuing future studies or careers in science, medicine, health professions, biotechnology, or related fields
- Engaging in hands-on laboratory work and scientific inquiry
- Developing critical thinking skills through real-world biological applications

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Inquiry-based laboratory investigations and experimental design projects
- Data analysis, graphing, and interpretation of biological experiments
- Reading and annotating college-level scientific texts and primary literature excerpts
- Written lab reports, free-response questions, and scientific argumentation tasks
- Unit exams, cumulative assessments, and AP-style multiple-choice and free-response questions

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Biology Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Biology
- AP Biology

AP Environmental Science

Course Description: This college level course is a challenging and comprehensive program designed for highly motivated students who wish to engage in college-level environmental science coursework. Aligned with the College Board's AP Environmental Science curriculum, this course emphasizes scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the complex interactions between living organisms and their environment.

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Environmental Science Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Environmental Science
- AP Environmental Science

AP Art Studio

2-D Art and Design Course Description: In this course, students will develop their 2-D skills through materials and processes such as graphic design, photography, collage, printmaking, fashion illustration, and others. You'll create artwork that reflects your own ideas and skills and what you've learned. Students must demonstrate proficiency in mastering the arrangement of the elements and principles of design to create strong compositions while exploring a concentration about a particular concept or idea utilizing their own "voice". Extensive work outside of class time is a requirement. Research and reflective writing are integral to this course. The program allows colleges to evaluate students' work by awarding college-level credit and/or placement. The course can also serve students who want to prepare for college, art school or a career in art.

3-D Art and Design Course Description: For this visual arts course students must demonstrate proficiency with 3-D skills in materials and processes, such as sculpture, architectural rendering and models, metal work, ceramics, glass work, and others. You'll create artwork that reflects your own ideas and skills and what you've learned. Extensive work outside of class time is a requirement. Research and reflective writing are integral to this course. The program allows colleges to evaluate students' work by awarding college-level credit and/or placement. The course can also serve students who want to prepare for college, art school or a career in art.

Drawing Course Description: AP Drawing is an introductory college-level drawing course. Students refine and apply drawing skills to ideas they develop throughout the course. Extensive work outside of class time is a requirement. Research and reflective writing are integral to this course. The program allows colleges to evaluate students' work by awarding college-level credit and/or placement. The course can also serve students who want to prepare for college, art school or a career in art.

This course will enable students to:

- Develop a sustained, cohesive body of work.
- Explore a wide variety of media and techniques.
- Learn and refine studio practices: planning, experimenting, revising, and documenting artistic decisions over time.
- Strengthen visual problem-solving, composition, craftsmanship, and creative risk-taking.
- Communicate their work's intent and meaning.

Students who are successful in this course…

- Practice good time management
- Learn and refine studio practices
- Keep a reflective sketchbook with documentation.
- Articulate themes, intent, and concepts through artist statements.

Students who take this course are interested in…

- Making art regularly and developing a strong studio practice.
- Exploring a range of artistic materials and techniques.
- Expressing personal ideas, identity, and perspective through visual work.
- Experimenting, taking creative risks, and pushing technical boundaries.
- Considering careers or further study in art related fields.

Typical activities, assignments, and assessments include…

- Sustained studio work
- Media experiments and skill builders
- Sketchbooks and process notebooks
- Critiques and peer review
- Selecting, photographing, and sequencing works
- Documentation of sustained investigation guided by inquiry

Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Art and Design Course and Exam Description
- AP 2-D Art and Design
- AP 3-D Art and Design
- AP Drawing
- About the AP Art and Design Program

NEW: AP Research
Course Description: AP Research, the second course in the AP Capstone experience, allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of individual interest. Students design, plan, and implement a yearlong investigation to address a research question. Through this inquiry, they further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by learning research methodology, employing ethical research practices, and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Students reflect on their skill development, document their processes, and curate the artifacts of their scholarly work through a process and reflection portfolio. The course culminates in an academic paper of 4,000–5,000 words (accompanied by a performance, exhibit, or product where applicable) and a presentation with an oral defense.
Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Research Course and Exam Description
- AP Course Overview - AP Research
- AP Research
- AP Capstone Diploma Program

NEW: AP Cybersecurity
Course Description: AP Cybersecurity is a broad introduction to the field of cybersecurity that aligns closely with a standard first year college introductory cybersecurity course. Students learn about common threats and vulnerabilities, and how those combine to create risk. Students study the ways that individuals and organizations manage risk, and how risk can be mitigated through a defense-in-depth strategy. Students explore specific vulnerabilities, attacks, mitigations, and detection measures across a variety of domains including physical spaces, computer networks, devices, and data and applications. Throughout the course, students consider the impact of cybersecurity on individuals, organizations, governments and societies.
Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Cybersecurity Course Framework
- AP Cybersecurity
- AP Cybersecurity Credential
- About AP Career Kickstart

NEW: AP Business and Personal Finance
Course Description: AP Business with Personal Finance is a rigorous course aligned with a college-level introduction to business. Students explore key business disciplines including entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, accounting, and management through real-world application, case studies, and project-based learning. The course also emphasizes personal financial literacy, with students learning and applying the National Standards for Personal Financial Education from the Council for Economic Education. Throughout the course, students develop essential business, professional, and leadership skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and ethical decision-making, preparing them for college, careers, and informed financial independence.
Resources for Students and Families to review:

- AP Business with Personal Finance Course Framework
- AP Business with Personal Finance Exam Overview
- AP Business and Personal Finance
- AP Business with Personal Finance Credential
- About AP Career Kickstart

Frequently Asked Questions

What is AP?
The Advanced Placement (AP) Program enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. The AP Program develops college-level courses that high schools can choose to offer and corresponding AP Exams that are administered once a year. The AP Program is run by the College Board. The content and workload of these courses is demanding, and expectations are high for the students, teachers, and Spellman in general.

What are AP exams?
Each AP course culminates with the students taking a global examination. These exams are always scheduled for the first few weeks of May. The dates and times are scheduled by the College Board so that students across the world are taking a specific exam in the same time frame. AP Exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Many U.S. colleges grant credit and/or advanced placement for scores of 3 and above.

Spellman students are required to take the exam. Students may not opt out or be exempt from an AP exam. There is a fee associated with each exam. The approximate price for each exam is between $100-$110. Fee assistance may be available for eligible students. The student/student's family is responsible for paying the exam fee.

Why should a student take an AP course?
By taking an AP course and exam, students can develop valuable skills that will help them to be successful throughout high school and prepare them for a smooth transition to college.

- Research shows that students who take AP are better prepared for—and more likely to—attend college and graduate on time (than academically similar students who don't take AP).
- Taking the AP Exam and getting a qualifying score helps students save time and money by earning college credit or advanced placement, which allows them to skip introductory college courses. In fact, 2 out of 3 AP students earn some college credit in high school.

Learn more about the benefits of the AP Program here.

What are the expectations for AP students at Spellman?
AP students are expected to proactively engage in a challenging, fast-paced environment. Much more time and effort is required for these classes than our other Honors level classes. AP students must have strong work habits, study skills, and time management strategies in and out of class. Work may include, but is not limited to, independent reading, writing, research, and projects.

AP students are expected to meet with the teacher and/or classmates outside of school hours. AP students may be required to attend morning/after school meetings and study sessions. AP students are often required to learn portions of the material on their own time. Work may be assigned in the summer prior to the start of school and during school vacations. AP students are expected to monitor their academic progress and proactively seek assistance and support when the work becomes difficult.

Students are not allowed to drop an AP course once they are enrolled. Students and parents/guardians sign an AP Course Contract acknowledging the rigors and expectations of AP enrollment.

What is AP Potential?
If you took the SAT®, PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, or PSAT™ 8/9, your Score Report will provide you with information about which AP® courses you're likely to do well in. In your personalized view of AP Potential™, you'll see which courses are offered at your school and which classes match a future major that may interest you.

AP Potential can help you discover your strengths. You may not realize that you're ready to take an AP course and that you have the likelihood to succeed in it. Even if a course isn't your strongest subject, you may still do well in the class. AP Potential can help you decide which courses would be the best fit for you. Many high schools begin planning student schedules in early spring for the upcoming school year. Speak with your counselor to explore all your possibilities.

AP Potential is just one measure of your likelihood to succeed in AP courses. Other factors, including your grades, motivation, and recommendations from your teacher, can show you're ready for AP.

It is important to note:

- A student may meet the prerequisites of other AP courses not identified in their AP Potential profile.
- The College Board may note potential for a student in AP courses that are not offered at Spellman.
- The AP Potential identification program does not indicate automatic acceptance into an AP course.
- A student may choose not to pursue an AP course. Genuine interest in a class is a strong predictor of success and therefore students should not feel pressured to elect AP courses that do not appeal to them.

What is the AP Capstone Diploma Program?
AP Capstone™ is a College Board program that equips students with the independent research, collaborative teamwork, and communication skills that are increasingly valued by colleges. AP Capstone comprises two AP courses—AP Seminar and AP Research—and is designed to complement and enhance the discipline-specific study in other AP courses. Learn more here.

What is AP Career KickStart?
AP Career Kickstart expands the AP Program by offering high schools a new set of career courses and exams. College Board is partnering with employers, college faculty, and high school educators to design courses that can lead to college credit and employer-endorsed credentials, and prepare students for high-demand jobs. Learn more here.

What are the potential drawbacks of taking AP courses?
Students should give very careful consideration to their ability to balance academic, athletic, extracurricular, and personal responsibilities, as well as their health and wellbeing before enrolling in an AP course. AP course work can be very stressful and tiring. The extra time required for these courses can have an impact on time spent on work for other classes.

While students do receive a GPA boost for enrolling in AP courses, they must understand that the additional boost does not always balance the added difficulty of the course. Students often find that their overall grade point average is much harder to maintain while enrolled in AP courses.

How does a student enroll in an AP course?
Students request AP courses through the normal course selection process. They are strongly advised to consult with their counselor, teacher, and department chairs to choose the AP courses that will help them meet their academic goals. Students must meet prerequisites in order to be approved for enrollment. Due to the rigorous nature of AP courses, Spellman recommends that AP students limit their enrollment to no more than 3 AP courses per academic year.

Do AP exam scores affect a student's grade or GPA?
No, course grades are determined by class performance. AP scores may influence college credit.

How many AP courses are enough?
There's no specific number of AP courses that's right for all students. Every student is unique. Students and families should talk to their teachers and school counselor to help them decide if they are ready to take AP courses and how many they should take.

The College Board recently completed a study that reviewed the relationship between the number of APs, AP performance, and college outcomes. This research shows that taking 5 AP courses (total in a high school career) and doing well on the exams is the optimal number for students in terms of college success. Learn more here.

Who should take AP courses?
All Spellman students are eligible to take AP courses if they have met the prerequisites for the course. We encourage students to be highly motivated, have excellent time management and study skills, and have the ability to self-advocate.

If a student took the SAT®, PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, or PSAT™ 8/9, their score report also provides them with information about which AP courses they may be successful in. They'll see which courses are offered at Spellman and which ones match a future major of interest. Learn more about AP Potential.

Can students take AP courses in 9th and 10th grade?
Yes, as long as they are prepared to complete college-level work. Spellman offers AP World History: Modern to 9th grade students. English 10: AP Seminar, AP United States History, AP Computer Science Principles, AP African American Studies, and AP Business with Personal Finance is offered to 10th grade students.

What if a student does not earn a 3 or higher on the exam? Will it negatively impact their college applications if they do not do well in an AP course?
No. Just completing an AP course and exam shows their dedication to college-level work, and colleges like to see students who challenge themselves. Spellman gives an additional GPA boost for AP courses because AP coursework is college-level work.

Do students need to take AP courses to get into colleges? Is it true that the more AP courses a student takes, the more likely they are to get into prestigious colleges and universities?
No, students do not need to take AP courses to get into colleges. There are many things that colleges and universities take into consideration when reviewing applicants. Read more below from MIT and Stanford.

From MIT: Let me state clearly: we do not admit students solely because of their AP courses/scores. There is no minimum or recommended number of AP courses. AP scores are not part of an admission formula. We're not simply going to look at a weighted GPA and throw everything else out. Challenge yourself in a way that is reasonable for you, while making sure that your course load provides you with material that keeps you excited and engaged, and that you have balance in your life. What we are saying is that, despite what you may have heard, college admissions isn't a game of whoever has the most APs, wins.

From Stanford: We want to be clear that this is not a case of "whoever has the most APs wins." Instead, we look for thoughtful, eager and highly engaged students who will make a difference at Stanford and in the world beyond. We expect that these students have taken high school course loads of reasonable and appropriate challenge in the context of their schools.

What are Spellman AP Ambassadors?
The purpose of Spellman's AP Ambassador Program is to grow participation, performance, and diversity in our AP program. Our ambassadors help recruit and promote AP courses at Spellman as well as organize study groups and sessions for AP exams. Learn more here.

Cardinal Spellman High School

AP Course Contract

Student Name: _____ Year of Graduation: _____

Student Email: _____

AP Course(s): _____

Advanced Placement (AP) courses at Spellman are exceptionally rigorous and come with unique requirements and expectations. The purpose of the form is to ensure the student's and families' awareness of those expectations and the very specific commitments associated with AP enrollment. Student and parent/guardian signatures indicate understanding of the following:

- AP courses require strong work habits, study skills, and time management skills in and out of class. Work may include, but is not limited to, independent reading, writing, research, and projects.
- Students may be required to attend mandatory class meetings outside of the regularly scheduled class period. Work may be assigned in the summer before the school year begins as well as during school vacations.
- Grades may be lower than a student is used to. Struggling and learning how to persevere through academic challenging content is often part of the AP experience.

Student Commitment: As an AP student at Spellman I understand that:

1. AP courses are college-level classes, and that the workload will be more rigorous than college prep and honors level courses.
2. I am expected to complete assignments on time, stay engaged in class, and seek help when I need it.
3. Consistent attendance is essential for success.
4. I will manage my time responsibly, balancing AP coursework with extracurricular activities, family responsibilities, and personal wellbeing.
5. I will uphold Spellman's standards of academic integrity, submitting my own work and collaborating only when permitted.
6. I am required to take the AP exam for this course and pay the associated exam fee.
7. I will communicate with my teacher and counselor if I experience academic difficulty, stress, or need support.

I acknowledge the rigorous nature of an AP course. I am making a commitment to putting my best efforts into success in this course, even in the face of challenges. I understand and agree that I will not be removed from this class once enrolled.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Commitment: As a parent/guardian of a Spellman AP Student, I understand that:

1. AP courses are demanding, and my child may need encouragement, structure, and consistent routines to manage their workload.
2. I will help monitor my child's wellbeing, including sleep, stress, and overall balance.
3. I will encourage my student to seek help early when challenges arise.
4. I will communicate with teachers or my child's counselor when concerns emerge.
5. I understand that AP exam fees are our responsibility and due in the fall.
6. I support the commitment my child is making to complete this AP course and associated AP exam.

I acknowledge the rigorous nature of my child's enrollment in this AP course. I have discussed the commitments listed above with my child and I understand my child will not be removed from class once enrolled.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____