

Frequently Asked Questions

(The Course Catalog can be found on our website at: <http://www.scgssm.org/residential/academics/course-catalog-and-faqs>)

1. How many courses do I need each semester?

All students must have a minimum of six courses per semester. Juniors will also take two one-hour seminar courses per semester. For seniors, Research counts as one of your six courses during the fall semester.

2. What if I want to overload on courses?

Overloading means taking more than six courses in a semester. Juniors are not allowed to overload during the fall semester and may request to overload during the spring semester only if their grades are above 90 and they receive approval from their advisor and the VP for Academic Affairs. Seniors must seek approval from their advisor. When considering an overload, it is important to consider the demands of an additional course. It is very important for college admissions that you perform well in the courses you take. Taking more courses and not performing well in all courses is not advisable.

3. What science courses do I need?

It is important that you have a solid foundation in the core sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Therefore, you must take a full credit (one year) in each of these three sciences at GSSM. However, if you have taken an AP course in one of these areas prior to enrolling at GSSM, then you may take higher level courses in that area of science or in one of the other two core science areas. You need at least three lab sciences during high school to graduate with a SC diploma and at least two lab sciences during your two years at GSSM to graduate with a GSSM diploma.

4. Which Chemistry course should I take, Principles of Chemistry or AP Chemistry?

You can take either Principles of Chemistry or AP Chemistry as a junior or senior. Taking Principles of Chemistry as a junior does not preclude you from also taking AP Chemistry as a senior. If you have already taken one year of high school Chemistry, you may opt to take AP Chemistry. If you have not had any Chemistry prior to enrolling at GSSM, you need to register for Principles of Chemistry. If you have taken Chemistry, but feel that your foundation is not as strong as you would like it to be, you may take Principles of Chemistry at GSSM. For students enrolled in the Principles of Chemistry course, at the end of the fall semester, instructors for that course will determine if a student should move to the articulated Introduction of Chemistry course for the remainder of the year or remain in the Principles of Chemistry course. As a senior, students can enroll in AP Chemistry after finishing either Principles of Chemistry or Introduction to Chemistry as a junior.

5. Which Physics course should I take, Fundamentals of Physics AP Physics I or AP Physics C?

You can take either Fundamentals of Physics, AP Physics I or AP Physics C as a junior, based on your math placement, or senior. Taking Fundamentals of Physics or AP Physics I as a junior does not preclude you from also taking AP Physics C as a senior. Physics has a heavy math component to it. Therefore, to register for Fundamentals of Physics, you must be in MAT111-H or above or receive permission from the instructor, to register for AP Physics I, you must be in MAT111-H or above, and to register for AP Physics C, you must be in MAT201-AP or above. You can enroll in any Physics course without a prior course in Physics as long as you meet the math requirement. As a senior, students can enroll in AP Physics C after finishing either Fundamentals of Physics or AP Physics I as a junior.

6. What if I have already taken AP English Language and Composition before enrolling at GSSM?

All students are required to take GSSM Junior and Senior English. If you have already had an AP course in English, then you will still register for the GSSM Junior or Senior English course, depending on your year at GSSM, and your transcript will reflect the course as GSSM Junior or Senior English.

7. Which math course should I take?

As is the case for all GSSM courses, the courses in mathematics are designed to teach mastery of the subject area. Based on our professional opinion and experience, our goal for students is to place them into the course best suited for each of their individual backgrounds. We want each student in the course that will challenge that student at an appropriate level.

Recognizing that the mathematical ability of students varies greatly despite possibly having taken similar courses, we take proper placement very seriously. Due to the conceptual nature of mathematics, it is possible that once a student is at GSSM he or she could and should be placed in a different level (higher or lower) class. We encourage students to challenge themselves and strive to reach their full potential in all academic areas, and therefore, we will switch a student to a different mathematics class if we see that our initial placement was incorrect. The math department will reassess placements near the beginning of the semester, after the first major assessment, and once again at the mid-term.

During the registration process, all rising juniors are asked to select the math courses, along with their other courses, that they want to take. During New Student Orientation Day, all rising juniors are given placement assessments, which are used in addition to

their placement request, transcripts, PSAT/SAT math scores and previous grades in mathematics, to place them in the proper math courses. The rising seniors are asked to select math courses for their senior year during the spring of their junior year. Actual placements for seniors are determined by their requests and their performance in mathematics during their junior year.

8. Do I need to take a Fine Arts course to fulfill a South Carolina graduation requirement?

At this point, SC does not require a fine arts credit for graduation. Colleges do like to see a well-rounded applicant, and therefore, many students do take a fine arts course at some point during high school or are involved in a fine arts related club. We offer multiple fine arts course during our January interim for which students receive a 0.5 credit. We also offer numerous fine arts related clubs.

9. What is an independent study and how do I register for one?

Independent Study is designed to provide additional opportunities for highly motivated students to pursue areas of their special interest. Independent Study courses are student-initiated and allow students to explore areas of interest beyond what is offered in the catalog. It is aimed at enhancing the quality of our program by adding to it a customized course in an area of interest of a student and expertise of the instructor beyond what is already offered. Independent Study Course proposals will only be considered for 0.5 Carnegie unit (equivalent time commitment required as a regular semester-long course) and as overloaded courses (i.e. courses beyond the six course minimum per semester). In some rare cases, Independent Study Courses could be considered for 1.0 Carnegie unit. Independent Study courses must be approved by the Curriculum Committee.

Students wishing to enroll in an Independent Study course must meet at least one of these criteria:

- a) A student wishes to extend knowledge in a discipline where all relevant existing courses have been completed with a grade of 90 or above or at the permission of the instructor and approval of the Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee reserves the right to determine if all relevant courses have been taken in an area of study in order to warrant an Independent Study course. In some cases it will be advised that a student take an existing course instead of an Independent Study.
- b) A student needs to complete a requirement for graduation (normally only in the Spring semester of the Senior year) when there is no course available in the specific subject that the student may schedule or an unavoidable scheduling conflict exists, provided that the Independent Study is not being used to replace a failed regular class. In special circumstances the instructor and student may request an exemption from the Curriculum Committee.

10. If there is more than one teacher for a course, can I select the teacher I want?

Students do not have the ability to select instructors. It is important to learn how to learn in all situations and from all different teaching styles. Learning from our diverse and talented instructors will prepare you for learning in the college setting and beyond.

11. Why does my schedule change sometimes during the year, especially between semesters?

In order to provide the best educational experience, we try to balance classes as best possible (i.e. similar number of students in each class). Since a number of our courses are taught in one semester and since we allow students to add and drop courses at the beginning of semesters, there is sometimes a need to rebalance classes for instructors at the beginning of each semester and sometimes after a few weeks into a semester.

12. How does Research count in regards to the classes I take?

Mentored Summer Research (RES401) counts as one of your required six classes in the fall of your senior year. The final grade and credit for research is not awarded until the end of the spring semester. Research does not count as one of your classes during the spring semester, but will show up on your spring schedule. You will receive one full high school credit for completion of RES401.

Students may also apply to participate in on-campus research during the fall and spring semesters (RES402 and RES403). These courses would count towards a student's STEM elective graduation requirement.

13. What do I need to do if I have not met the Physical Education state graduation requirement prior to coming to GSSM?

You must complete the GSSM graduation requirement for PAR and the Life and Leisure seminar. The combination of these will suffice for the state PE requirement.

14. If a course is listed in the course catalog will it definitely be offered?

Ideally, yes. However, depending on student demand for the course and faculty load (i.e. what other courses they are teaching), some courses may not be able to be offered each year. Also, some courses might have to be limited to a certain number of students, and therefore in some cases, not all students who register for a course will be able to take the course. Therefore, when signing-up for courses, you should think about other elective courses you might want to take if your initial choices cannot be met.

15. If I take the one semester Gov/Econ (HIS 201) class at GSSM how does that impact the state requirements?

If you take the one semester Gov/Econ class at GSSM then that satisfies both the government and economics state requirements, thereby reducing the total state Social Studies requirements from 3 credits (US History – 1.0 credit, Government – 0.5 credit, Economics – 0.5 credit and one other Social Studies credit – 1.0 credit) to 2.5 credits total (US History – 1.0 credit, GSSM Gov/Econ – 0.5 credit and one other Social Studies credit – 1.0 credit).

16. Do students and parents have access to grades through PowerSchool like they did in their previous high school?

GSSM is a high school that operates in a lot of academic ways similar to a college. Classes are on a college schedule, mastery of the subject is the goal which is a process and student ownership of their academic success is promoted. Therefore, we ask that students maintain a record of their grades throughout the course. At any point during a course, a student or parent can inquiry to a teacher about their grade, but ideally, the student would be able to know or have a good idea based on the grades they have received and the grade breakdown provided in the course syllabus. However, we realize that we are not a college, and therefore, mid-semester report cards and end of semester report cards are given to the students and sent home.

Rising Junior course selection: Helpful Hints

(The Course Catalog can be found on our website at: <http://www.scgssm.org/residential/academics/course-catalog-and-faqs>)

- 1) All Juniors must take **six classes** each semester along with the seminars in the Junior Seminar Series.
- 2) All Juniors take GSSM Junior **English**
- 3) All Juniors take the Junior **Seminar Series**: Life and Leisure (fall and spring), Entrepreneurial Leadership (fall) and College Planning Seminar (spring). These seminars are each one-hour long per week. Students do not need to sign-up for the seminars, instead students will be placed into the seminars that fit their schedule.
- 4) You should request a **math** class. On the New Student Orientation day, a math placement assessment will be given to assist in determining the appropriate placement. *Please see FAQ regarding which math course to select.*
- 5) If you have not taken **US History**, you should register to take it during your junior year.
 - i) If you have taken it, but have not taken **Government and Economics**, then you should register to take the one semester GSSM Gov/Econ class which fulfills the state requirement of a semester of Government and a semester of Economics or consider taking AP Government in the fall and AP Macroeconomics in the spring to fulfill this state requirement.
 - ii) If you have taken both US History and Gov/Econ, then select any other elective for which you have the necessary pre-requisites or co-requisites. To meet the GSSM graduation requirements of 0.5 credits in Social Studies, you should also consider registering for one of the history, psychology or economic electives.
- 6) If you have not completed three years of a **foreign language**, select the appropriate level in that foreign language. If you have completed three years in a foreign language, then either select the appropriate next level in that foreign language or any other elective in another academic area for which you have the necessary pre-requisites or co-requisites. The requirement of three years of foreign language will be waived if you have already completed two years in a foreign language that is not offered at GSSM. If this is the case, then select any other elective in another academic area for which you have the necessary pre-requisites or co-requisites.
- 7) Selecting your **science** courses should take some thought on your part. Decide what area of science you like or wish to explore more. You will have the opportunity to take higher level science courses, including courses in computer science and engineering, at GSSM. In order to take full advantage of these courses, selecting your junior courses is important so that you have the necessary pre-requisites in order to take the higher level courses. When registering for courses, take a look at all of the science, computer science and engineering offerings and try to determine which ones you would like to take during your two years at GSSM and then work backwards to determine which ones you should select to take during your junior year. Many of the courses have pre-requisites and/or co-requisites, so please pay particular attention to those details. *Please see FAQ regarding science courses.*
- 8) GSSM offers a **Residential Engineering Program**. The purpose of the Residential Engineering Program is to expose students to a variety of engineering courses, concepts, skills and applications so that if completed the student will have a solid engineering background entering college and eventually the work force. Students in the GSSM Residential Engineering Program may also select the GSSM Engineering Project interim courses during both their junior and senior years and may complete an engineering-based research project for their Mentored Summer Research.
- 9) For GSSM students that have completed the 10th grade year of the **Accelerate Engineering Program** at their home high school, they may opt to continue in the engineering courses offered through Clemson while attending GSSM. These engineering courses will be offered in the same way they were offered during their 10th grade year. Students will be responsible for following the course schedule for these engineering classes. Their remaining course work will be completed through the residential program and follow the residential schedule.

Rising Senior course selection: Helpful Hints

- 1) Seniors must take a **minimum of six classes** both semesters. An Independent Study is not counted as one of these six classes. In the fall, research counts as one of the six; however, many students take six other classes beyond research in the fall.
- 2) On the rising senior course selection sheet that is completed early in the spring semester, courses that you need in order to receive a state and GSSM diploma will be listed. You will need to fill in the blanks on the sheet with the other classes that you would like to take.
- 3) Every senior takes **English, math, and research**. **Math placement is determined by you and your current math instructor. In March after midterm grades, you will meet with your math instructor to decide which math course is appropriate for you. Final semester grades will determine your ultimate placement.** Placement is determined by the general guidelines below:
 - i) For students currently enrolled in MAT 102/103, a grade of 90 is needed for MAT 201 (Calculus AB) and 95 for MAT 203 (Calculus BC).
 - ii) For students currently enrolled in MAT 111/112, a grade of 85 is needed for MAT 201 (Calculus AB) and 93 for MAT 203 (Calculus BC).
 - iii) Students who have completed MAT 201/202 as juniors may select the following courses for their senior year:

For the Fall
MAT 304: AP Stats (Semester 1 of full year course)
MAT 308: Linear Regression (only for students who have completed AP Statistics)
MAT 301: Linear Algebra (by Math faculty permission only and offered only in even years)
MAT 306: Multivariate Calculus (by Math faculty permission only and offered only in odd years)

For the Spring
MAT 302: Abstract Algebra
MAT 303: Calculus BC
MAT 305: AP Stats (Semester 2 of full year course)
MAT 307: Discrete Structures (by Math faculty permission only and offered only in even years)
MAT 312: Ordinary Differential Equations (by Math faculty permission only and offered only in odd years)
 - iv) Students who have completed MAT 203 as juniors may select the following courses for their senior year:

For the Fall
MAT 304: AP Stats (Semester 1 of full year course)
MAT 308: Linear Regression (only for students who have completed AP Statistics)
MAT 301: Linear Algebra (offered only in even years)
MAT 306: Multivariate Calculus (offered only in odd years)

For the Spring
MAT 302: Abstract Algebra
MAT 305: AP Stats (Semester 2 of full year course)
MAT 307: Discrete Structures (offered only in even years)
MAT 312: Ordinary Differential Equations (offered only in odd years)
- 4) If you want to continue in **foreign language** beyond level 3, please write your choice on the fall and spring semester sides.
- 5) On the course selection sheet, in the blanks that have an asterisk (*), you must select a **STEM or Economics elective**. Depending on what you have taken, you might need to select one or more semester courses in this elective area. More than one **STEM or Economics elective** can be taken in a given semester despite the location of asterisk (*) on your selection sheet.
 - i) If you took Principles of Chemistry, Introduction to Chemistry, Fundamentals of Physics or AP Physics I during your junior year, then AP Chemistry or AP Physics C can be selected to meet this elective.