

Germantown School District

GERMANTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
N104W13840 DONGES BAY ROAD
GERMANTOWN, WI 53022-4499
262-253-3900

February, 2017

Dear Families,

As your child begins the high school course selection process, it's important for you to be informed about the course sequence options for the upcoming school year at Germantown High School. Incoming freshmen will have the opportunity to enroll in either Physical Science or Biology, and depending on their interest, aptitude, and desired career path, honors courses.

Physical Science or Biology, as well as most honors courses, will be selected by parents and students. When making this decision, please consider the district's recommendation found on green 9th Grade Course Selections form, the course descriptions in the Course Planning Guide, your child's data found in this packet, current classroom performance, and your child's interests. Knowing your child best, please select the courses that best meet your child's educational goals:

Physical Science:

Physical Science is a course that emphasizes principles of both physics and chemistry. Physics topics include forces, motion, work, magnetism, waves, energy, temperature and heat. Chemistry topics include properties of atoms, radiation, chemical bonds and chemical reactions. This course is a very important starting point for beginning high school science students in that it readies them for future content as well as the expectations and procedures involved in a high school lab science course.

Physical Science is the course recommended for most incoming freshmen as it provides a solid foundation for all other high school science courses.

Biology:

The intent of the Biology course is to provide the student with a study of living structures and their relationship to man and his environment. Six biological themes are considered in the year long course. The themes are:

- 1. Unity and Diversity*
- 2. Structure and Function of Cells*
- 3. Genetic Continuity*
- 4. Evolution: Change through Time*
- 5. Life Processes: Regulation and Homeostasis*
- 6. Organisms and Their Environment*

Students recommended for Biology have a high interest in science, a strong desire to study science, want to pursue a possible career in the science field, have a Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Math score between the 80th and 90th percentile, Cognitive Skills inventory (CSI)/CogAT of 110 or above, and consistent grades of B or better in science over time.

Math Course Sequence and Placement:

Students are required to successfully complete a minimum of three (3) credits of math. Pending Board approval, for the 2016-17 school year, students taking Algebra may have two options. There is a traditional one-year algebra course, and there could be another option to take an Algebra A/B course sequence to complete Algebra over a two-year period.

Please contact the guidance department at the middle school if you have questions regarding your child’s current performance, contact the school counseling office (502-7256) at the high school if you have questions about course sequence, or me if you have additional questions about the course selection process.

Sincerely,

Brenda O’Brien

Brenda O’Brien
Director of Teaching and Learning
Email: bobrien@germantown.k12.wi.us Phone: 262-253-3906

Student Data Information for: «Student__First_Name» «Student__Last_Name»

MAP Math Percentile: «M__Math»

MAP Reading Percentile: «M__Reading»

InView CSI/CogAT Score: «CSI»

Germantown High School Counselors

Mrs. Mueller (A-F)	502-7251	Mrs. Herandez (G-L)	502-7253
Mr. Benz (M – Sch)	502-7254	Mrs. Bast (Sci – Z)	502-7252

Honors Course Recommendations

Germantown School District has established criteria to help identify students who demonstrate academic potential, skills, and achievement. A student should meet a *minimum of three criteria points* for placement into any of the following Honors courses, but the decision of honor course placement will be based on a parent-informed, self-select process. When making this decision, please consider the district's recommendation found on the green 9th grade Course Selection Form, your child's data found in this packet, the course descriptions found in the Course Selection Guide, your child's interests, your child's involvement in co-curricular activities or work responsibilities, and the characteristics of successful honors students found in this packet. Knowing your child best, please select the courses that best meets your child's educational goals.

Students must maintain a minimum of a B- in 1st semester in order to continue in an Honors course during the remainder of the year.

If a student does not enroll in Honors courses during the 9th grade year, he/she would have an opportunity to enroll in Honors courses during sophomore year upon successful completion of prior coursework.

Honors English

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading score at 90th percentile or above
- InView Cognitive Skills inventory (CSI)/CogAT of 120 or above
- Quarter grades of A in Reading and Language Arts (consistently over time)
- Displays most of the characteristics of a successful honors student (see reverse side)

Honors Biology (*Completion or concurrent enrollment in Honors Geometry, Geometry or IMP 2 is required*)

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Math score at 90th percentile or above and Reading MAP score of 85% or above
- InView Cognitive Skills inventory (CSI)/CogAT of 120 or above
- Quarter grades of A in Science (consistently over time)
- Displays most of the characteristics of a successful honors student (see reverse side)

Honors American History

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading score at 85th percentile or above
- InView Cognitive Skills inventory (CSI)/CogAT of 120 or above
- Quarter grades of A in Social Studies (consistently over time)
- Displays most of the characteristics of a successful honors student (see reverse side)

****Students must meet at least three of the following criteria and be recommended for Honors Mathematics (Advanced Algebra or Geometry)**

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Math score at 90th percentile or above
- InView Cognitive Skills inventory (CSI)/CogAT of 125 or above
- Quarter grades of A in Algebra/Geometry (consistently over time)
- Displays most of the characteristics of a successful honors student (see reverse side)

Characteristics of a Successful Honors Student:

Honors/AP classes are open to any student **academically prepared** and **willing to do** more difficult work at a much quicker pace. Sometimes students display one or the other, but those that do well should certainly display both of those qualities as well as most of the following characteristics.

- Loves to read, handles a heavy reading load incredibly well - accepts reading 20-30 pages/night for English 9 Honors
- Accepts challenging reading and reading a variety of different genres (historical fiction, science fiction, non-fiction)
- Might be involved in other co-curricular activities but manages time well
- **NEVER** turns in work late or has missing assignments; very organized
- Is a strong writer with a solid command of grammar and mechanics, organization, and ideas
- Demonstrates strong participation in class discussions
- Has the ability to speak to the teacher if he/she has concerns or has been absent - Is able to email or speak with the teacher before or after school if there is a concern with a grade or if he/she needs extra help on an assignment
- Is able to manage own work calendar and timeline for extended projects
- Self-motivated

A Note Regarding American History versus American History Honors

From the Germantown High School Social Studies Department:

The majority of our high school graduates go on to a four year college. Therefore, all of our social studies classes are college preparatory classes. Please thoughtfully consider these ideas when making a course decision.

The main difference between the two courses is the National History Day (NHD) requirement. This is an extensive, active research project during 2nd and a portion of 3rd quarter, including a competitive component to advance to regional, state, and national competitions. Students become historians, proposing a thesis related to their topic/annual theme, and students must provide historic research to support it. They may choose their presentation format – a traditional paper, exhibit, documentary, website, or performance – to convey their findings and must also partake in an interview in which they defend their research and rationale.

The pace of presenting material in American History honors is accelerated, especially during 2nd and 3rd quarter to allow time for the NHD research and instruction. Students who enroll in American History Honors focus more on long-term projects rather than daily work. Students in American History will receive “Guided Reading” worksheets, and in American History Honors, students receive unit reading assignments and are expected to complete them in preparation for upcoming instruction. For students to successfully complete these long-term projects, they need to be organized, manage time well, and be self-motivated.

Students may not transfer from American History to American History Honors at 2nd semester due to the required NHD component.

A Note Regarding English 9 versus English 9 Honors

From the Germantown High School English Department:

Taking into account that a majority of our students go on to a four year college, all of our English classes are college preparatory classes. They are challenging. Our English classes create strong writers and thinkers and prepare students for upper level English classes. The chart below shows the main differences between English 9 and English 9 Honors. Please refer to this as you choose your son's or daughter's English class for next year.

English 9	English 9 Honors
Summer Reading: None	Summer Reading: Students are required to read one nonfiction and one fiction text of their choice over the summer. They will need to complete four reading logs as they read. This must be completed <u>before</u> the first day of school. Then, during the first week of school, students will construct a media symbolism project/presentation to reflect their chosen books.
Independent Reading: Students read one book of choice per quarter in English 9. Assessment varies by teacher but might include such assessments as reading logs, books talks, or book reports.	Independent Reading: Students read one book of choice per quarter in English 9. In Honors 9 English, students prepare a creative, interactive project at the end of each quarter. Students present their project to the class the last week of the quarter. Successful completion requires independence as students self-monitor their reading timeline and preparation for their project.
Grammar: Students study and practice grammar throughout the entire year. It is used as bell ringer activities each day, throughout the entire year, and reinforced through all writing assignments and revisions. Students learn about comma splices, compound sentences, compound-complex sentences, introductory clauses (overall correct comma usage).	Grammar: Grammar is only formally taught 1st semester at which point students are expected to master and use all proper mechanical expectations.
Vocabulary: Students study 50 ACT/SAT vocabulary words per semester.	Vocabulary: Students study 120 ACT/SAT vocabulary words per semester and will have weekly quizzes. There is also summative test at the end of each quarter.
Short Story Unit: This unit focuses on analyzing text for literary terms through a collection of 5-7 short stories. Summative assessments include a speech, essay(s), and unit test. All students learn the structure of the literary analysis essay in this unit and are taught and practice the concepts of thesis statements, topic sentences, incorporating textual evidence in essay format. Students learn and practice the revision process in both self and peer revision. Students learn how to write according to the MLA format and this is emphasized and taught for the entire year.	Short Story Unit: Increased pacing allows students to move quickly through several short stories and <i>review</i> literary terms. Students learn to annotate text and are expected to take notes nightly to prepare for facilitated large and independent small group discussions the next day. There is a final unit test and final literary analysis essay. There is a heavy emphasis on revision for the final essay. Students are given resources to follow MLA format, but once introduced this is no longer heavily taught.

<p>Romeo and Juliet Unit: The play is read and/or performed out loud. There is much in-class analysis and interpretation of the play. Students practice the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing. Students work to put the play into a modern context and language. Students watch various versions and adaptation of the play to help with interpretation. There is a summative exam and comparison/contrast final essay.</p>	<p>Romeo and Juliet Unit: The play is read and performed out loud. Honors 9 students are expected to analyze the poetry aspect of Shakespeare’s writing in this play. Very little time is spent on interpreting plot/character/conflict. Students read more in depth to experience the flow and power of the language. There are several enrichment activities that require poetry analysis through annotations, writing a sonnet in Iambic Pentameter, and a final unit test. Students are introduced to close poetry analysis and start writing short responses to literary technique.</p>
<p>Poetry: A poetry unit introduces students to different forms and genres of poetry. Students read and discuss poems in class and create their own poetry project. Students are introduced to the close poetry analysis process in both small and large groups.</p>	<p>Poetry: Poetry is thematically integrated into various units. Students independently annotate and analyze poetry in order to develop class discussions in a large group setting.</p>
<p>2nd semester Short Story Unit (no creative writing unit): Students review literary analysis writing skills, develop a creative “Theme of My Life” project, and use short stories as a medium to discuss real-world concerns and conflicts. Students learn close analysis of the short story genre to study more difficult literary technique like irony, symbolism, satire, and theme.</p>	<p>Creative Writing: Students analyze and annotate professional models of creative pieces in both small and large group settings. Students write poetry, a descriptive piece, and impromptu short responses which require a solid understanding of thesis statements, citing textual evidence, and developing arguments. Writing requires the use and analysis of literary devices and multiple revision steps. The largest focus for the writing portion of this unit is eliminate excess words/phrases in the final paper.</p>
<p>The Book Thief Unit: Students learn how to start the annotation process through discovering literary technique and discuss such literary terms as symbolism, tone, metaphor, point of view, and imagery. Students start to discuss authorial intent. There is a final literary analysis essay and final unit test. Socratic seminars are introduced to students to help facilitate engagement in large group discussion, and students write their own higher level thinking questions.</p>	<p>The Book Thief Unit: weekly short response essays giving an in-depth analysis of literary technique used by the author are required. There is a quicker reading pace for the novel, a more difficult final literary analysis essay, and unit test. Students are required to run their own Socratic Seminars each week for discussion.</p>
<p>Animal Farm Unit: Students in English 9 will study symbolism and allegory to unearth the author’s purpose and intent with this novel to relate it to the Russian Revolution. Students also learn about persuasion and propaganda. Time is dedicated in class to helping students interpret the complex characterization and authorial intent. There is a unit test and final project. Students write their own higher level thinking questions and practice facilitating both large and small group instruction.</p>	<p>Animal Farm Unit: In Honors 9 English, students study the allegorical representations of this novel in comparison to the Russian Revolution and study satirical intent. Very little time in class is spent on understanding plot/character/conflict. Instead, students focus on author intent, persuasive technique, propaganda, and use of the allegorical style. A final test with an in-class essay to analyze one of Orwell’s essays completes the unit.</p>

Persuasion: Students start an Annotated Bibliography unit first semester that teaches research techniques and solidifies students' ability to summarize, paraphrase, and directly quote. Proper citation methods, research note-taking techniques are taught to help students learn the research process. The annotated bibliography segues into the persuasive research essay unit during second semester that further helps students develop logical, strong arguments about their chosen topic. Students write a persuasive essay and give a class presentation. Students learn about credible, reliable research and hone in on different arguments categorized by ethos, pathos, and logos.

Persuasion: While reading *Animal Farm*, students start to analyze 30 different rhetorical strategies and propaganda. Students research and write a persuasive essay and are expected to use the persuasive techniques in their own writing. Students build on their foundation of writing skills as they work to eliminate the over use of "to be" words and engage rhetorical strategies in their own writing. Students also analyze 5 nonfiction pieces for rhetorical analysis and argument and write 4-5 short responses in addition to the large persuasive essay. Research, note taking, and writing skills are reviewed but not heavily taught in this unit.

Two additional units in Honors 9 that are not in English 9:

Anthem by Ayn Rand: This is an additional book not read in English 9. Students are introduced to philosophical principles like Objectivism and Collectivism. Students submit a final literary analysis essay to the national Ayn Rand Essay writing contest. There is also a final unit test.

Dr. Cook's Garden by Ira Levine: This is an additional text not read in English 9. This play focuses on dystopian themes and closes the end of the year. Students read and perform this in class and finish a symbolic "Garden Project" in a small group.

General Differences between the two courses/students

- Missing and late work in English 9 Honors is unacceptable. Late work is only taken one day past the due date and only receives ½ credit.
- Students in Honors 9 write in over 5 different genres, which requires exceptional writing skills and ability to navigate between the different genres' rules and expectations.
- Honors 9 English - Weekly short responses during several of the units are in addition to the larger analysis essays. The writing is much more focused on development of thought and logic and how to properly analyze the effectiveness of literary technique and rhetorical strategy. Very little time is spent on organization, building thesis statement and topic sentences, integrating textual evidence, correct citations, works cited page, and MLA format (these are structural elements that many 9th graders need more reinforcement with). With that said, if a student doesn't tend to quickly learn these elements the first time, they will struggle in the honors classes. These concepts are covered early in the year and only reviewed minimally after. Students are expected to revise multiple drafts of a piece of writing before receiving their final grade. Students who struggle with essay organization, basic grammar expectations, and display typical thought/argument development should be counseled to take English 9 as these skills will be taught and reinforced in English 9 more thoroughly.
- There are at least 10 more writing pieces in Honors 9 English than in English 9.
- More literature is covered at a quicker pace than in English 9 and nightly notes/annotations are expected for homework.