

# THEOLOGY

<b>GRADUATION REQUIREMENT:</b> 4 years (or each year in attendance)			
<b>Freshmen Required:</b>	<b>Sophomores Required:</b>	<b>Juniors Required:</b>	<b>Seniors Required:</b>
Scripture	Sacraments and Morality	World Religions and Church History	Social Justice and Religious Themes in Art or Social Justice and Christian Lifestyles or Social Justice and Campus Ministry or Honors Social Justice

The mission of Saint Thomas Academy is to create Christian leaders. The Theology Department is an integral element in this educational process. By stressing the moral dimension of leadership, we strive to help young men be capable, just, compassionate, and forthright citizens. In assisting students in their faith formation, we seek to develop a spirituality which encourages young men to desire personal holiness as well as to become servant leaders who welcome and care for each other. It is our hope that each student will come to know the mystery of God’s abiding presence and the depth of God’s love for all. Our goal is to develop educated and informed Catholics who seek to be knowledgeable in their faith, who are willing to embrace the challenges of Christianity in the new millennium, and who are ready to work for the Church’s social mission and justice and peace. The student will:

- Demonstrate basic Biblical interpretation skills, reverence, and appreciation of Sacred Scripture.
- Understand the basic teachings of the Church as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (i.e. sacraments, creed, Ten Commandments, beatitudes, virtues, precepts of the Church, etc.)
- Understand their obligation to act morally and ethically as responsible Christians with well-informed and formed consciences.
- Have a basic understanding and appreciation of the history and theology of the Church, diversity of religious traditions, and of contemporary spiritual leaders.
- Understand liturgy and prayer and their movement towards service.
- Explore Christ’s invitation to discipleship and personal holiness by exploring those lifestyles compatible with the Christian vocation.
- Know the key principles of Catholic social teaching, especially principles regarding respect for life and sexual morality.
- Develop reflective, critical thinking skills; moral, creative imaging skills and prayer and dialogical skills which allow the students to research and identify, assess and evaluate, discern, judge and determine action in light of Gospel values and Church teaching.

**SCRIPTURE**

Grade Level: 9

1 year  
Weight: 1.0

This survey course imparts a knowledge and love of Scripture. Students study the nature of Divine Revelation and learn how to appreciate the complex development of Scripture as it was passed down through oral tradition, set in written text, and made part of the canon. In keeping with Catholic tradition, students learn basic literary, structural, and historical methodological skills for Biblical interpretation. Students learn how to examine and clarify the meaning of Scripture; they also are encouraged to hear, in their reading of Scripture, the living word of God and reflectively seek to understand how God's word applies to their daily lives. This course also fosters students' moral and spiritual growth through the study of religious and spiritual leaders, examining how they responded in faith to contemporary issues and problems of their day.

**SACRAMENTS AND MORALITY**

Grade Level: 10

1 year  
Weight: 1.0

This course integrates an exploration of Christian morality with the study of the seven sacraments. This study takes place primarily within the context of the challenges of popular culture as it is viewed through the media. Students study the concepts of objective and subjective truth, conscience formation, sin and grace, legal and moral authority, the Ten Commandments, the moral precepts of the Church, and the Gospel call to justice and peace. The students are introduced to three essential strategies for self-discovery: thinking, learning and communicating. This will raise the probability that students will be empowered to reach their potential as children of God and find true success well beyond their school years. Through the study of the seven sacraments, students learn of God's abiding presence in the human person and the invitation to grow morally and spiritually. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is introduced to the students throughout the course of their study.

**CHURCH HISTORY AND  
WORLD RELIGIONS**

Grade Level: 11

1 year  
Weight: 1.0

These courses introduce the students to the major world religions, their history, and the manner in which they approach major life questions with special emphasis on Islam, Judaism, and Christianity; and the formation of the early Christian community, development of the creeds, ecumenical councils, evolution of worship, evangelism, major historical events in the history of the church, the Reformation, Vatican II, and the contemporary church.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE COURSES**

Grade Level: 12

1 year

The Social Justice seminar uses the maturity of seniors to discuss issues chosen and led by students. The list of possible issues is a long one, but the course covers abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, discrimination, poverty, religious freedom, and other moral and ethical issues of our time that the Pope has highlighted as being critical in today's society. Using Catholic social teachings and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, students study the principles that define and clarify the Church's position on these issues in order to illuminate their thought processes.

**Seniors take one of the following courses:**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND  
CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLES**

Weight: 1.0

Christian Lifestyles considers those lifestyles compatible with common Christian vocations (e.g. chosen single life, religious life, marriage). The goal of this course is to prepare the seniors to live a moral life beyond the walls of St. Thomas. Issues include living in a diverse world, moral lessons from the Holocaust, using the Gospels as a foundation for living a life of moral action, self-discipline, and compassion. Other topics include current trends in Catholic spirituality, identity development, women's issues, and closure to the STA experience.

**HONORS SOCIAL JUSTICE** Weight: 1.1  
P.A.C.C. Weight: 1.2

**Prerequisite:** Instructor approval. Students must have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher and a GPA of 3.3 or higher in H.S Theology courses.

This seminar course will challenge students to study theology and justice at a deeper level. Social Justice and our Faith is an honors course taught at the college level. Post-secondary credit is offered through St. Mary's University with 3 college credits earned through P.A.C.C. (Program for Advanced College Credit), and course expectations will reflect this standard. Students will use a college level textbook (approx. \$25). This course includes students presenting issues to the class. Students will reflect on the life and teachings of Jesus and on the tradition of the Church in learning about and discussing a wide variety of current moral issues such as sexuality, medical ethics, abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, poverty, and discrimination. Cost: approx. \$180.00 paid to St. Mary's University.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND  
CAMPUS MINISTRY** Weight: 1.0

**Prerequisite:** Instructor approval

This course offers seniors a unique opportunity to combine the academic requirements of senior theology and its study of Catholic principles and teachings on social justice with "practicum" which seeks to apply these principles in real-life situations. In addition to studying basic Catholic social teachings and the rationale(s) behind them, students will plan and present liturgies, retreats for underclassmen, and community service projects.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND  
RELIGIOUS THEMES IN ART** 1 semester each  
Weight: 1.0

The Social Justice seminar uses the maturity of seniors to discuss issues chosen by the students and led by them. The list of possible issues is a long one, but the course certainly covers abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, discrimination, poverty, religious freedom, and the other moral and ethical issues of our time that the Pope has highlighted as being critical in today's society. Using Catholic social teachings and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, students study the principles that define and clarify the Church's position on these issues in order to illuminate their thought processes.

**Students are also registered in Religious Themes in Art.**

Religious Themes in Art explores a variety of spiritual themes and the means artists use to express them. Judeo-Christian traditions serve as the content base. Students grow in their appreciation of their own spiritual experiences and, above all, will understand themselves as creators. Topics and media covered include religious symbols, social justice themes, religious leaders, historical leaders, church architecture, wood, silk-screening, and the computer.

**SENIOR PROJECT**

Saint Thomas Academy invites students to cultivate a vital and relevant spirituality through service, reflection, and prayer. The school's goal is to empower students by encouraging them to become servant-leaders who respect others and work for justice and peace. Since this dimension of a student's development is an integral part of its mission, the Academy has a graduation requirement of forty service hours, which are completed outside of school, along with ten hours of reflection and social analysis, which are incorporated into the senior Theology Social Justice course.

These fifty hours complement a two-week "Senior Project," which is completed during the last two weeks of senior year, where students are mentored in their responsibilities within one of forty educational, health, or social service agencies.