

Overview

St. Francis Classical Academy provides traditionalist, Christian education that is rigorous, leisurely, and beautiful. We offer advanced liberal arts courses in humanities, math, and science to homeschoolers. We were founded in 2021 and graduated our first class of seniors in May, 2023. Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 8am to 3pm. We offer classes “university style,” meaning that students may enroll in as many classes as suit them. Our program provides an intensive liberal arts education with traditional pedagogy and content.

Distinctives

- Creedal Christianity
- Traditionalism
- Rigor
- Leisure
- Beauty

We seek to cultivate in our students what St. Augustine calls “rightly ordered loves.” Because we are led by our loves, and because the work to which we commit our hands flows directly from our affections, we want our students to be constantly in pursuit of good taste. And because we are Christians and traditionalists, the things we desire our students to have affection for are the good things that have stood the test of time.

In a relativistic age, when new things are in vogue every ten minutes, we teach students to unashamedly believe that popularity does not indicate value. We teach that some things are better than others. Some food, some art, some music, some ideas are inherently good, and some are inherently bad. We believe that the goodness and badness of things is proven only over time. For instance, we may safely cultivate our affections for the paintings of Caravaggio and the sculptures of Michelangelo because they have lasted for over 400 years, and they are likely to last for the next 400. They have been proven good. On the other hand, we are suspicious of the philosophies and baubles that are in fashion today because they are untested. They are not necessarily devoid of value, they simply have not been proven, and must be handled cautiously and interpreted in the light of our love of the greatest things.

Enrollment

This year’s enrollment, K5-12, is approximately 45 students.

Contact Information

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Headmaster Bobby McGee

Affiliations

Society for Classical Learning (SCL), Member

Tutors

The student : tutor ratio across the school is 5:1.

Graduate Telos

Our final aim is not good test scores, though many students certainly achieve those. Our aim is to graduate able Christian citizens, linguists, philosophers, historians, mathematicians, and theologians — free men and women who, by pious self-denial, will go out to wage cosmic war on rulers, principalities, and the powers of darkness.

Preparation for Life & Further Education

Families who are new to classical or traditionalist education might wonder, “If we educate classically at St. Francis, will my children be educated as well as they might be at another school? Will they be prepared for the rigors of highschool?”

The answer, borne out in good classical schools over time and around the world, is a resounding, “yes.” Students classically educated in the liberal arts tradition are abundantly prepared intellectually and spiritually for any field of study they choose to tackle in the future. The exceptional Tutors, pedagogy, curriculum, and ideology of St. Francis Classical, though unusual in our time, conspire to prepare students exceptionally well for life, labor, and further education.

Mental & Spiritual Discipline

Aristotle says of young people:

“Young men have strong passions, and tend to gratify them indiscriminately. [...] Their lives are mainly spent not in memory but in expectation; for expectation refers to the future, memory to the past, and youth has a long future before it and a short past behind it. [...] They have exalted notions, because they have not yet been humbled by life or learnt its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things. [...] All their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently.”

And we agree. In the Second Form, as students grow in independence of spirit and action, we tailor curricula and instruction to address the peculiar strengths and struggles of youth. We work to instill the *sober mindedness* which the Apostle Paul commends to young Timothy.

In these middle years, students awaken to the philosophical inquiry which they will continue to pursue in the Third Form. Students learn to express themselves more eloquently and to apply their ideas to the world carefully and beautifully. As we point students to imitable men and women, we keep them in mind of St. Francis’ teaching that “the warfare of Christ is to be begun by victory over self.” (Bonaventure, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*)

Non-numerical grading

Students at St. Francis Classical only see Latin grade designations and corresponding narrative feedback on their assessments and semester report cards. This approach to grading naturally drives a student’s attention to the quality of his work, and reduces the tendency of students to fixate on the grades themselves. (Nota Bene: Satis is a true average at St. Francis Classical.)

SCL	Summa Cum Laude	With Highest Praise
MCL	Magna Cum Laude	With Great Praise
CH	Cum Honore	With Honor
S	Satis	Sufficient
NS	Non Satis	Lacking Sufficiency
CD	Cum Defectu	With Deficiency

Courses Offered

N.B. These courses may be offered in alternate sequences depending upon the needs and prior coursework of the students enrolled.

	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Mathematics	Singapore 5	Singapore 6	Singapore 7 (Pre Algebra)	Singapore 8 (Algebra I)
Science	General Science, Earth Science, Life Science, or Physical Science			
History	Ancient Period	Medieval Period	Humane Letters I (Early Modern Period)	Humane Letters II (Ancient Period)
Literature	5th - 6th Literature			
Bible	Reading & Narration (yr 1)	Reading & Narration (yr 2)		
Ancient Language	Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin
Language Arts	Dictation and Imitation V	Dictation and Imitation VI	Composition I	Composition II
Logic, Aesthetics, Rhetoric			Logic I	Logic II, Aesthetics, or Rhetoric

Course Descriptions

Mathematics: These courses in Arithmetic, one of the seven Classical Liberal Arts, are designed to be rigorous, teach mental discipline, and move students from the concrete and tangible study of matter, numbers, and patterns (the art of recognizing multitudes and magnitudes) to love the source of all beauty. We use Singapore's Dimensions curriculum in 5th through 8th grades; it is particularly suited to helping students learn math conceptually and develop mathematical reading comprehension.

Science: Students study the complexity and beauty of creation and are introduced to the concepts that they will encounter in greater depth in the Third Form. These courses involve readings, field observations, collections, and sketches and are designed to whet students' appetites for scientific study.

General Science:
Earth Science:

Novare's *General Science*
Novare's *Earth Science*

The Wonder Book of Science, Bird Sense, Fabre
Tropical Nature, The Wonder Book of Chemistry

History (5th & 6th): Students study excerpted primary sources curated by Tutors and practice the work of real historians - observing and interpreting historical writings, speeches, and artifacts. This course is structured on Classical Conversations' history card curriculum. Tutors use these cards each week as introductions and summaries before turning the students' attention to primary sources.

Literature (5th & 6th): Students read and discuss approximately nine books each year with their Tutors. We carefully select *good* books that will prepare students to read *great* books. Tutors read aloud and exegete; students read along and discuss, responding orally and in writing. Because of the setting, we intentionally choose books that would be challenging for students to read or understand on their own.

Bible (5th & 6th): This course improves students' familiarity with the Scriptures. For the first half of each class, Tutors read several chapters aloud while students listen; for the second half, students write or give oral narrations of those chapters.

Humane Letters (7th & 8th): This course supersedes the separate History and Literature courses taken before 7th grade. Two periods of each day are devoted to this course. Students study Literature, History, and Philosophy - with discursions in economics, theology, art, and political theory - as integrated disciplines. Students read, discuss, and write about texts in the Western Canon, and study the historic relationship of Christianity to the fundamental human arts. Because the reading list is ambitious, most texts are read aloud in class.

Language Arts

(5th and 6th): Students learn grammar, spelling, and writing via imitation. Each week, Tutors present students with an excerpt from a good work of Literature or a Poem. Students read this excerpt aloud, study it with their Tutors, then copy it in preparation for a dictation exercise at the end of the week. This course is primarily about "ear training" - training students to have an ear (and an eye) for good English grammar and syntax.

(7th and 8th): Students learn the classical, technical forms of persuasive, deliberative writing. This course is based on the CiRCE Institute's *The Lost Tools of Writing* curriculum.

Latin: This course treats Latin as an end rather than a means to an end - that is, a beautiful thing worth enjoying for its own sake. The Latin program aims not merely to equip students to fluently read the Latin texts of authors as diverse as Vergil and Cicero to Erasmus and Newton, but to instill in them the desire to do so long after they have graduated. To this end, students read, speak, write and memorize Latin in the classroom. Readings and memory passages in the Second Form are taken from *Lingua Latina* I and II, as well as Caesar, Cicero, Vergil, the *Vulgate*, Boethius, etc.

Logic: Students learn to reason carefully and artfully, identify fallacious reasoning, and construct valid, sound, and true arguments using deductive and inductive reasoning. This course is based on Informal and Formal Logic texts from Classical Academic Press.

Aesthetics: Students study beauty as a philosophical idea and as a tangible reality in beautiful, classic art including paintings, drawings, sculptures, architecture, music, and poetry.

Rhetoric: Students learn to speak confidently, write persuasively, and debate with force and clarity. Writing assignments vary widely from imitative speeches to embellishment exercises as set forth in Erasmus' *De Copia*. Students memorize and recite Shakespearean soliloquies and selections from famous speeches. Anchoring texts for the Rhetoric program are Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria*.

Art & Choir: Once a week, 5th and 6th graders study Art History through a variety of studio art projects pertaining to the pieces of art they study. 7th and 8th graders spend one semester studying calligraphy and illumination, and another sculpting stone. Also once a week, all students 3rd-12th participate with their Tutors in choir and receive instruction in musicianship.