Welcome! You’re coming!

The deadline for applying for a gap year has passed, so if you’re seeing this, you really are a member of the Class of 2024. About 320 of you will be here in person, and another 40 or so will be remote. But you are all members of the Class of 2024 and we are looking forward to getting to know all of you!
HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR DEAN

By early August, you will be assigned a dean whom you can look to as a partner and resource for academic and non-academic issues throughout your time at Bryn Mawr. Your dean will be your primary adviser for your first two years and will meet with you at least once a semester to discuss course selection and help you reflect on your journey and plan for the future. You may make additional appointments with your dean at any time to discuss anything from homesickness to time management to extra-curricular activities. Your dean is not only interested in helping you through difficulties, but is also eager to cheer on your accomplishments, both large and small.

Before you even arrive, you’ll have group advising appointments with your dean and also have an individual advising appointment via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or phone. You’ll find details in the Tuesday Newsletter before the end of July.

Just as safety concerns are going to impact how your classes are conducted, they’ll also be affecting how we deans work with you this fall. Most of our meetings with students will be by Zoom, Teams, or phone. We will also be adjusting our hours somewhat to allow for social distancing when we are at work and to ensure availability to all students regardless of location.

HOW TO START BUILDING YOUR FALL SCHEDULE

There are two required courses everyone will take in the fall of their first year: The Emily Balch Seminar (a.k.a. ESEM), and THRIVE.

ESEM is a small seminar where you will learn critical reading, thinking, and writing skills along with other first-year students. Each ESEM has a theme and earns one unit of academic credit—read about the different choices on the ESem website and make sure you register for your three top choices between July 20 and August 2. You’ll find out which ESem you’re assigned to before you need to register for your remaining three academic courses.

THRIVE is a 10-week non-graded “intro to college” course that does not count toward academic credits, but earns you 2 PE credits. It’s a low-stress environment that introduces you to college resources and allows for self-reflection and community-building.

Other than those, everyone’s schedule will look different! Some students who have grown up speaking, writing, and going to school in languages other than English will be taking the Workshop for Multilingual Writers. Other students will be taking a Quantitative Seminar to make sure that their quantitative training will serve them well in Bryn Mawr courses that they’ll want or need to take in future semesters. Students who will need one of these courses will be hearing from faculty in the Writing Program or in the Qproject.

Now let’s talk about the courses you get to choose. This is where exploration really begins. Sure, we offer familiar subjects like Math, History, and Spanish; but check out all the new areas you could explore like Comparative Literature, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Neuroscience, and Russian! Browse courses offered this fall on our Explore Courses page (https://www.brynmawr.edu/academics/explore-courses). When you register in August, you’ll be choosing three academic courses to take along with ESem and THRIVE. But as you explore courses now, we’d like you to keep a longer list of courses that look interesting to you. As you become BioNIC experts during your time here, you can use features in BioNIC like My Planner and Shopping Cart, but for now, we’d recommend either just writing them down in your notebook or keeping an electronic document, spreadsheet, etc.

Please look back at Issue #1 of The Lantern for information about academic requirements.
A Semester Like No Other: 3 Types of Classes

THIS FALL, Bryn Mawr students will be enrolling in three different types of classes. If you were able to attend our webinar, you will have already heard about this. But we wanted to lay it out again for you here, to have as background.

- **In-person**: Students must be on campus to enroll in these courses, even though they may still have some remote elements.
- **Remote**: Students can be anywhere to enroll. These courses are fully remote with no in-person elements for any student.
- **Hybrid**: Students can be anywhere to enroll. For those who are on campus, there will be a combination of remote and in-person elements. For those who are enrolling remotely, obviously everything will be available remote. Students in the class might be 6 feet away from each other—or 6,000 miles away!

**AS YOU CONSIDER YOUR SCHEDULE**, the distinction between synchronous and asynchronous will be almost as significant. All classes will likely have synchronous and asynchronous elements.

- **Synchronous activities happen in real time.** For example, in a hybrid course like Chem 103, in-person labs will happen in real time. Recitation sections will also happen synchronously and will be scheduled at various times to allow participation by students all around the globe.
- **Asynchronous activities happen at the times that work for you.** Again, to use Chem 103 as an example, lectures will be recorded, so that students may watch them on their own schedule.

The more asynchronous a course is, the more flexibility students will have. At the same time, that flexibility can actually make it harder to feel fully engaged with the material, to develop relationships with fellow students and with professor, and to access supports like office hours. It can also make time management more difficult.

In contrast, a more synchronous class allows students to have more interaction with classmates and professors, but may be challenging to manage for remote students because of time zones.

Most classes will combine some of each. Professors have been asked to address this issue in the more detailed class information that is being added to BiONiC. In reality, in this most unusual semester, students and professors both have to be prepared for the unexpected. This semester will require flexibility from everyone!

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One student’s experience from this spring and hopes for the fall

“When we suddenly moved online in the Spring, my professors truly demonstrated their commitment to student learning and support. All of my professors were understanding of the situation and made the effort to be accessible for office hours and any questions.

With summer training and education for professors on adapting classes to be hybrid/online, I imagine that classes will be more interactive and engaging in the Fall semester—the benefits of Bryn Mawr’s small class sizes and being able to interact with your professors will be more evident with online classes than in a normal year!”
What to Expect in August

- **Group advising sessions** with your dean: These will be a little like a webinar, but in groups that are small enough that you will be able to ask questions, introduce yourselves, etc.

- **Virtual Academic Fair**: As part of Customs/New Student Orientation, academic departments will be providing information about their offerings. In many but not all cases, these will include video presentations and even real-time consultations.

- **Individual advising appointments** and registration, with lots more guidance about how to prepare for these.

**TIPS FROM STUDENTS**

“Take a variety of subjects in one semester (don’t take all science or all writing intensive classes) and have at least one class that you’re really excited about, that sparks joy.”

– SASHA BAUER, 2019

“The variety of classes the College offers can be overwhelming at first—take this first semester to take classes that sound interesting to you! Don’t worry about figuring out a major yet (you have so much time)—use this time to explore.”

– KATE WEILER, 2020

“It’s okay not to fulfill all your requirements in your freshman year. I didn’t, and it gave me more time to explore possible majors early on.”

– CLAIRE ECKSTEIN-INDIK, 2020

“Try something that isn’t offered in high school, like a Sociology, Anthropology, or Geology class. The beauty of a liberal arts college is that you get to experience all sorts of subjects, even if you don’t continue with them in your future career.”

– NATALIE KOGAN, 2021