

Robotics FAQ

Q: What is the schedule for robotics?

A: Technically speaking, robotics is a seventh period class, meaning it meets **after school**. However, since we function more like a team than a class, our schedule differs from a traditional seventh period class and is subject to change. During the fall (August–December), we meet from 2:15–4:15 on the first and last odd days of the week (never on Wednesday) other than extraneous circumstances. During competition season (January–April), we mostly meet from 3:00–5:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but there are optional open shop hours for students to work outside of class. After our competition season, we relax our schedule and meet once a week. For reference, this year’s schedule is [here](#).

Q: My child/I participate(s) in sports. Can they/I still do robotics?

A: Maybe. Although robotics has a more lenient schedule than other classes, that is **not an excuse to cut class all the time** for sports. That being said, many robotics students are able to fit both sports and robotics into their schedule. We are much busier during competition season, so it may be difficult to participate in spring sports like badminton and swimming. Read more on page 11 of the [Team Handbook](#).

Q: Are there required prerequisites for robotics?

A: No. Students will go through all the necessary basic training during the fall to ensure that they are ready for competition season. However, they should be **hardworking and motivated** as detailed on the [Join page](#).

Q: What are the skills learned in the team?

A: There are many skills used in class, but some of the main skills are prototyping, CADing, machining, programming, mechanical assembly, electrical and pneumatic system assembly. You may join the team with no training whatsoever. Do note that learning these skills takes a long time. You will not be proficient in all of them after one year. Even though you do not need to know any of these beforehand, it really helps if you can learn one or get familiar with one of these skills.

Q: How is this class graded?

A: This class is mostly graded on effort, with the occasional quiz based on what students specialize in. Another part of the grade is engagement during competition season.

Q: Are there any other jobs other than technical robotics jobs?

A: Yes. Robotics is like a business. In that sense, we need to fundraise and market ourselves. We need to have a communications portal (social networks, website, pamphlets, videos). We have a team spirit and graphic design group (t-shirts, banners, etc). We have a business and accounting group to manage all our funds received and funds payable. Every student will be part of a non-technical group. Operations is equally as important as technical groups. That said, every student does technical work on this team. We do not have strictly non-technical, or strictly technical people on the team.

Q: How does taking this class affect college transcripts?

A: Robotics looks good on transcripts, but this should not be the only reason to join. Students should only join robotics if they have a genuine interest in it.

Q: Do I have to donate to the team?

A: No. We kindly request for donations to fund the activities of the team, but they are completely optional. Donating to robotics will not increase the chances of being accepted into the program. If you would like to donate, please for the instructions [here](#).

Q: Is the class required to be on the team?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the team student-led or led by mentors/teachers?

A: It is a combination. There are areas that are strictly led by students and areas strictly led by the school. For example, students have complete domain over the design, building, programming, strategy, and CAD of the robot. The school has full jurisdiction on team size, finances, safety, team meeting times, issues regarding facilities, any adults working on the team, etc. There are other areas where students and the teacher work together. Having this team be as student led as possible is a source of pride, and it is a goal for the team and the school. Anything that can be done safely and well by the students is done by the students and managed as little as possible by the school and mentors, but there is good oversight to ensure this is happening.

Q: What happens if I decide that the team is not for me? Do I still need to take the class?

A: All classes can be dropped at any time. That said, you have 6 weeks at the beginning of the semester to drop with no record on your transcripts. After 6 weeks, you would have to commit or it will show on your transcripts that you dropped the class. 6 weeks is generally long enough to know if this is for you or not. Additionally, if you want to leave the team you can easily drop at the semester (20 weeks long) and that would only show that you have 1

semester credit on transcripts and no record of dropped class on your transcripts. You then have another 6 weeks at the start of the second semester to drop the class without any record on your transcripts.

Q: Is there enough time 2 times a week for 2 hours to do all the stuff the team wants to do?

A: In short, no. For most of the fall season, meeting for 4 hours a week should be fine, but as we get into our competition season (January through April) students will put in many more hours. After our competition season, meeting 4 hours a week will be just fine.