



MAY TERM

COURSE CATALOG



MAY TERM

- IS REQUIRED
- WILL HAVE NO HOMEWORK
- WILL BE PASS/FAIL
- WILL BE ON THE TRANSCRIPT
AND WILL BE FOR CREDIT

PURPOSE OF MAY TERM

To foster meaningful, authentic learning, our school year ends with each student taking one May Term course. These seven-day courses enrich the student experience beyond the core GFA curriculum and offer opportunities to dig into a topic in ways that are impossible during the regular school schedule. Students should expect to connect with classmates and teachers in a different way, explore new interests, and focus on their learning.

MAY TERM COURSE SIGN-UP

The course catalog will be available to students in early April. Students should carefully read through each course. They will then work with their advisor to sign up for May Term. Students should plan to choose five courses that they would be excited to engage in. Priority will go to seniors, but there are many additional factors that go into placement. All efforts will be made to place students in one of their top five course choices. Rosters will be released in the beginning of May.

TEACHING ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Juniors and seniors have the opportunity to apply to support faculty members as teaching assistants in courses that they may have already taken or where they show strong knowledge and deep interest. Responsibilities may include working with the teacher to develop part of the course curriculum, running small group discussions, mentoring individual students, creating and teaching a lesson, and assisting in the classroom and on field trips. Applications will be available in April and will be reviewed by the faculty members teaching the course, as well as the May Term Committee.

ALoud!!!

Ms. Lambert & Mr. Connors

“Speech is my hammer, / bang the world into shape / Now let it fall.”
— Mos Def, “Hip Hop”

How can words bang the world into shape? From Beowulf to Hamilton, artists have performed their words on a variety of occasions and in many contexts to describe the world they see and what they would like to change. Whether spoken word, the relationship between gospel and hip hop, or Broadway musicals, the common denominator between these genres is the impact on the audience. In this course, students will explore the impact that performative writing has had on the way we learn, narrate, and empathize with the writers’ experience. They will craft and perform slam poetry, spoken word pieces, boasts, and Moth-style storytelling.

ALTERNATIVE HISTORIES THROUGH GAMING

Mr. Campbell & Mr. Lowenstein

Through Simulation Gaming, this course will allow participants to explore the role of causation, contingency, and accident in history through the use of computer- or board game-based historical simulations. Subject matter and topic will be developed with input from students. Examples include a game set in the Middle Ages or the Ancient World that sees students guide their civilizations through the challenges of the era; a power struggle in England known as the War of the Roses; and a diplomacy simulation set in Renaissance Italy. A deep dive into military simulations will also be an option for the truly hardcore gamer. Supplemental readings and documentaries will enhance our understanding of the topic and allow us to learn from our alternative, counterfactual histories.

AMERICAN SON: BLACK, WHITE AND BLUE

Ms. Henry & Mr. Hannum

Aristotle argued that “it is a natural human impulse to make art that imitates the people, places, and events around them.” Based on the acclaimed Broadway play, ‘American Son’ delves into the tensions around implicit bias, police-community relations, and interracial relationships at a time when society is deeply divided on these issues. This suspenseful play focuses on an interracial couple in a police station desperate for answers about the disappearance of their son Jamal following a late-night traffic stop. Students will watch and deconstruct the play, while engaging in critical reflection and honest conversation about race, class, identity and policing in America.

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING & DESIGN

Mr. Valles

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of architectural and 3D design through various types of architectural drawings and model-making. Using a variety of media—pen, marker, pastel, and watercolor—students will create freehand perspective, plan, and site drawings. In the second phase of the course, students will explore the principles of space, surface, light, and craftsmanship by making physical models using foam core, chipboard, and other common materials. Students can expect to have a small body of work upon completion of the course.

THE ART OF THE CHINESE STRATEGY GAME-GO (WEIQI 围棋)

Ms. Liu & Mr. Zarco

Learn the most popular strategy game in the world from a professionally trained player! Go, or Weiqi (围棋), is an abstract strategy board game for two players for which the goal is to occupy more territory than the opponent. Invented in China over 2,500 years ago, Go is believed to be the oldest board game played to the present day and one of the four essential arts of cultured aristocratic Chinese scholars. The rules of Go are considerably simpler than those of chess, but playing it well takes some practice because actual gameplay is extremely complex. We will start by learning the basic five-in-a-row game, then play on 9x9 and 13x13 boards, and finally move on to play on a 19x19 full board. We will end by watching and discussing a documentary movie about how Deep Mind’s AlphaGo beat the world Go champion from South Korea. Let’s Go!!

THE ART OF WABI SABI: WORKING WITH CLAY, NATURAL DYES, AND POETRY

Ms. Greiner & Ms. Sommer

Explore the ancient wisdom of Wabi Sabi, finding beauty in simplicity (wabi) and serenity in the rhythms of the seasons (sabi), by creating art using materials and processes from the natural bounty around us. Wabi Sabi teaches us that all things are impermanent and imperfect, giving us permission to be our imperfect selves as we create art in harmony with nature. We will hand-build tea sets, sculpt “netsuke” (small animal figurines), and dye our clay creations with minerals. We will harvest natural dye materials to dye fabrics using traditional Japanese techniques, as well as learn sashiko stitching and Haibun poetry. Visits to the Urasenke Chanoyu Japanese tea house in Manhattan and the Noguchi Museum will allow us to experience the wabi-sabi philosophy first-hand.

BASICS OF ASIAN COOKING

Dr. Mederer & Ms. Zhang

Asian cooking doesn't need to be intimidating, but what exactly is Asian cooking? Egg Foo Young is definitely not it, and neither is the Sweet and Sour Chicken served in Chinese American restaurants. We'll start with the basics of rice, dough, spices, and xiao (fillings), and work with simple ingredients to create something that is, hopefully, easy enough to replicate at home. Although this may seem easy, some research will be needed to truly understand the ingredients with which we're working. Cleanliness and safety are a must, and you shouldn't be afraid of working with knives or meat.

BEYOND THE WALLS OF BEACHSIDE: DAY TRIPS NEAR AND A LITTLE FAR

Dr. Mead & Ms. Morrison

Open to Grades 11 & 12

GFA prides itself as a location at the intersection of natural and cosmopolitan beauty connected via highway, rail and waterway. This course engages students as ambassadors beyond the "walls of Beachside" to thrive in the environs within our reach on a given day. Day trips to New York City, New Haven, Hudson Valley and small-town Connecticut will allow us to expand the classroom to the art museums, sculpture gardens, botanic gardens, farms, and parks that are near and just within reach. Students will keep a travel journal.

BON APPÉTIT: LET'S LEARN ABOUT FRENCH CULTURE THROUGH FOOD!

Mr. Karolinski

This course is designed for the Francophile in all of us and is open to all students, regardless of which language they speak. In this hands-on course, you will be whipping up traditional dishes while tackling and using practical, basic French vocabulary, and learning about the history, geography, and regional diversity of France through its cuisine. Come and discover why France is the culinary capital of the world! You'll have that certain "je ne sais quoi" before you can say "déjà vu"!

THE BIG READ: MOBY-DICK

Mr. Jones & Mr. Kravitz

Much of the time at school, we read novels in an unnatural way—an assigned number of pages at regular, spaced intervals. Most people, when asked to describe their best reading experiences, describe something quite different—immersive, propulsive, transporting. This course will provide the time and space for an immersive reading of the greatest novel in the English language: Moby-Dick, or The Whale, by Herman Melville. Moby-Dick is alternately breathtaking and confounding, mesmerizing and



mystifying; we will plunge into its "unshored, harborless immensities" and see what happens. Some of the time, we will engage in discussion and journaling; we'll take a field trip to one of several pilgrimage sites within a day's drive. Mostly, we will be reading Moby-Dick, which in itself promises to be immensely rewarding, both intellectually and personally. Melville himself hinted at the potential rewards in a letter to his frenemy Nathaniel Hawthorne: "In me divine magnanimities are spontaneous and instantaneous -- catch them while you can."

DESIGN THINKING

Ms. Yuen

Build a prototype that provides an innovative solution to a problem (big or small) that you face in your day-to-day life. In producing this early product, you will learn actionable tools for synthesizing information, navigating ambiguity, experimenting rapidly, and communicating deliberately. At the end of the course, you will craft a market-ready pitch to present to a stakeholder or potential investor.

DISNEY ADAPTATIONS: A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Ms. Pembroke

Open to Grades 10,11 & 12

Have you noticed all the new live-action Disney movies that are coming out? Between The Lion King, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, and Cinderella, lately it seems that almost every "classic" is getting an updated adaptation. Students will study and unpack various Disney animated films alongside their contemporary "adaptations" and deconstruct the meanings and messages behind the stories. Students will also question and analyze what exactly

an adaptation is and what the release of these contemporary films seems to suggest about our cultural moment.

DRAGONS IN THE WILD

Dr. Jump & Mr. Serach

This will be an experiential learning course in being outdoors. As we explore the wild places around GFA and across Connecticut, we will learn through doing. Skills we will practice may include hiking, map-reading and orienteering, outdoor cooking, camping, and canoeing. As we interact with and learn how to make our way in the natural world, we will ask ourselves important questions. What does it mean to live competently and responsibly outside of the urban environments to which we are accustomed? What can the outdoors offer us? What are our responsibilities to the outdoors? And how can we live well as a collective, share the responsibilities of leadership, and learn to function as a team?

This course will culminate in a required overnight camping trip in one of Connecticut's beautiful state parks. To make the most of our time outside, we will leave campus promptly at 8am each day.

EXPLORING MATHEMATICS THROUGH MAGIC

Mr. Matte

This course is designed to introduce students to a number of mathematical concepts, using magic as a backdrop. Through a wide selection of tricks, students will explore the fields of number theory, combinatorics, probability, algebra, geometry, and topology (among others), while learning a bit about the successful presentation of magic. No advanced level of mathematics or experience with magic is required but enrolled students should have an interest in mathematics and have successfully completed Math 300, Math 350, or beyond.

THE GREAT GFA BAKE OFF: CREATING & PRODUCING BAKING SHOWS

Ms. Comer & Ms. O'Donovan

Do you ever find yourself watching the Food Network for hours on end? Do you wonder what it would be like to be on a competitive baking show? If so, come learn about how baking shows are produced through the creation of our replica of "The Great British Bake Off". We will be analyzing episodes of baking shows, cultivating content with food, and filming and editing an episode of The Great GFA Bake Off. Sign up to see if you have what it takes to make it to the final...

IN PURSUIT OF PURPOSE

Dr. Gerdes & Ms. Wilchinsky

How does a young woman from Mexico City go from being a waitress to creating clean energy as an engineer at a nuclear power plant? How can food waste become the biofuel of the future? How do art and music therapists engage individuals with profound



learning difficulties to express themselves and thrive? How can working alongside marginalized individuals provide volunteers with a sense of understanding and purpose? How does what you are doing now as a student at GFA help you to identify and prepare for lives or purpose? In this course, we'll partner with members of our community to do the hard and thrilling work of addressing current crises like sustainability, global warming, food security, homelessness, and the long-term needs of children with learning issues. We'll learn about how these individuals found their lives of purpose in careers and volunteer work and we'll go into the community to do service ourselves. Through conversations, interviews, readings, and reflection, we will find common threads and life lessons, which we will share with the GFA community in our culminating project.

INTRODUCTION TO EXERCISE SCIENCE AND SPORT HISTORY

Mr. Hoffstein & Ms. Kirkup

This course will examine best practices for strength, conditioning, and coaching, with an eye on the core concepts of exercise science. Students will work on creating small group lessons and coaching sessions that help with understanding and appreciating how the body adapts to exercise. They will then study the role of sport in their lives and our country's history, including a look at those who have been discriminated against in sport because of race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. The course will include visiting speakers and visits to sites of interest that will deepen students' appreciation of the role of sports in our culture.

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS

Mr. Abel & Ms. Oseguera

Steven Pinker says that humans have the remarkable ability to shape events in each other's brains with exquisite precision through the use of language. This class will explore central questions around the nature and use of human language. How do humans acquire language? How do sounds and words work to make language happen? Why is it so difficult to acquire a second language? How is speaking and listening different from reading

and writing? Answering these questions will expose students to a deeper understanding of the physiological and ontological complexities of human language.

JAZZ IMPROVISATION 101

Dr. Cadwallader

This course is directed toward the student who wants to go beyond simply reading music and explore the realms of improvisation. The thrill of creating music “on the fly,” of learning how to invent and give structure to a solo by interpreting chords, rhythms, and melodies, is fun and exciting. The course may include a trip to a real jazz club, either locally or in the jazz capital of the world, New York City! As a culminating experience, students should expect to perform both in front of the class and at the end of May Term. Students should have a reasonable fluency on their instruments and should be fearless in their approach to creating new music.

KILLER COURSE

Ms. Teyan & Ms. Van Hatten

Open to Grades 11 & 12

Are you fascinated by true crime? Do you wonder if criminals are born or made? Do you want to know how criminals are caught and convicted? Join us as we learn the biology and psychology behind some of the world’s most notorious criminals and their crimes. Learn how their crimes were solved with the use of forensic psychology, criminal profiling, DNA testing, and brain imaging. Apply your knowledge of forensic psychology, criminal profiling, and science to solve a heinous crime and catch the murderer before they strike again.

MOCK TRIAL

Ms. Fratto & Dr. Freeman

Innocent or guilty? Accidental death? Suicide? Insurance fraud? This May Term course will introduce students to the use of legal reasoning and argument in the context of trial advocacy. The course will walk students through preparation for a mock trial of a fictional civil or criminal case. Students will learn about the various aspects of a legal procedure and will prepare short briefs and oral arguments, culminating in a trial at the end of the week. Students will have the opportunity to play the role of both attorney and witness. Our work to understand the court system will include meeting with practicing professionals.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Ms. Ibarcena

In this course, we will simulate the United Nations to learn about diplomacy and current global events. We will learn about the history and structure of the UN and then dive deep into several global issues currently facing the international community. You will take on the role of a UN member to argue for your delegation’s policy objectives, and you can expect to take part in fast-paced crisis simulations. Previous participation in the Model UN club or trip is not required. If possible, we hope to visit the United Nations in New York City.

MOVIES & MADNESS: HOW THE MEDIA DISTORTS OUR PERCEPTIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. McCloskey & Ms. McGee

Movies & Madness will explore how mental health is portrayed, not only in movies but in all forms of media, ranging from movies to TV shows, books to magazines, news programs to social media. The course will examine the stigmatization and marginalization of people with mental health disorders, an issue exacerbated by misleading and negative images presented in the media. The course will also provide a very basic scientific explanation of different psychological disorders and their treatment.

ONE STRUGGLE, ONE FIGHT: THE LGBTQ+ CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE US

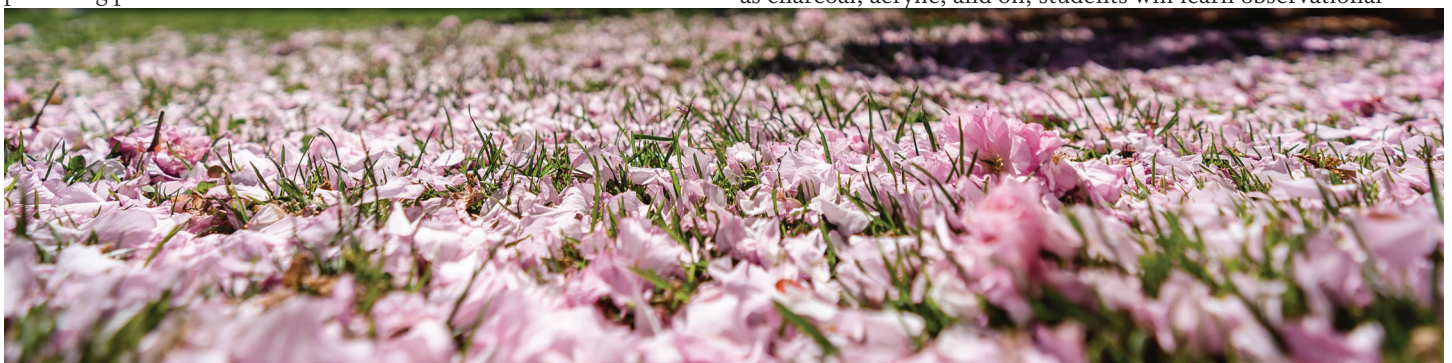
Ms. Bergeron

Experience the colorful and heartbreaking narrative of the LGBTQ+ Community’s fight for equal rights and recognition. Meet some of the social justice pioneers who were there and fought on the front lines of the movement. Take a field trip to the historic Stonewall Inn and get a sense of history. Using the compelling stories that you will hear, devise a means of social protest that will have an impact on the school, the local community, the country and the world.

PAINTING AND DRAWING THROUGH OBSERVATION

Ms. Betancourt & Mr. Dalesio

Through the in-depth exploration of traditional mediums such as charcoal, acrylic, and oil, students will learn observational



skills to interpret the world around them. In a warm and creative environment, we will work on different themes, including still lifes, portraits, and plein-air painting. Classes will include outdoor activities, museum visits, and studio time. Students will be given the space to create their works of art independently and partake in a collaborative learning environment.

A PUZZLER'S PARADISE!

Ms. Hunt & Mr. Martocchio

Please join us and embark on a journey into the world of puzzling. Whether you love crosswords, strategy games, or escape rooms, there will be something for you: puzzles (both new and old), logic games, sudoku, jigsaws, and so much more. Together we will enjoy not only solving, but even creating our own puzzles! You're the missing piece to A Puzzler's Paradise, and we hope you'll help us complete the puzzle. Let's get solving; you can start right now with this rebus!



REAL LIFE 101

Ms. Hynes & Ms. Fellows

Open to Grade 12

Seniors, adulthood is coming your way quickly and this course is here to help. Real Life 101 will dive into the skills that will prepare you for life beyond GFA. The course will cover everything from personal finance to health and safety on campus. Topics will include how to create a budget, why your credit score is important, the basics of auto care, banking, safe travel, working, campus safety, and more... The course will include hands-on activities, outside speakers, and connections to resources and experts in our community. Students will leave with a toolkit of knowledge that will support them as they head out into the real world.

THE SCIENCE OF THRILL RIDES!

Mr. Ramaley & Dr. Kuhn

Why take a field trip to an amusement park? If physics teachers could design the ultimate teaching laboratory, what would it be like? The laboratory would certainly contain devices for illustrating Newton's laws of motion, energy transformations, momentum conservation, and the dynamics of rotation. It would consist of large-scale apparatuses so the phenomena could be easily observed and analyzed. Oh, and of course the dream laboratory would allow

the students an opportunity to not only witness the laws of physics in operation but also feel them! Well, this dream laboratory does exist and virtually all the topics included in the study of mechanics can be observed operating on a grand scale at amusement parks. Amusement Park Physics will take a look at the physics and math behind popular amusement park rides, give participants a chance to design their own model roller coasters, and of course take a trip to a local amusement park!

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INDIGENOUS VIEWPOINTS AND SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

Dr. Heenehan & Ms. O'Grady

Immersing ourselves in the three ecosystems and the garden we share at GFA, this course will integrate science and indigenous perspectives into our connection with nature and the outdoors. Students will seek to understand the components of these ecosystems along with the history of the land we reside on, acknowledging the story of this place, then, now, and in the future. The course draws inspiration from books, including Braiding Sweetgrass by Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, and will have students out in the three ecosystems on a daily basis, working cross-divisionally and collaboratively with students from other May Term courses.

WAR AND FILM

Mr. Meatto & Mr. Morrison

This course will provide students with an opportunity to explore the different ways that warfare is depicted in film. Students will view a collection of war films with the goal of examining how directors depict conflict, screenwriters grapple with issues of morality and meaning in the context of conflict, and films influence our understanding of history. Students will be expected to reflect on course material in a journal and develop a proposal for a filmic treatment of a specific conflict.

WRITING FOR THE SCREEN: THE ONE-ACT ZOOM PLAY

Mr. Coll

What are the elements of a compelling drama? What makes a great script or screenplay? In this course, students will learn and apply the basics of dramatic writing by imagining, composing, staging, and recording a one-act Zoom Play. (Interested in what a Zoom Play is? Come and ask me, or just sign up!) Whether your one-act is comedic, dramatic, horrific, romantic, mysterious, or dystopian, you'll learn about character development, dialogue, and dramatic action.

MISSION STATEMENT

GFA engages students as partners in an innovative, inclusive, and globally minded community to prepare them for lives of purpose.

PHILOSOPHY

PARTNERS

Our students collaborate with teachers to develop their voices to effect change, to become lifelong learners who take ownership of their educations, and to have an instinct for self-reflection that builds character and drives improvement.

INNOVATIVE

Building on a demanding curriculum, our faculty seeks innovative and effective methods to help students cultivate the skills and habits of mind necessary to excel.

INCLUSIVE

GFA strives to create a diverse community that values the identities, perspectives, and experiences of all its members.

GLOBALLY MINDED

We empower our students to discover their place in the world and help them to become globally competent citizens engaged in building a sustainable future.

CORE VALUES

PASSION • INTEGRITY • EMPATHY • CURIOSITY • EXCELLENCE



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