



THADEN
SCHOOL

Upper School Course Offerings

Academic Year 2024-25

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Letter From the Head of School

Thaden Families,

Over the past year, our faculty and academic leadership team have been working creatively and collaboratively to prepare an engaging and challenging set of course offerings for the 2024-25 academic year. I am pleased to announce that the Upper School offerings are now ready for students to view.

The many pathways through our Upper School curriculum all lead to independence. Whether our students are reading *Macbeth*, exploring Northwest Arkansas food systems, testing the laws of physics, or writing and staging a one-act play, they will learn how to think, speak, and act for themselves. Our curriculum is designed to develop not only the critical thinking skills of discerning citizens, but also the empathy and curiosity of scholars who can explore complex questions from many perspectives. We also strive to help students balance their convictions with humility and respect for civil discourse and free inquiry. Finally, a Thaden education should fill students with confidence in themselves and a joy in learning that lifts them up and carries them far on the road to independence.

In March and April, our students will chart their continuing course of study at Thaden in close consultation with their families, teachers, and academic advisors. We encourage all parents to partner with us in this process. Enjoy the course offerings, and please do not hesitate to share questions with Jessica Bonnem, Head of Upper School.

Together we fly!

Clayton K. Marsh
Founding Head of School

Mission and Guiding Principles

Our mission is to provide a balanced and challenging education that ignites in our students a passion for discovery and learning, prepares them to succeed in college, and inspires them to lead lives of integrity, purpose, and responsible global citizenship.

In pursuing our mission, we are guided by these principles:

- The diversity of a school is essential to the quality of education that it provides.
- In a small school, students are better able to form close relationships with teachers that will give them a strong sense of belonging, self-confidence, and responsibility.
- There is an art in masterful teaching, which requires resources, mentorship, and recognition.
- A well-balanced curriculum empowers students:
 - To think ethically, critically, and creatively about global issues and their local manifestations;
 - To see connections among the humanities, sciences, and mathematics as integrative disciplines in the search for knowledge, meaning, and beauty;
 - To build coherent, compelling, and innovative arguments;
 - To establish their voice in the world by writing and speaking well and expressing themselves creatively;
 - To work independently and collaboratively.
- Activities outside of the classroom (such as acting in a play, competing on a team, or working on a sustainability project) give students essential opportunities to develop as leaders, volunteers, and contributors to the life and spirit of the greater community.
- A school must create a safe and healthy environment where students have time and space for reflection, freedom to make important decisions, and opportunities to learn from mistakes.
- The harmony of a school community depends on a shared commitment to honesty, compassion, and fair play.

Overview

Giving equal emphasis to the sciences and humanities, Thaden School's graduation requirements are designed to ensure that students build a strong and balanced foundation across all major disciplines. While our curriculum respects the boundaries of the core academic disciplines so that students understand how scientists, artists, mathematicians, historians, and others create knowledge and understand the world, the course of study within a given discipline often intersects with other disciplines in ways that help students discover larger patterns and explore broad topics and questions from multiple angles.

Our commitment to interdisciplinary problem solving also finds rich expression within the context of our three signature programs – Meals, Reels, and Wheels – where students combine multiple fields of study and engage with community partners in ways that foster a strong sense of civic responsibility. Intensives and other forms of independent study as well as Community-Based Learning (CBL) courses provide further opportunities for students to form and investigate their own questions from many perspectives.

While our curriculum committee and academic leadership oversee the development of our academic program to ensure consistency and coherence, we leverage the special interests and expertise of our nationally recruited faculty by giving them considerable discretion in the design of their courses. Our faculty use a wide range of pedagogical methods – from seminar-style discussions to community-engaged projects – that collectively enhance students' versatility as problem solvers who can work independently and collaboratively in a rapidly changing world.

By virtue of our Indexed Tuition program and small class sizes, we also offer a classroom experience in which students of many interests, aspirations, and backgrounds share and explore different points of view under the guidance of nurturing, even-handed educators. As our students discover their common ground and learn from their differences, they grow better prepared for life and citizenship in a nation founded upon a shared commitment to the value of civil debate and diversity of thought.

Our approach to the assessment of academic work is designed to foster a “growth mindset” and resilience in the face of challenge. In particular, our standards-based grading practices illuminate the path to self-improvement by helping students focus on the skills and habits essential to their success at Thaden and beyond. Given our small class sizes, we also expect faculty to provide their students with detailed written feedback and personal encouragement that builds their self-confidence and ignites a lifelong passion for learning and discovery.

Graduation Requirements

Thaden School's graduation requirements ensure that all students build a strong and balanced foundation, while also offering freedom to explore and develop a wide range of interests.

Program	Credits	Notes
English	4	The required sequence in Grades 9-12 (English I, II, III, IV) fulfills this four-credit requirement.
Mathematics and Computer Science	4	The required sequence in Grades 9-11 (Algebra I-II and Geometry) fulfills three credits of this four-credit requirement. Algebra I taken in Middle School counts as one Upper School math credit.
History and Social Sciences	3	The required sequence in Grades 9-11 (Modern World History, US Government and Economics, US History) fulfills this three-credit requirement.
Science	3	The required sequence in Grades 9-10 (Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences, Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences) and one additional year-long course fulfills this three-credit requirement.
World Languages and Cultures	3	Students must study the same language for at least two consecutive years in the Upper School. World language study in Middle School may count for up to one credit.
Signature Programs	2	Students may choose elective courses in three areas: Meals, Reels, and Wheels.
Visual and Performing Arts	2	Students may choose elective courses in three areas: music, theater, and visual arts.
Wellness and Physical Education	2	Students in Grades 9 and 11 are required to take a one-trimester Wellness course. Students must earn one Physical Education (PE) credit each year in the Upper School by taking a one-trimester PE elective or by participating on a Thaden athletics team.
Additional Courses	3	This requirement may be fulfilled by taking elective courses in any field of study at Thaden School.
Total	26	As a general matter, students are expected to take seven courses per trimester.
<p>While fulfilling these requirements, students must also take at least three courses that carry the Community-Based Learning (CBL) designation.</p> <p>In most cases, one credit equals three trimesters of study. The number of credits required represent the minimum that a student must earn to fulfill that requirement. Thaden School's graduation requirements exceed Arkansas state standards.</p>		

Academic Policies

Course Selection

Thaden School's Upper School course selection process will begin on March 4, 2024. Students start the process by referring to this guide and setting their long-range academic goals as well as their specific selections for the upcoming year. During this planning phase, students are encouraged to consult with their parents, advisor, college counselor, teachers, and assistant head of school.

When students have identified their desired course of study for the upcoming year, they should complete the course selection form through the school portal. Course selections are due on April 5, 2024.

Advanced Coursework

At many schools, especially those serving students with a broad range of academic trajectories and needs, courses that are specifically designed to prepare students for college often carry the Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) designation in order to signal their academic rigor. Thaden does not offer an AP or IB program because our required course of study, consistent with our mission, is designed to prepare students for success at even the most academically challenging colleges and universities.

Thaden does offer opportunities for students to take advanced courses, which are denoted on the transcript – and in the Course Offerings Guide – with an asterisk (*). Students who enroll in an advanced course are expected to have a high degree of facility and fluency in the fundamental skills of the course's discipline, as well as high degrees of curiosity, preparation, and initiative both inside and outside of the classroom. They should expect to proactively find, consult, and effectively use resources to problem solve and extend their knowledge and skills. Advanced courses offer exciting and challenging opportunities for students to deepen and apply their knowledge and skills to develop meaningful and authentic work products.

Independent Study

Students who have exhausted Thaden School's course offerings in a particular area of study may submit a proposal for an independent study, which they complete in partnership with a faculty mentor. Independent Study courses are graded on a Pass/No Credit basis.

Senior Thesis

In the spring of the junior year, a student may submit a proposal for a senior thesis project. Senior theses are an opportunity to pursue original research, in partnership with faculty mentors. Students may develop their projects from ideas sparked by past courses or pursue topics of long-standing personal interest. Senior theses are graded on a Pass/No Credit basis.

Course Add/Drop Policies

Thaden School conducts its course registration process prior to scheduling course meeting times for the following academic year with the goal of accommodating students' preferences to the fullest extent possible. Once the schedule has been constructed, changes may be difficult or even

impossible, and students may be precluded from altering their schedule due to conflicts, class sizes, or other factors.

Students may request to drop and add courses during the first two weeks of the academic year for year-long courses and the first week of the trimester for trimester-long courses. To initiate the process of dropping and adding courses, students should complete the course add and drop forms (available on the school portal and in Coleman) by indicating which courses they wish to drop and add and obtaining the signed approval of their advisor, parent or guardian, and the relevant course instructors. Completed forms should be submitted to the registrar, who makes the final decision in consultation with the academic leadership team.

A student who drops a course receives no credit for that course and the course does not appear on the student's transcript. Students who add courses are responsible for making up all work assigned prior to their enrollment.

Grading and Assessment

Thaden School faculty use a system called Standards-Based Grading (SBG). In this system, students are evaluated based on their proficiency in meeting clearly-articulated course objectives. Instead of receiving a single overall grade, SBG breaks down subject matter into smaller "learning targets." We employ Standards-Based Grading practices because the learning goals and ratings provide students with more specific information about their progress, above and beyond what a letter grade can reveal.

To communicate students' Standards-Based ratings, Thaden School allows students and families to see their cumulative learning progression ratings at all times, and also releases progress reports at the end of each trimester. Upper School students receive ratings on their progress in meeting specific learning goals for each course as well as letter grades. In addition, students receive narrative comments from their teachers twice a year and a personal letter at the end of the year, written by their advisor or another member of the faculty, that reflects on their growth.

The specific learning goals are divided into two categories:

Skills

- Factual Knowledge: accurately recalls and uses factual information and vocabulary
- Conceptual Understanding: grasps fundamental ideas, constructs, frameworks, and theories
- Procedural Technique: understands and follows disciplinary methods and processes
- Critical Thinking: effectively analyzes complex problems using factual knowledge, conceptual understandings, and procedural techniques
- Communication: clearly and/or persuasively articulates ideas and arguments with appreciation for the audience and context
- Creativity and Originality: generates and advances novel ideas, products, or points of view

Habits

- Preparation: brings relevant materials to class and effectively manages time
- Initiative and Perseverance: actively engages in the learning process and demonstrates an eagerness to improve
- Collaboration: works well in diverse groups to achieve a common goal

While students may cultivate many, if not most, of these Skills and Habits in each of their courses, progress reports identify and rate only the goals that a teacher deems most important in the context of a given course. A student's progress with respect to each goal is rated numerically on a four-point scale, indicating the degree to which the student has progressed in meeting grade-level expectations: (1) Beginning; (2) Approaching; (3) Proficient; (4) Exemplary. The absence of a rating next to a certain Skill or Habit indicates that not enough information or data has yet been collected to provide meaningful feedback.

Thaden uses a decaying average to calculate students' overarching scores in each skill and habit. The decaying average formula is a calculation method that places more weight on the most recently scored material, allowing for a better measure of growth by rewarding students for how far they have come regardless of where they started. To translate ratings into letter grades, faculty take the average of a student's overall rating in each of the course's identified transdisciplinary skills – only skills, not habits – and then use the following conversion scale:

A	>3.5
A-	3.25-3.49
B+	3.0-3.24
B	2.75-2.99
B-	2.5-2.74
C+	2.25-2.49
C	2.0-2.24
C-	1.75-1.99
D	1.5-1.74
NC (no credit)	<1.49

Course Offerings

English

Required Courses

English I: Journeys and Transformations

This year-long course introduces students to the study of literature as an academic discipline. As students read texts in many forms and from many periods and places, such as Homer's *The Odyssey*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, and Portis' *True Grit*, they investigate the importance of storytelling in the human experience through the lenses of journeys and transformations. Using annotation and other close-reading strategies, students deepen their understanding of the course texts. In addition, they write numerous analytical paragraphs and three extended essays, while also exploring their own journeys and transformations through autobiographical and creative writing assignments. Seminar-style discussions develop students' oral presentation skills and their ability to listen actively and contribute, one of the hallmarks of a Thaden education.

Required for Grade 9

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

English II: Individuals and Communities

This year-long course builds on the reading, writing, and thinking skills students develop in English I, applying them with greater sophistication and to more complex texts. Students read books such as Dürrenmatt's *The Visit*, Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Kelley's *A Different Drummer*, Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, and Morrison's *Sula*. Focusing on individuals and communities, they investigate fundamental questions related to the formation and negotiation of one's identity relative to the status quo. Through reading, writing, and critical conversations, students explore how one becomes oneself; how society shapes an individual; how societies can be just or unjust; and how individuals contribute to the formation and preservations of just societies. These questions – and many more – emerge through textual encounters that span periods and genres, from graphic memoir and horror to fabulism, realism, and bildungsroman. While students continue to work on their writing at the paragraph level, their focus is primarily on extended pieces, including four major papers and creative and reflective responses.

Required for Grade 10

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

English III-A: Money and Power

This year-long course uses literature as a lens to explore the roles of money and power in the human experience. Students read works such as Diaz’s *Trust*, Garcia Marquez’s *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, and Whitehead’s *The Nickel Boys*, along with selected poems and short stories. These texts raise fundamental questions about how money and power reveal and shape the human heart. What do people truly value and deeply desire? What forces influence those yearnings? To what lengths will individuals go to get what they want? Is it true that “absolute power corrupts absolutely” and “the love of money is the root of all evil?” Is it possible to have great wealth and great power, yet be *good*? These questions are more than literary hypotheticals. They have shaped our world for centuries. As students develop thoughts around these questions, they hone their writing skills by crafting extended argumentative essays that analyze text and communicate complex ideas clearly. Students also spend significant time writing personal essays in preparation for the college application process.

Required for Grade 11 (students must enroll in English III-A or B)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

English III-B: Love and Loyalty

This year-long course uses literature as a lens to explore the varied roles of love and loyalty in the human experience. Within friendships, family, romance, and other unique kinds of community, threads of love and loyalty are frequently explored and questioned, pointing to the myriad ways in which humans connect and, alternately, disconnect from one another. Students in this course read works that address these themes such as Diaz’s *Trust*, Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*, and Shakespeare’s *Othello*. These texts highlight key questions about human relationships: how and why do we sustain genuine connections with others? How do we trust and come to know one another? What do we do when love or loyalty is tested and what might those tests look like? To delve into these kinds of thematic questions, students hone their critical thinking and reading skills through seminar-style discussions. In addition, students share their ideas through extended argumentative essays that analyze the text and communicate complex ideas clearly.

Required for Grade 11 (students must enroll in English III-A or B)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

English IV-A: Tragedy

Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle once defined tragedy as “an imitation of life.” This year-long senior English course is the study of the tragic tradition in literature. The course studies the evolution of tragedy, considering famous tragic works such as Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, and Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, along with selected poems and short stories. As students study these works, they continue to hone their analytical reading and writing skills in preparation for college. They also explore tragedy’s role in the human experience. This course probes questions such as: What is tragedy and what is its artistic purpose? To what

extent does tragedy shape society? How has it changed over time? And, perhaps most importantly, if life is full of pain, why do we need to experience it in art?

Required for Grade 12 (students must enroll in English IV-A or B)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

English IV-B: Comedy

Erma Bombeck, a 20th century American humorist, once said, “When comedy goes, there goes civilization.” This year-long senior English course is the study of the comic tradition in literature. The course studies the evolution of comedy, considering famous comedic works such as Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse 5*, Moliere’s *Tartuffe*, Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and Stoppard’s *Arcadia*, along with selected humorous essays. As students study these works, they continue to hone their analytical reading and writing skills in preparation for college. They also explore comedy’s role in society. This course – ironically enough – takes Bombeck’s quote seriously by asking questions such as: What’s funny? Why do we laugh? To what extent does comedy shape and critique society? How has comedy changed over time? What can it do that tragedy cannot? And, perhaps most importantly, why do we need it?

Required for Grade 12 (students must enroll in English IV-A or B)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Elective Courses

Creative Writing: Memoirs and Personal Essays

Montaigne, Renaissance inventor of the modern essay, insisted, “I quote others only to better express myself.” Memoirs and personal essays are a genre of creative writing that is an alluring centaur blurring the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, borrowing from both, obeying neither. In this trimester-long elective, students have the chance to hone their storytelling skills through various modes of short-form creative nonfiction writing, such as personal essays, memoirs, and commentaries. After gaining familiarity with the genre and reading essays by classical and contemporary writers such as Montaigne, Joan Didion, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, students write several creative nonfiction pieces of their own. The course helps students develop their creative abilities as they work through the steps of the invention process from the early stages of brainstorming and invention to revising drafts and polishing a final product. While students work independently to build a portfolio, creative collaboration is an important part of this course as well. Regular writing workshops serve as a forum for students to present their ideas, share progress, and exchange constructive feedback. Polished drafts may be submitted to Thaden’s literary journal for publication.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Creative Writing: Poetry

Elizabethan sonneteer Philip Sidney envisioned the poet as an alchemist, who could transmute our world from bronze to gold. Celebrated American poet Robert Frost described poetry as something that “begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a lovesickness,” while John Ciardi insisted that verse was the “road to truth.” Are poets truth tellers, soul revealers, or philosophical alchemists? This trimester-long elective course allows students the chance to discover the possibilities of poetry first-hand by crafting their own verse. The trimester begins with an examination of major verse types, rhyme schemes, and poetic structures, with selections from writers like Paul Fussel and John Hollander. In the main, however, this course emphasizes practice over theory. Once students gain familiarity with poetic forms, they experiment with writing their own poetic verse across a variety of established forms such as the sonnet, the ode, the sestina and the villanelle, which they incorporate into a poetry portfolio by the end of the term. While students work independently to create their poetry portfolio, creative collaboration is an important part of this course as well. Regular writing workshops provide a forum for students to present their ideas, share progress, and exchange constructive feedback. Polished drafts may be submitted to Thaden’s literary journal for publication.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Creative Writing: Short Fiction

Celebrated novelist Joseph Conrad once observed, “Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life.” This trimester-long elective offers students the opportunity to explore the possibilities of their imaginations and hone their creative writing skills by inventing and writing short stories. After a brief introduction to the elements of fiction and a survey of key short story authors, students immerse themselves in the craft of world making, which is at the heart of short story writing. The course helps students develop their fiction writing abilities as they work through the steps of the creative process from the early stages of plot sketches and character development to draft-writing and editing. While students work independently to build their own short story portfolio, creative collaboration is an important part of this course as well. Regular writing workshops provide a forum for students to present their ideas, share progress, and exchange constructive feedback. Polished drafts may be submitted to Thaden’s literary journal for publication.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Film Theory

This is a course about reading film, about understanding how visual and aural languages work together to create a cohesive meaning. Students are exposed to a variety of concepts through two perspectives: the feminist and the socio-economic. We discuss the Billy Wilder film “Double Indemnity” (1944) in the context of female power and analyze the Bong Joon Ho film “Parasite”

(2019) from the socio-economic perspective. The course builds off the students' pre-existing experiences in the Reels program by working with various filmic concepts (framing, shot selection, angles, transitions, mise-en-scène, etc.) to explore a more literary and theoretically based understanding of the medium. This course challenges students as audience members and creators, and opens a dialogue of analysis. In addition, students are exposed to academic readings and ideas around film theory.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs

Prerequisites: None

Hardboiled Literature and Film

Hardboiled literature generally begins with a crime and follows a hero with non-heroic qualities, whom we refer to as an anti-hero, through their journey into the underbelly of a corrupt society. The stories often focus on the anti-hero's questionable and unique code of ethics just as much as the crime or mystery. The class examines the circumstances out of which this genre grew, its defining characteristics (including its depiction of gender roles), and why it continues to flourish across cultures. The course focuses on the shared structural elements between the books and movies, and how they expressed the prevailing themes of the post-war world, and then asks whether these themes are relevant in the 21st century. Students read Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* and watch the films "The Killers" (Robert Siodmak, 1946), "Yojimbo" (Akira Kurosawa, 1961), and "Long Day's Journey Into Night" (Bi Gan, 2018), as well as short stories and various short clips. There is an emphasis on cinematic realism, existentialism, narrative structure, and character archetypes, with one overarching question: Why does this genre still speak to us? In addition, students are exposed to academic readings and both film and literary theory.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs

Prerequisites: None

Post-War Literature and Film

This course studies the cultural milieu surrounding the aftermaths of World War I (The Great War) and World War II. Students read a novel and study a film from each post-war era, as well as selected poetry and art, to examine how society collectively and artistically processes the trauma of war (and trauma in general). Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1927) and the film "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari" (Weine 1920) provide insights into the aftermath of The Great War as students examine how society and individuals processed the trauma of war and the accelerated changes of the 1920's both psychologically and artistically. This unit focuses on the themes of disillusionment and liberation that accompanied the massive societal realignment following the war. For World War II, students read Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1942) and watch "The Third Man" (Reed 1950). This unit focuses on post-war existentialism as a means through which individuals and society processed two world wars and the Holocaust. For each war, students also examine the concepts of progress and culture that led to the elimination of entire generations on the battlefield.

Open to Grades 9-12
1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs
Prerequisites: None

Writers' Room

In this trimester-long elective, students experience the fast-paced environment of a television writers' room, working collaboratively to develop a series from scratch. Students begin by pitching series ideas and collaboratively writing an outline, beat sheet, and character profiles. After that, each student is responsible for writing one episode of the series independently while also workshopping their and classmates' drafts. Students are encouraged to share opinions and observations and learn to hone the ability to apply and give feedback throughout the course. Academically, students gain new insight into story structure, character development, and scene analysis. They also discover world building and themes through close interpretation and analysis of their own work and that of their peers.

Open to Grades 9-12
1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs
Prerequisites: None

Dante's *Inferno*: Reimagining Hell and Poetry*

This trimester-long course takes students on a journey through the nine circles of hell in Dante's *Inferno* (1321). Students encounter a host of sinners from myth and history along the way. Crooked politicians fight each other for eternity while demons beat popes and Greek heroes are imprisoned in flames. This course offers a deep dive into the first canticle ("part") of Dante's phantasmagoric three-part "Divina Commedia," which chronicles Dante's trek from the depths of hell through purgatory to the heights of paradise. Students explore the *Inferno* and encounter more than creative (and often hilarious) torments – while also encountering a reinvention of epic poetry. While poems like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are concerned with war and political strife, Dante's poem turns inward with more modern, personal fears like crisis of conscience and loss of faith. This course also poses questions about the influence of *Inferno* on modern literature and culture.

Open to Grades 11-12
1/3 Credit
Prerequisites: None

Yearbook: *The Screech*

Among the traditions that signal the end of another academic year, the yearbook is the most enduring. It is a full-color, hardback time capsule preserving the events, people, and memories of the most formative years of a student's life. It's an exercise in story-telling and writing, graphic design and photography. This course is a two-trimester elective dedicated to the creation of *The Screech*,

Thaden's annual yearbook. Join the Yearbook staff in telling the story of the community, creating an enduring keepsake, and learning valuable skills that translate into the workforce. Community partners may include the Bentonville Public Library and the *Northwest Arkansas Gazette*. Digital media will come and go, but the yearbook is forever.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Mathematics and Computer Science

Required Courses

Algebra I

In this year-long course, students learn the basic structure of algebra while further developing their problem-solving and critical thinking skills. With a focus on data collection and analysis, students explore key properties of functions and their corresponding tables, graphs, and equations. Students analyze data and make inferences and predictions in the pursuit of communicating mathematical ideas clearly. Beyond modeling data, students also extend the properties of exponents to exponential equations and compare and contrast linear and exponential functions. Students also develop their understanding of quadratic functions through exploration and applicable word problems. The course offers a wide array of learning opportunities that develop students' ability to communicate and reason mathematically.

Required in math sequence (Grade 8 or 9)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Geometry

This year-long course focuses on the development of geometrical vocabulary, problem-solving skills, mathematical communication, and logical proof. Students develop these skills with a variety of physical and digital tools that allow them to apply their knowledge constructively and creatively. Students also learn to work individually and collaboratively to solve problems, convey their thought processes, and communicate their results – verbally and in writing. Activities and assignments in this course push students to recognize the wide spectrum of mathematical questions, from the abstract to the applied.

Required in math sequence (Grade 9 or 10)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Algebra I

Algebra II

This year-long course takes students into a variety of function families and enables them to integrate algebraic symbols and equations with tabular, graphical, and algorithmic representations. Students begin the year by spiraling back to linear and quadratic functions. With these core skills, they then survey other major function families (*e.g.*, radical, rational, exponential, and logarithmic) and enhance their algebraic toolkit with additional models to represent real-world phenomena. The course prepares students for college entrance exams, more advanced courses in mathematics, and other math-intensive STEM courses (*e.g.*, physics and computer science).

Required in math sequence (Grade 10 or 11; students must enroll in either Algebra II or Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Algebra I and Geometry

Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus

The scope of this year-long course is equivalent to that of Algebra II and Precalculus combined. Covering the same set of concepts and procedural skills, it moves at a much quicker pace, beginning with a study of polynomial functions that generalizes and builds on students' familiarity with linear and quadratic functions. Students then explore a host of transcendental functions (*e.g.*, radical, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric), paying close attention to the unique properties of each function family, those they share in common, and other relationships among them (*e.g.*, inverses). In preparation for future calculus and advanced mathematics courses, students devote considerable practice to simplifying complicated expressions, equations, and functions. Students enrolling in this course should have strong number and algebra skills and an appetite for being challenged.

Required in math sequence (Grade 10 or 11; students must enroll in either Algebra II or Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus)

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Algebra I and Geometry

Elective Courses

Introduction to Cryptography

Cryptography has arguably one of the most interesting histories, coupled with essential applications for daily life. The beginning of written language was very quickly followed by writing in code. Secrecy is an invaluable tool and has been at the center stage of an evolution advanced by the battle between two groups, code makers and code breakers. This trimester-long course explores cryptography from beginnings, such as Leonidas receiving warning of Xerxes' plans and the Caesar cypher to stories about Mary Queen of Scots, The Beale papers, the Enigma machine, and Navajo Code Talkers. The course ends with Public Key Cryptography and RSA encryption. Students also learn techniques for creating ciphers and codes and the mathematics behind the making and breaking of them.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Programming I

This year-long course provides a practical introduction to programming in the Python language. Students explore not only theoretical issues (*e.g.*, algorithms and object-oriented and functional approaches to programming) but also practical ones (*e.g.*, data types, control structures, and syntax). While gaining facility with the basic building blocks of the Python language, students work on increasingly complex and realistic programming puzzles and projects. At the same time, they pursue programming tasks of their own design, customizing their learning experiences according to their own goals and interests. Overall, the course enables students to engineer and execute simple programming tasks unassisted and to succeed in a college programming course in Python or any other programming language. While the course does not require prior knowledge of any programming language or mastery of mathematics beyond pre-algebra, students with less experience in these fields should bring a genuine desire to deepen and enhance their mathematical and computational skills.

Open to Grades 9-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Robotics

Throughout this year-long course, students develop STEM skills and practice engineering principles while realizing the value of innovation and teamwork. Students are encouraged to bring any skills they already have, like coding, electronics, metalworking, graphic design, web creation, public speaking, and videography. All skill levels are welcome! Students learn to think like engineers as they design, build, and code robots to compete in an alliance format against other teams. Students construct robots from a reusable platform powered by Android technology, and also code using a variety of programming languages. This course is offered in collaboration with a mentor from Springdale Robotics Center who visits Thaden at regular intervals to work with students in preparation for the FIRST Tech Challenge. This course culminates in a regional robotics competition in the spring where qualifying teams compete for awards and a spot at the FIRST Championship.

Open to Grades 9-12

1 Credit Math or Science (cannot be used to fulfill the 3 Science credits required for graduation)

Prerequisites: None

Precalculus

This year-long course makes complex mathematical concepts accessible for algebraic, graphical, and numerical analyses. Through the study of a wide variety of functions, including trigonometric functions, students discover the similarities and differences among a variety of predictive models. In preparation for future calculus and advanced mathematics courses, students devote considerable practice to simplifying complicated expressions, equations, and functions. They also participate in group and individual exercises that develop their ability to employ algebraic skills strategically as they

gather information from graphs and tables, and present and articulate their findings and rationales with confidence.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Geometry and Algebra II

Calculus I*

This year-long course in differential and integral calculus arms students with the mathematical tools to explore the nature of continuous change. The course begins with advanced precalculus topics before undertaking in-depth investigations of calculus topics, including derivatives, antiderivatives, and their applications. This overview prepares students for college-level calculus by giving them ample opportunities to develop their algebraic technical skills, refine their problem-solving strategies, and utilize technology as a powerful resource in the study of mathematics.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Precalculus or Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus

Multivariable Calculus*

This year-long course is a continuation of Calculus I. Building upon the fundamental techniques of calculus, students explore additional methods of integration: L'Hôpital's rule, integration by parts, trigonometric substitution, partial fractions, and improper integrals. Additional applications include arc length, area for solids of revolution, and centers of mass. Students are introduced to techniques for analyzing infinite series and drawing conclusions about their behavior, and they also investigate parametric equations and coordinate transformation, with an emphasis on the transition between Cartesian and polar coordinates. The course concludes with a study of vector-valued functions and the geometry of space.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Calculus I

Quantitative Reasoning

This year-long course has students using their knowledge from previous math courses – along with their problem solving, critical thinking, and communication skills – to understand and solve real world problems. This problem-solving process involves interpreting and representing mathematical information, analyzing data, choosing and using appropriate models, drawing conclusions based on the quantitative analysis with consideration of assumptions and limitations, and effectively communicating the process and solution. Students finish the course well-prepared to reason about

quantitative information as consumers, global citizens, employees, and life-long learners in today's world.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Algebra II

Statistics

This year-long course teaches students how to collect, represent, and interpret data. Students develop the skills of exploratory data analysis in real-world contexts, learn to implement statistical best practices in experimental design, examine the concepts of probability that inform statistical inference, and explore the methodology of making data-based factual claims. Students engage with the mathematical underpinnings of statistical methods and think critically about the philosophical and societal implications of data-driven decision making in the modern world.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Algebra II

History and Social Sciences

Required Courses

Modern World History

In the context of human history, 1750 was practically yesterday; yet, a significant number of transformative changes have taken place since then. Examining these changes can help us make better sense of our past, present, and future. In this year-long course, students are introduced to major periods, events, and concepts that shaped world history from around 1750 to the present, with an emphasis on the 19th and 20th centuries. Course learning goals prioritize equipping students with the fundamental skills of historical investigation: shaping good questions, reading primary and secondary sources, and communicating analyses and interpretations orally and in writing. Students engage both individually and collaboratively with selected primary, secondary, and non-textual sources to investigate the histories of various world regions in the modern era. Students practice exercising their conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and communication skills through a variety of written assessments, reflective journaling, and class discussions. By engaging with the past globally, critically, and ethically, students gain an appreciation for history as shaped by the voices that tell it.

Required for Grade 9

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

United States Government and Economics

This year-long course introduces students to foundational economic and governmental concepts. Using a series of case studies, students explore the relationships between the United States' political and economic institutions and consider the proper role of government in a democracy. This writing-intensive course requires students to develop and communicate their positions on complex and, at times, controversial topics by synthesizing and presenting evidence. The course also gives students opportunities to develop civic skills by applying their knowledge to real world issues.

Required for Grade 10

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

United States History

In this year-long course, students investigate key themes and pivotal events in the history of the United States from the 16th to the 21st century. Readings include classic works of American political life, contemporary social and cultural critiques, and foundational primary and secondary historical sources. While developing the research methods and writing skills needed to produce substantial works of historical analysis, students are challenged to think critically and creatively about what it

means to be an American citizen, whose voices may be misrepresented or missing, and how the complexities of the past continue to shape the course of events and the construction of historical accounts.

Required for Grade 11

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Elective Courses

Africa Since Independence*

By the late 1990s, most countries in Africa had transitioned from being European colonies to becoming independent countries. Many leaders who oversaw the transition from colonization to independence were idealistic, dynamic leaders who envisioned the establishment of strong, effective governance systems supported by a sense of pride in African history, traditions, and contributions to humanity. Some countries in the region formed democratically-elected governments. In others, oppressive colonial governments were simply replaced by authoritarian regimes. The region is also home to weak or fragile countries that have been devastated by years of protracted conflict. Why did some states transition more successfully to democracy than others? How has Africa's transition to democracy been complicated by the interference of outside actors, like the United States? What challenges and opportunities remain ahead for Africa? This trimester-long course provide students with a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that have shaped the continent's political, economic, and social landscapes since independence. Students engage critically with academic texts, case studies, and firsthand accounts. This course fosters a deep appreciation for the diversity within Africa, recognizing the continent's resilience, innovation, and contributions to global affairs.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Literature of Immigration (CBL)

Over a century ago, twenty million people made their way to the United States in the middle of the greatest wave of immigration this country had yet seen. Since then, the United States has become a refuge, workplace, and home to millions of immigrants, documented and undocumented, from countries near and far. But, as immigration scholar Nancy Foner notes: "A whole mythology has grown up about the immigration at the turn of the last century, and perceptions of that earlier migration deeply color how the newest wave is seen." In this trimester-long elective, students examine how these newcomers, now and in centuries past, negotiated notions of American identity even as the identity of the United States was (and is) rapidly changing. Reading essays, short stories, and novels in conversation with the historical context of immigration, this class explores the common and divergent threads of assimilation across the historical waves of immigration to the United States: what challenges remain the same? What new challenges have emerged in recent years? Central course texts may include those by Richard Blanco, Willa Cather, Sandra Cisneros, Junot

Diaz, Malcolm Gladwell, Maxine Hong-Kingston, Gish Jen, Dinaw Mengestu, Jacob Riis, Richard Rodriguez, and others. This course carries a CBL-component: working with local immigrant advocacy organizations, students connect with immigrants in our community and work to develop a community anthology of immigration narratives.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Modern Latin America*

To better understand the current situation of most countries and regions in our modern world, scholars must dive deeper into the past happenings of a place, including the philosophies that have influenced it, the events that have shaped it, and the role it has played on the global stage. To achieve this for Latin America, in the early part of the trimester, this class investigates a case study of a Latin American country to answer questions such as “What are the key events that have led to the current political situation in Venezuela?” or “When and how did the Mexican Drug War begin, and what is being done to resolve it?” Students individually investigate a Latin American country or region of their choice, create their own driving question(s), and build a product to help others better understand how the past affects the present situation of their topic of choice.

This trimester-long course provides students with the opportunity and challenge to better understand some of the factors that have shaped Latin America's current political, economic, financial, cultural, and/or social situations. Student voice and choice is paramount to this course since the students are the ones who determine which case study they focus on for the majority of the trimester. The goal of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to earn a deeper understanding not only of Latin American history, but also of the historical investigation process.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Native American Studies

This trimester-long course encompasses a broad range of topics, including Native American history, federal Indian policy, land issues, reservation and urban challenges, cross-cultural influences, and the exploration of Native American literature, art, music, and language. Students embark on an inquiry and analysis of the complexities of American Indigeneity by delving into the intersections of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, age, nationality, and religion. Through this exploration, students examine how cultural dynamics shape and are shaped by social and cultural life in tribal and non-tribal contexts.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

The Rule of Law

For centuries, the amorphous yet critical concept of “the rule of law” has profoundly impacted the earth and its residents – working to establish order in communities and maintain public health and safety while also protecting what we consider innate individual freedoms, like posting to social media and enjoying a family vacation. But beware if you take that vacation in Florida, as it is illegal to sing in public while wearing your swimsuit. And, if you travel to Florida by car, remember the law requires you to remove your blindfold while driving through Alabama and to use your hands to eat your chicken if you stop for a bite in Georgia. The absurdity of these laws – and many other similar laws across the country – highlights the question posed by this trimester-long course that legal scholars have struggled to answer since the time of Aristotle: What makes an effective and just rule of law? In this course, students explore texts spanning thousands of years describing the rule of law and discuss and debate the role and importance of this concept in a class forum. Ultimately, students develop a deeper understanding of the principles that are foundational to the successful application of the rule of law as they work to hone their analytical reasoning, persuasive writing, and public speaking skills.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Running a Political Campaign (CBL)

In this election year, it is easy to focus on the office of president. But elected public servants like city council members, justices of the peace, school board members, state representatives, and many more are integral components in America’s democracy. In this one-trimester course, students identify a down-ballot position and build a campaign – for their own candidacy – that synthesizes their personal political beliefs, the scope and responsibilities of their chosen position, and the needs of the community they would serve if elected. Community-Based Learning in this course comprises meeting with and interviewing current and prospective elected officials (as well as other political operatives such as campaign staff and local organizers), canvassing neighbors to better understand their hopes and concerns, and building real campaign assets like social media content, videos, yard signs, and more. Through this experience, students clarify their own political beliefs, better understand the mechanisms of government, hone their skills as politically engaged citizens, and discover a sense of agency, the primary goal of a Wheels education.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit History and Social Sciences or Signature Programs; CBL

Prerequisites: None

US-China Relations: Past, Present, and Future*

This trimester-long course provides an in-depth examination of the geopolitical and economic issues that shape the relationship between the world’s two largest powers. Students examine the advent of the modern relationship between the two nations beginning in February of 1972 with Richard

Nixon’s visit to China through the present day. As part of this intellectual journey, students learn about the social, political, and economic forces that have shaped attitudes and perceptions between the two nations, including historical attitudes, human rights, trade, politics, economics, national security, and the pursuit of geopolitical power. Students gain a specialized understanding of the importance of this relationship and impact it will have on the future of the modern world.

Open to Grades 11-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Women’s History

In 2016, Anita Sarkeesian and Laura Hudson wrote in *TIME* magazine, “[T]hat’s the story we’re accustomed to hearing about the past: one where the presence of men is taken as a given, and the presence of women is exceptional.” Indeed, many history books, courses, and documentaries favor the “Great Man” approach to history, focusing on kings, presidents, and other male leaders. This trimester-long elective course offers students the opportunity to think about new approaches to history that center women. Students investigate examples of female agency and power that have been left out of conventional historical narratives, explore themes that relate to the global struggle for gender equality, and consider the question of whether and why “women’s history” is a separate and valid domain for study. By engaging with scholarly sources on gender as a category of historical analysis, classic works of feminist theory, and primary sources that bring the voices of women throughout history into the present, students develop their critical thinking skills and their familiarity with disciplinary frameworks. The trimester concludes with an independent research project and oral public presentation.

Open to Grades 11-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Urban Studies (CBL)

The great Danish architect and urban designer Jan Gehl wrote, “first we shape cities – then they shape us.” As the rate of urbanization – the process by which people migrate from rural to urban areas – increases and a greater share of the world population lives in cities, we would be wise to seriously consider the implications of Gehl’s insight. What kinds of cities do we want to live in? How might we rethink cities for the age of climate change? How will our answers change who we are as individuals and as citizens?

With these questions in mind, in the first trimester of this Wheels and Social Sciences course, students learn about the basics of urban design in America and Europe through encounters with the seminal works of Jane Jacobs; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck; William H. Whyte; Jan Gehl; Mike Lydon, and more. Students also conduct community-based fieldwork to develop deeper understandings of the processes, politics, and practical considerations that influence how communities are designed, built, and inhabited. (Bentonville is in the midst of crafting the plan that will guide the development of the city for the next 15-20 years.) Further, students engage in critical

examinations of these environments to assess how they influence the people who move through them and how people, in turn, influence their environments. In the second trimester, students collaborate to apply their learning and the principles of tactical urbanism – citizen-led, hyper-local, test-before-you-invest interventions intended to humanize and democratize the built environment – to a location in Bentonville. Ultimately, students are empowered to think critically and creatively about how they can catalyze positive change by planning and executing real projects in their communities.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit History and Social Sciences or Signature Programs; CBL

Prerequisites: None

The 2024 Presidential Election

This two-trimester course examines the American presidential election in extensive and intimate detail. Students draw on matters of constitutional understanding of the presidency, the Electoral College, campaign finance, advertising and messaging, voting rights, voter attitudes and turnout, mass media, and political strategy to understand the candidates, issues, and developments that shape the election. In the aftermath of the election, students examine important issues pertaining to the election results, including insights into the outcome and its impact on the country, specific issues and attitudes that affected the candidates and voters, and election integrity while also studying the importance of the presidential transition process, the Inauguration, and the first 100 days.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Digital Literacy (CBL)

Is the internet driving humanity? This year-long course helps students ponder this question while thinking critically about the internet, social media, and misinformation. Students learn to analyze the various factors driving our information economy – brain science, online behavior, algorithms, and economic incentives. Using resources from Stanford’s Civic Online Reasoning, The Center for Humane Technology, and Verified by Mike Caulfield and Samuel S. Wineburg, students learn strategies to navigate our digital age. To end the course, students create, implement, and evaluate a project that helps create better digital citizens.

Open to Grades 9-12

1 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Psychology

What is the most reliable and comprehensive way to understand human beings? What is the relationship between self and other, and what should it be? Do humans exist beyond the electrical and chemical components of our brains? This year-long course helps students begin to answer these and other important questions by introducing them to the fundamental principles, goals, and methods of psychology, the study of human thoughts and behaviors. The course begins by addressing experimental design, methodology, and ethics before exploring various subfields such as cognitive, social, and clinical psychology. The course also emphasizes connections to biology, chemistry, and humanities so that students understand the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Students work independently and collaboratively as they examine psychological theories, evaluate research studies, classify behavior, and assess personality traits. Assessments include exams, essays exploring some of the guiding questions above, oral presentations, and projects. Students leave the course with a new familiarity with the field of psychology as well as new insights into the human experience.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Science

Required Courses

Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences

This year-long course explores interactions in the natural world – from the molecular processes that are integral to cell function to the forces that drive climate change. Building on previous coursework, students learn how living organisms carry out the processes that sustain life, adapt, and interact with their environment. Through case studies and laboratory work, students learn to observe, ask questions, and build and test hypotheses like scientists, which develops their critical thinking, communication (both written and oral), conceptual understanding, and procedural technique skills. This course also sets students up for future success by giving them the foundational knowledge and skills needed to succeed in upper-level biology electives.

Required for Grade 9

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences

This year-long laboratory course investigates the behavior, properties, and composition of matter. Students study the interactions of matter and energy, the way atoms combine to form compounds, and the fundamental structure of atoms. This course focuses on core conceptual understanding of the phenomena that shape the world around us and building a framework to interrogate and appreciate these phenomena. In their laboratory work students train on a range of tools for tabulation, graphical representation, visualization, and statistical analysis. In addition, they continue to hone their ability to ask scientific questions, design relevant experiments, develop models, engage in argument, and determine possible solutions using empirical evidence. The ability to read, interpret, and produce scientific and technical text are fundamental foci of this course, as is the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.

Required for Grade 10

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Elective Courses

Robotics

Throughout this year-long course, students develop STEM skills and practice engineering principles while realizing the value of innovation and teamwork. Students are encouraged to bring any skills they already have, like coding, electronics, metalworking, graphic design, web creation, public

speaking, and videography. All skill levels are welcome! Students learn to think like engineers as they design, build, and code robots to compete in an alliance format against other teams. Students construct robots from a reusable platform powered by Android technology, and also code using a variety of programming languages. This course is offered in collaboration with a mentor from Springdale Robotics Center who visits Thaden at regular intervals to work with students in preparation for the FIRST Tech Challenge. This course culminates in a regional robotics competition in the spring where qualifying teams compete for awards and a spot at the FIRST Championship.

Open to Grades 9-12

1 Credit Science (cannot be used to fulfill the 3 Science credits required for graduation) or Math

Prerequisites: None

Advanced Chemistry*

This advanced, year-long laboratory course is designed for students who wish to further their studies in this core scientific field. The key concepts underpinning this course include atoms and forces, patterns in chemical behavior and reactions, chemical bonds, energy changes, and experiments and evidence. Students delve deeply into analytical chemistry, theoretical chemistry, quantitative chemistry, and solutions chemistry through laboratory exploration, case studies, and designing solutions to real-world problems. Throughout this course, students gain a greater depth as well as breadth of subject knowledge, confidence in applying knowledge and skills in new situations, and the vocabulary to discuss this subject conceptually and show how different parts link together. Developing a deeper theoretical and practical knowledge of matter and energy enhances learning and understanding in biological sciences and physical sciences as well as the Signature Programs, thereby advancing students' appreciation for the beauty and complexity of this essential science.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences

Advanced Physics*

This advanced, year-long course builds on the foundations laid in previous science courses. Students dive in to enhanced rigor and challenge as they deepen their conceptual understanding of physics and experimental design, as well as their problem-solving skills. Many of the oversimplifications that served us earlier in our scientific careers will be set aside for more robust models. Calculus and mathematical rigor will be our constant companions. Topics resemble a first semester college physics course with opportunities to branch farther afield likely.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences; Prerequisites or Corequisites: Calculus

Molecular Genetics*

Molecular genetics is a field that makes advances in research and technology every day. In Molecular Genetics students learn about the molecules that make up genes, how they function, how they evolve, and how they control the function of cells. This is a lab-intensive course where students use the knowledge gained to control, alter, and replicate genes (in other words, genetically engineer living microbes) using advanced molecular techniques like PCR, CRISPR, protein purification, and gel electrophoresis. The course begins with the study of Mendelian and non-Mendelian inheritance and their influence on health and disease, continues with the molecular properties of genetic material, and concludes by analyzing genetic mechanisms in individual organisms and populations.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences and Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences

Plant Sciences (CBL)

Botany is the scientific study of plants including their structure, physiology, genetics, ecology, evolution, and economic importance. In this year-long course, students make use of Thaden's grounds, greenhouse, and gardens to better understand how plants are put together, how they function, how they grow, and how they adapt to so many different environments. Plants are engineering marvels, absolutely essential to human life, providing the nutrition we need and the oxygen we require, and yet we often take them for granted. Through fieldwork, lab studies, and research projects, students strengthen their understanding of key biological concepts and develop a new level of wonder for these organisms that regularly and easily outnumber, outweigh, and outlast us.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences

World Languages and Cultures

Required Courses

Latin I, II, III, IV*, and V*

This sequence of five year-long courses in Latin enables students new to the language to achieve a degree of mastery sufficient to read and understand a variety of Latin texts that span more than 2,000 years. Using Ørberg's *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata*, podcasts, videos, and conversations with Latin speakers, students gradually build confidence and find their voice through repeated use of the language in and outside of class. Along the way, students explore Greco-Roman mythology and Roman history and culture, and they celebrate certain festivals to demonstrate the continuity of tradition from antiquity to the 21st century. Students also participate in nationally recognized exams sponsored by the American Classical League (*e.g.*, the National Mythology Exam and the National Latin Exam) and may take trips to manuscript collections, foreign language competitions, and local universities to engage in relevant events.

Open to Grades 9-12

Up to 5 Credits (one for each year)

Prerequisites: None for Latin I

Mandarin I, II, III, IV*, and V*

This sequence of five year-long courses in Mandarin enables students new to the language to achieve a degree of mastery sufficient for meaningful engagement with the cultures of the Chinese-speaking world. Pronunciation of the four tones is emphasized through a variety of speaking and listening exercises that strengthen students' command of the Pinyin system, while reading and writing of Chinese characters is introduced through short dialogues and elementary patterns of Chinese grammar. As each course progresses, students master increasingly complex grammatical patterns and acquire additional characters that extend their ability to speak and write in Mandarin. Students also explore the traditions of China, compare and contrast socio-cultural norms and practices, and learn about the nation's current governmental, economic, and technological evolutions.

Open to Grades 9-12

Up to 5 Credits (one for each year)

Prerequisites: None for Mandarin I

Spanish I, II, III, IV*, and V*

This sequence of five year-long courses in Spanish enables students new to the language to achieve a degree of mastery sufficient for meaningful engagement with the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Students develop the four core skills of language learning: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. From the beginning, students are expected to participate actively in class using

the target language. They also read and write about selected topics that give them opportunities to explore popular culture, customs, and traditions from the Spanish-speaking world. Spanish literature (poetry, drama, and short stories) and other cultural materials, including film and video, complement the lessons in the textbook. Students also have opportunities to develop their skills in conversation with guests and community members from Spanish-speaking countries.

Open to Grades 9-12

Up to 5 Credits (one for each year)

Prerequisites: None for Spanish I

Elective Courses

Ancient Rome

This trimester-long course introduces students to the history, politics, and culture of Ancient Rome. Students explore the history of Rome from its mytho-historical origins (pre-753 BCE) up to the Byzantine period (4th century CE). Special attention is paid to Rome's legacy and the many ways that Roman civilization has spread and survived across time and space. The course progresses chronologically, with a different thematic focus each week. While fundamentals are anchored in weekly readings, students also learn to interpret primary sources of all sorts: texts from ancient Latin authors (in translation), inscriptions, works of art, tombstones, and even graffiti. In addition to learning the rich history of the Roman world, students also engage in historical analysis, research, and writing. This course complements the World Languages curriculum.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit World Languages

Prerequisites: None

Mexican Cuisine and Gardening

This one-trimester interdisciplinary course integrates the art of gardening with the vibrant flavors of Mexican cuisine while students immerse themselves in the Spanish language. Students explore the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of Mexican culture at a deeper level through a culinary lens. Students ponder how staple ingredients reflect the culinary landscape of a region and how they are shaped by various cultural influences, such as migration, colonization, trade, and globalization. First, students learn the fundamentals of sustainable gardening with a focus on cultivating Mexican herbs, spices, and produce. Next, they explore the diverse regional flavors of Mexican cuisine, from the bold spices of Oaxacan mole to the freshness of Yucatecan ceviche. Each unit begins with a lesson based on the historical context and the cultural significance of each primary ingredient sourced from the Thaden gardens or local hispanic farmers.

Open to Grades 10-12

1/3 Credit World Languages or Signature Programs

Prerequisites: Spanish II (this course is taught in Spanish)

Signature Programs

Elective Courses – Meals

Cooking for the Community (CBL)

This one-trimester course provides students with a unique opportunity to actively connect with the community while honing their culinary skills. Students engage in meaningful collaborations with several nonprofits in Northwest Arkansas, such as the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, and Compassion Coalition. Through cooking, sourcing produce from the Thaden gardens, and collaborating with nonprofits, students play a crucial role in preparing meals for those in need. By actively contributing to the well-being of the community, students refine their cooking skills and cultivate a strong sense of civic duty, empowering them to become more socially conscious and responsible members of society.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Cooking Methods

This one-trimester course provides students with foundational skills in the culinary arts. The course includes instruction in recipe and menu planning as well as preparing and cooking foods using different methods such as dry-heat, moist-heat, and combination heats. The course takes a deeper look at some of the more popular cooking methods such as baking, braising, roasting, grilling, steaming, poaching, broiling, smoking, and open flame. The course also focuses on the aesthetics of food presentation and introduces students to a wide variety of cuisines and culinary techniques. Additional topics include safety and sanitation, communication, management, and hospitality.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Food Advocacy (CBL)

This one-trimester course helps students identify and analyze issues in our local food systems. Many people know that agriculture is the largest industry in Arkansas, but what are the specific agricultural, economic, and political factors that influence what ends up on a plate? What values should a plate of food represent? Students work in the gardens and kitchen to develop the skills and practices aligned with these values. Informed by the Slow Food Movement and its Theory of Change, students leverage local partnerships to develop and implement solutions that achieve good, clean, fair food for all.

Open to Grades 9-12
1/3 Credit Signature Programs; CBL
Prerequisites: None

Food and Community: Harvest Festival (CBL)

The Thaden School Harvest Festival is a much-anticipated annual event that brings together the school community through a celebration of food and community. Students in the Food and Community course explore how foodways can be a vehicle to cultivate community as they help to plan the 2023 Harvest Festival. Students in this course are actively involved in growing, harvesting, and preparing food from the Thaden garden to serve at the event. Students engage with the school community, farmers, and food producers from the broader community as they help to plan and host the Harvest Festival.

Open to Grades 9-12
1/3 Credit; CBL
Prerequisites: None

Preserving the Harvest

From chocolate, coffee, and cheese to pickles and pasta – many of our favorite foods rely on food preservation traditions that have been handed down over generations. The preservation of food through fermentation and other techniques not only gives us nourishment during lean times when fresh food is not available for harvest but also provides additional health benefits and complex flavors that we would not experience by eating the original food.

Over the course of this trimester-long course, students learn how to preserve food using a variety of food preservation practices. Students help to harvest and preserve food from the Thaden farm using techniques such as fermenting, dehydrating, canning, pickling, curing, root cellar storing and more. Possible class projects may include making fresh pasta and learning how to dry it, dehydrating and packaging herbs and spices, and pickling various vegetables using the salt brine method.

Open to Grades 9-12
1/3 Credit
Prerequisites: None

Ready, Set, Grow!

In this one-trimester course, students learn to plant, cultivate, and harvest a variety of vegetables and herbs, as well as learn and practice multiple ways to propagate plants, such as sowing from seed and grafting from cuttings. The course also exposes students to a variety of fundamental techniques and practices for growing seasonally appropriate food in the greenhouse and outdoors through experiential learning, selected readings, films, discussion, and reflection. While mastering

cooking-related skills is not the main focus of this course, there are opportunities throughout the course to prepare, taste and enjoy food that we grow.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs

Prerequisites: None

Thaden Menu Development (CBL)

This one-trimester course empowers students to influence what the Thaden community eats and how Upper School lunchtime unfolds. Building on the Meals Menu Project, students not only have the opportunity to revisit a diverse selection of meal choices but also gain exclusive access to the inner workings of the lunchtime business. Students delve into budget considerations and actively participate in the decision-making process for selecting lunch products. This class provides a platform for students to voice their opinions and contribute to the shaping of Thaden's lunchtime offerings. Students engage in taste test analyses and embark on a comprehensive exploration of all facets related to lunch.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs; CBL

Prerequisites: None

World Cuisine

This one-trimester course explores the cuisines of different cultures from around the world through lessons in the kitchen, garden, and classroom. The course focuses on the following five concepts: 1) continental food difference; 2) the relationship of attitudes and practices of food preferences; 3) the relationship of food contribution to American culture and cuisine; 4) how foods of a country show a relationship to the agriculture of a country; and 5) practical application of international cooking in a collaborative kitchen environment.

In this course, students simultaneously develop their culinary skills and their global culinary fluency. Coursework includes hands-on learning through growing and harvesting foods from the regions of the world that students learn about. For example, they may harvest ginger grown in the greenhouse and then learn and apply culinary uses for ginger in Thai cuisine. After preparing and sampling traditional recipes that represent specific areas of the world, students have a clearer understanding of the contributions that many cultures have made to contemporary cuisine.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Mexican Cuisine and Gardening

This one-trimester interdisciplinary course integrates the art of gardening with the vibrant flavors of Mexican cuisine while students immerse themselves in the Spanish language. Students explore the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of Mexican culture at a deeper level through a culinary lens. Students ponder how staple ingredients reflect the culinary landscape of a region and how they are shaped by various cultural influences, such as migration, colonization, trade, and globalization. First, students learn the fundamentals of sustainable gardening with a focus on cultivating Mexican herbs, spices, and produce. Next, they explore the diverse regional flavors of Mexican cuisine, from the bold spices of Oaxacan mole to the freshness of Yucatecan ceviche. Each unit begins with a lesson based on the historical context and the cultural significance of each primary ingredient sourced from the Thaden gardens or local Hispanic farmers.

Open to Grades 10-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs or World Languages

Prerequisites: Spanish II (this course is taught in Spanish)

Elective Courses – Reels

Film Theory

This is a course about reading film, about understanding how visual and aural languages work together to create a cohesive meaning. Students are exposed to a variety of concepts through two perspectives: the feminist and the socio-economic. We discuss the Billy Wilder film “Double Indemnity” (1944) in the context of female power and analyze the Bong Joon Ho film “Parasite” (2019) from the socio-economic perspective. The course builds off students’ pre-existing experiences in the Reels program by working with various concepts (framing, shot selection, angles, transitions, mise-en-scène, etc.) to explore a more literary and theoretically-based understanding of the medium. This course challenges students as audience members and creators, and opens a dialogue of analysis. In addition, students are exposed to academic readings and ideas around film theory.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs or English

Prerequisites: None

Hardboiled Literature and Film

Hardboiled literature generally begins with a crime and follows a hero with non-heroic qualities, whom we refer to as an anti-hero, through their journey into the underbelly of a corrupt society. The stories often focus on the anti-hero’s questionable and unique code of ethics just as much as the crime or mystery. The class examines the circumstances out of which this genre grew, its defining characteristics (including its depiction of gender roles), and why it continues to flourish across cultures. The course focuses on the shared structural elements between the books and movies, and how they expressed the prevailing themes of the post-war world, and then asks whether these

themes are relevant in the 21st century. Students read Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* and watch the films "The Killers" (Robert Siodmak, 1946), "Yojimbo" (Akira Kurosawa, 1961), and "Long Day's Journey Into Night" (Bi Gan, 2018), as well as short stories and various short clips. There is an emphasis on cinematic realism, existentialism, narrative structure, and character archetypes, with one overarching question: Why does this genre still speak to us? In addition, students are exposed to academic readings and both film and literary theory.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs or English

Prerequisites: None

Introduction to Film Scoring and Foley

In this one-trimester course, students study and compose music for film and learn how to create foley (sound effects). Students use recording software to compose and record sounds for film, learn the basics of digital music composition, and learn how to create sound effects that are added to movies. They build a base of knowledge through a series of projects, using Thaden student films from the Reels department and adding their own sounds/music to them. No prior experience is required.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs or Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisites: None

Photography

In this one-trimester course, students delve into the fundamental concepts of digital photography as a means of creative expression through a blend of readings, lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on shooting assignments followed by constructive critiques. With a strong focus on fostering each student's individual creative practice, this course investigates the profound impact of the recent acceleration in the creation and dissemination of photography. This transformative shift significantly alters how photographs function in contemporary society.

Covering technical, aesthetic, and conceptual dimensions, the course explores the intricate process of creating meaning within digital photographs. Students acquire skills in digital editing, and master camera controls. They also understand file formats and develop efficient workflows. Assignments are designed to tackle relevant topics, including the abundance of images, the appropriation of images, and the themes of manipulation/truth and surveillance/voyeurism. Throughout the course, there is a strong emphasis on fostering interaction with classmates' work and cultivating a receptive approach to constructive critique.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Podcasting

In this trimester-long course, students learn the basics of creating podcasts, gaining technical skills of audio interviewing techniques, workflow organization, structuring episodes, scriptwriting, post-production mixing, scoring, and critical review. Students leave this class understanding the mechanics of audio storytelling and how to approach and evaluate pitches. This course is a hands-on workshop, and students can expect to end this course with the start of an audio portfolio. The students are encouraged but not required to enter their podcasts in the NPR Student Podcast Challenge.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Post-War Literature and Film

This course studies the cultural milieu surrounding the aftermaths of World War I (The Great War) and World War II. Students read a novel and study a film from each post-war era, as well as selected poetry and art, to examine how society collectively and artistically processes the trauma of war (and trauma in general). Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1927) and the film "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari" (Weine 1920) provide insights into the aftermath of The Great War as students examine how society and individuals processed the trauma of war and the accelerated changes of the 1920s both psychologically and artistically. This unit focuses on the themes of disillusionment and liberation that accompanied the massive societal realignment following the war. For World War II, students read Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1942) and watch "The Third Man" (Reed 1950). This unit focuses on post-war existentialism as a means through which individuals and society processed two world wars and the Holocaust. For each war, students also examine the concepts of progress and culture that led to the elimination of entire generations on the battlefield.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs or English

Prerequisites: None

Writers' Room

In this trimester-long elective, students experience the fast-paced environment of a television writers' room, working collaboratively to develop a series from scratch. Students begin by pitching series ideas and collaboratively writing an outline, beat sheet, and character profiles. After that, each student is responsible for writing one episode of the series independently while also workshopping their and classmates' drafts. Students are encouraged to share opinions and observations and learn to hone the ability to apply and give feedback throughout the course. Academically, students gain new insight into story structure, character development, and scene analysis. They also discover world building and themes through close interpretation and analysis of their own work and that of their peers.

Open to Grades 9-12
1/3 Credit Signature Programs or English
Prerequisites: None

Reels Mentorship Lab* (CBL)

In this trimester-long course, Upper School Reels students have the opportunity to mentor the next generation of Reels students. The students in this course work as a team to develop, plan, and lead interdisciplinary projects with three different Grade 6 classes. Upper School students show mastery of their craft as they teach Reels skills to younger students and also ignite in them a passion for cross-curricular learning. This course provides opportunities to deepen both relationships and learning. In doing so, the students in this course help build not only Thaden's next generation of storytellers, but also our next generation of balanced learners.

Open to Grades 10-12; Because of its collaborative nature, this course is limited to six students
1/3 Credit; CBL
Prerequisites: Short-Form Video Production I

International Cinema

This trimester-long course explores short film winners from the Giffoni Film Festival. Founded in 1971, this festival is the longest running youth film festival in Europe, welcoming thousands of children to the mountain town every year for an extraordinary program of workshops and screenings. What sets this festival apart from all the others is that youths are the judges. In this course, Thaden students learn to identify key elements responsible for propelling these films to the highest tier, all while gaining valuable exposure to multicultural stories. The course combines weekly viewings accompanied by lectures, advanced group discussions, written assignments, and oral presentations.

Open to Grades 11-12
1/3 Credit
Prerequisites: None

Short-Form Video Production I

This year-long course provides students with foundational storytelling and technical skills to be multimedia storytellers. Students learn visual analysis, directing, cinematography, lighting, production, sound, and editing through class lectures and workshops. The course consists of one project per trimester: a documentary portrait, an audio piece, and a narrative film. Each project focuses on different production skills. Production generally takes place on the Thaden campus, and some class time is dedicated to learning on-set skills as a group. Particular emphasis is placed on gaining fluency with Thaden's camera equipment and Adobe Premiere Pro. Collaboration is highly

emphasized. In addition to creating their own exercises, students are expected to assist and give feedback to classmates' projects.

Open to Grades 9-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Short-Form Video Production II*

This year-long course builds upon skills gained in Short Form I and teaches students the advanced fundamentals of short-form video production, with a particular emphasis on story development. Students learn new skills such as treatment writing, screenwriting, casting, storyboarding, producing, sound design, and color correction through class lectures and workshops. Students focus on either narrative, documentary, or experimental filmmaking and are expected to complete a 7-10 minute independent project to be presented at the end of the year, focusing on stories that can positively affect our community. Students not only continue to build their technical skills but also reflect on their observations and personal growth as they learn how to create meaningful work that potentially expresses social, cultural, or historical issues, as well as appreciate the broader social responsibilities of media making.

Open to Grades 11-12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: Short-Form Video Production I

Elective Courses – Wheels

Bike Co-op (CBL)

A problem that befalls anyone with a bicycle is the need for maintenance, but that maintenance is often prohibitively expensive or mysterious to those who need it. A bike co-op is a community space that brings people together to solve this issue – to work on bicycles, share mechanical know-how, and promote cycling accessibility. This course leverages students' skills in mechanics, organization, and marketing in the service of creating a Bike Co-op for the Northwest Arkansas community. Working in collaborative groups, students create and lead several "bike co-op" sessions. The goal of these sessions is to support people as they learn to care for their own bikes. These sessions are a place where students offer both maintenance and skills development for people who depend on their bicycles to get around.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Mountain Biking in NWA (CBL)

In this one-trimester elective, students practice, develop, and hone their skills on the mountain bike trails around Bentonville and learn how to give bicycles the attention they deserve back in the shop. Students learn about the network of trails in the region and how they were made, trail rating systems, the differences between older, more established trails and the ones built more recently, mountain bike-specific vocabulary, basic first aid, the value of under-biking, and how to participate in trail stewardship. A special topic of conversation in this class concerns access: “Who are the trails for?” Students take regular trips off campus to local singletrack and make regular use of the on-campus skills course and pump track to integrate skills and classroom content on a smaller, more controlled scale. In the maintenance and repair unit of this course, students spend time in the Wheels Lab learning basic mountain bike maintenance and suspension service. Through trail maintenance opportunities and mechanic work, students engage with community partners at the NWACC Bike Tech program, Trailblazers, and other local organizations.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Trail Building as Conservation (CBL)

Trails help people gain access to the outdoors and establish a connection to the land. They also make it easy to have a great time in the woods. But how can trails, rather than simply serving the interests of people who bike and hike, alleviate current issues in our landscape around water runoff and erosion? How can trail building be a form of stewardship? In this course, students work with local stakeholders to develop an understanding of the ways in which conscientious trail building can help address ecological concerns and also connect people to the landscape through mountain bike trails. Students explore the environmental issues around trail building and possible solutions. The course culminates in a hands-on project where students apply their knowledge and skills.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Running a Political Campaign (CBL)

In this election year, it is easy to focus on the office of president. But elected public servants like city council members, justices of the peace, school board members, state representatives, and many more are integral components in America’s democracy. In this one-trimester course, students identify a down-ballot position and build a campaign – for their own candidacy – that synthesizes their personal political beliefs, the scope and responsibilities of their chosen position, and the needs of the community they would serve if elected. Community-Based Learning in this course comprises meeting with and interviewing current and prospective elected officials (as well as other political operatives such as campaign staff and local organizers), canvassing neighbors to better understand their hopes and concerns, and building real campaign assets like social media content, videos, yard

signs, and more. Through this experience, students clarify their own political beliefs, better understand the mechanisms of government, hone their skills as politically engaged citizens, and discover a sense of agency, the primary goal of a Wheels education.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Signature Programs or History and Social Sciences; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Urban Studies (CBL)

The great Danish architect and urban designer Jan Gehl wrote, “first we shape cities – then they shape us.” As the rate of urbanization – the process by which people migrate from rural to urban areas – increases and a greater share of the world population lives in cities, we would be wise to seriously consider the implications of Gehl’s insight. What kinds of cities do we want to live in? How might we rethink cities for the age of climate change? How will our answers change who we are as individuals and as citizens?

With these questions in mind, in the first trimester of this Wheels and Social Sciences course, students learn about the basics of urban design in America and Europe through encounters with the seminal works of Jane Jacobs; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck; William H. Whyte; Jan Gehl; Mike Lydon, and more. Students also conduct community-based fieldwork to develop deeper understandings of the processes, politics, and practical considerations that influence how communities are designed, built, and inhabited. (Bentonville is in the midst of crafting the plan that will guide the development of the city for the next 15-20 years.) Further, students engage in critical examinations of these environments to assess how they influence the people who move through them and how people, in turn, influence their environments. In the second trimester, students collaborate to apply their learning and the principles of tactical urbanism – citizen-led, hyper-local, test-before-you-invest interventions intended to humanize and democratize the built environment – to a location in Bentonville. Ultimately, students are empowered to think critically and creatively about how they can catalyze positive change by planning and executing real projects in their communities.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit Signature Programs or History and Social Sciences; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Visual and Performing Arts

Elective Courses – Music

Beat Making: Explorations in Sound Production

In this course, students create beats and other musical works using software like GarageBand and Ableton Live. Students learn basic music theory and song structure while creating beats and other electronic compositions. Students also learn about loops, basic drum sounds and patterns, and how to sample and manipulate sounds. Throughout the class, students have access to digital interfaces and audio recording equipment, allowing them to build their base of knowledge through a series of projects as well as original compositions. Students' projects are added to the Thaden Sound Soundcloud. No prior musical experience necessary.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Introduction to Film Scoring and Foley

In this one-trimester course, students study and compose music for film and learn how to create foley (sound effects). Students use recording software to compose and record sounds for film, learn the basics of digital music composition, and learn how to create sound effects that are added to movies. They build a base of knowledge through a series of projects, using Thaden student films from the Reels department and adding their own sounds/music to them. No prior experience is required.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit Visual and Performing Arts or Signature Programs

Prerequisites: None

Survey of Rock and Roll

In this one-trimester course, students study American music from the birth of Rock and Roll until today. Students study elements of music such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, and how technology has influenced music. The class looks at significant performers, writers, composers, and cultural events that have shaped the contemporary musical landscape. Students learn how to listen critically and develop their own interests and personal preferences. No background in music needed, just an interest in the language of music.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Vocal Styles in Musical Theater

“Hamilton,” “The Sound of Music,” “Wicked,” “The Phantom of the Opera,” “Oklahoma!” ... These award-winning musicals are just a few examples of musical scores that require singers to perform with a variety of vocal techniques. Every song must either develop the characters or push along the plot. In this one-trimester course, students identify and produce appropriate vocal technique and musical style for the various sub-genres of musical theater repertoire. In addition, students integrate the demands of healthy vocal production into appropriate solo and ensemble repertoire with an emphasis on character development and communication. Instruction includes the development of singing skills, basic body movement, and acting technique.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Choir

In this two-trimester course, students explore their singing voices through solos, small groups, and ensembles, delving into a diverse range of musical styles. This course seeks to cultivate a lifelong appreciation for choral music, develop strong vocal and ensemble skills, and provide students with a platform to express themselves through singing. Musical collaboration is also available with the Modern Music Ensemble. In addition, students have the opportunity to showcase their musical growth and collective talent in a Spring Music Concert. This culminating event serves as a celebration of the diverse skills acquired throughout the course, featuring repertoire that predominantly consists of student-selected music choices. The concert highlights the individuality of each student's musical preferences and provides a platform for creative expression within the framework of choral performance.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Instrumental Studio

This one-trimester course provides an opportunity for students to focus on their individual and small ensemble instrumental skills. Open to all skill levels, this is a safe environment to learn an instrument for the first time, build instrumental technique, and add greater musicality to one's performance abilities. Instrumentalists may also choose to focus on all-region audition opportunities.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Instrumental Ensemble

In this two-trimester course, instrumentalists of a band or orchestra background come together to rehearse and perform music, building a firm music theory foundation as it pertains to instrumental repertoire and explore ensemble work in greater detail with the goal of becoming independent musicians. Students will explore a broader range of repertoire and musical styles, performing as a full ensemble as well as in smaller groups, chamber ensembles, and as soloists. Students will have opportunities to develop their leadership skills as section leaders, theory tutors, and music council members. This ensemble course will have performance opportunities in school concerts, around our community, and with participation in regional and national honor ensembles.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit (may be taken up to four years for a maximum of 2 and 2/3 credits)

Prerequisites: Instrumental Studio or equivalent experience

Jazz Studio

This course provides an opportunity for vocalists and instrumentalists to learn, practice, and perform the fundamentals of jazz. The class explores the history and origins of jazz, but the primary focus is playing and learning the foundations of jazz. Students learn repertoire and are introduced to elements of improvisation, as well as learning tunes and also chord/scale relationships. They dive into different styles of jazz such as traditional Dixieland, big band, hard bop, and Latin jazz. This course provides students with the opportunity to perform at school and in the community. Students who enroll in this course should be at an intermediate level, with several years of experience either playing their instrument or singing.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit (may be taken up to four years for a maximum of 1 and 1/3 credits)

Prerequisites: Instrumental Ensemble or equivalent experience

Modern Music Ensemble

This two-trimester course provides instrumentalists and vocalists an opportunity to focus on small ensemble instrumental skills within the context of popular music from the 1950's to the present. This course allows students to learn musicianship skills, theoretical concepts, and stylistic methods that are applicable to today's performance standards. Students have the opportunity to perform concerts at school and in the community. This course is open to vocalists and instrumentalists who play guitar, ukelele, bass, keys, and drums. It is also open to all levels, including those with no prior experience.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit (may be taken up to four years for a maximum of 2 and 2/3 credits)

Prerequisites: None

Elective Courses – Theater

Introduction to Theater Arts

These trimester-long courses may be taken individually or as a year-long series:

- **Acting Techniques**

Students develop their acting skills by practicing their sense and emotion memory and improvisation and engaging in basic acting exercises. Scene study and technique as well as text analysis are studied in depth with individual critique and coaching by the instructor.

- **Original One-Act Play**

Students use guided writing exercises to produce and stage an original one-act play. This trimester-long course begins with guided exercises and scene writing prompts. Students then draft, revise, and rewrite their script, and ultimately stage their original play. Depending on their area of interest, students choose whether to serve as writer, actors, or director.

- **Scene and Character**

Students focus on scene and character work as they rehearse small performance pieces. They also prepare for the audition process by tackling cold reading techniques and preparing two contrasting monologues.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit each

Prerequisites: None

One-Act Play

In this one-trimester course, students experience theater as a live performing art as they move from page to stage. The class will spend the trimester working on the staging of a selected one-act play. Everyone in the course must participate in some element of the production, whether it be acting, stagecraft, or technical theater. Toward the end of the trimester, the show is mounted on the main stage for a minimum of two performances. This course requires a number of after-school rehearsals, especially as the time of performance approaches. To participate in the production, students should sign up for the class but must receive permission or audition for a spot to be officially enrolled.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit (may be taken up to four years for a maximum of 1 1/3 credits)

Prerequisites: audition or instructor approval

Stagecraft

Participants in this course learn shop, theater, materials, and tools safety; explore the fundamentals of metal, wood, and non-traditional materials fabrication; design construction and painting of

scenery and props; and craft the lighting, audio, and video for productions. Students gain proficiency in using shop tools, stage equipment, and the lighting and sound systems in the Performing Art Center. Other activities include stage management, event staffing, and preparation for Thaden events, concerts, and theatrical productions.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit (may be retaken for up to four years for a maximum of 4 credits)

Prerequisites: None

Performance Workshop

In this two-trimester course, students explore theatrical possibilities as they work on a full-length play for performance. They experience all stages of production, from rehearsal to show. To advance in their stage work, students practice fundamental performance skills which include deepening their understanding of acting terminology, voice and speech, physicality, and characterization. To participate in the production, students sign up for the class and then audition for a spot in it. This workshop requires a number of after-school rehearsals, especially as the time of performance approaches.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit (may be taken up to four years for a maximum of 2 and 2/3 credits)

Prerequisites: audition or instructor approval

Elective Courses – Visual Arts

Acrylic Painting

In this one-trimester course students learn foundational skills such as color theory, principals and elements of design, and the procedures and techniques needed to develop a work of art in the opaque medium of acrylic painting. Students create both abstract and realistic original paintings in acrylic within prescribed themes and themes of their choice. Study work from different time periods and art movements and gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the way art and culture interact, inspiring and informing student work. Students engage in independent and personal reflections as well as group critiques and collaborations.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

The Art of Nature (CBL)

In this one-trimester course, students learn to use art to represent the natural world. Specifically, students visually explore and catalog the native prairie landscape of Thaden's campus and other natural landscapes using printmaking, pencil sketches, and painting. Students use commercial paints

and make our own lake pigments derived from plants. Each piece of visual art that is derived from the plants on our campus will be organized into a field guide for our community, contributing to the community's understanding of native prairie and the benefits of maintaining this environment. The field guide accompanies Thaden's seed library, an artistic keepsake for the community.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Drawing

In this one-trimester course, students explore a variety of drawing tools and materials, emphasizing procedures and techniques that are based on research from Betty Edwards' *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. Students learn the skill of close observation by engaging in several drawing exercises, such as contour line, negative space, laying a ground, framing, and perspective. Drawing focuses on direct observation, from quick sketches to longer, developed studies. Projects might include perspective drawings, still life, portraits, and non-objective work that explores the qualities of drawing tools. Sketchbook activities and peer and instructor feedback are also critical components of the course. By the end of the trimester, students develop drawing skills and a critical eye, building foundations that encourage individual and creative work success. Students with advanced drawing skills also explore using the medium for personal expression.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Empty Bowls (CBL)

The Empty Bowls movement is a loose collection of artists who use ceramics to highlight issues around hunger. In this one-trimester course, students investigate local food-related charitable organizations. They then design and sculpt ceramic bowls in support of one of these nonprofits. Their bowls incorporate different hand-building techniques, including using templates and plaster batts to mold bowls, adding colorants to employ Neriagi and Nerikomi techniques, coiling bowls, and creating matching bowl sets. Students then partner with the Meals program to create an Empty Bowls event in conjunction with Harvest Festival. This CBL-designated course helps students build their artistic skills while also exploring how art can encourage social change.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit; CBL

Prerequisites: None

Paper Arts

Paper is a foundational art medium and one that everyone has easy access to. In this one-trimester elective, students explore the world of paper in both two and three dimensions. Students learn about different types of paper, make their own paper, and create torn paper collages. Students also explore the art of kirigami – a Japanese method of paper cutting. For their 3D explorations, students use wooden reeds and rice paper to make lanterns and abstract paper sculptures.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Sculptural and Functional Ceramics

In this two-trimester course, students learn the fundamentals of handbuilding with clay. Working with a variety of clay bodies such as porcelain and different colors of stoneware, students learn how to elaborate on the basic concepts of pinching, coiling, and slabs. Students construct work that is both functional and sculptural while studying techniques from around the world – such as colored clay, slip-casting, and slump molds – to add complex dimensions to their work. Students also create sculptural pieces that are both figurative and abstract using a variety of glazes, mason stains, and other decorative techniques to embellish original creations.

Open to Grades 9-12

2/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Advanced Studio Art*

In this two-trimester course, advanced art students undertake a sustained investigation – a series of two-dimensional or three-dimensional works in the same medium that communicate a connecting theme or concept. Two-dimensional media might include acrylic painting, color pencil, pastel, charcoal, experimental media, or printmaking. Three-dimensional work might include ceramics in a variety of handbuilding techniques, including Nerikomi, fiber arts, or mixed media sculpture.

Each student's investigation is informed by research, preliminary drawings, sketchbook studies, and explorations that support conceptual development and solutions to technical and perceptual problems in the chosen media. Students work with the teacher to design a timeline, supply list, and rubric for their projects. Regular group critiques, discussions, and teacher check-ins give students further opportunities to develop a more sophisticated understanding of their chosen media and how to use that media to communicate their ideas. This course is intended for students with advanced skills and independent work habits in their chosen 2-D or 3-D media.

Open to Grades 10-12

2/3 Credit (may be taken up to four years for a maximum of 2 and 2/3 credits)

Prerequisites: 1 credit in Upper School Visual Arts or instructor approval

Wellness and Physical Education

Required Courses

Wellness I and II

These one-trimester courses inspire and enable students to practice healthy living, broadly conceived. With emphasis on interpersonal communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution, the courses address identity development, nutrition, anatomy, and physiology. Students also earn CPR and First Aid certifications.

Wellness I required for Grade 9

Wellness II or Wellness: Special Topics required in Grade 11

1/3 Credit each

Prerequisites: None

Elective Courses

Wellness: Special Topics

This trimester-long course is designed to help students develop life-long social and emotional habits essential for mental well-being. With an emphasis on creating a supportive and productive environment, students will cultivate skills and learn tools to address emotional regulation, personal distress, interpersonal effectiveness, and healthy habits of the mind. Course objectives include learning and practicing skills necessary for:

- Coping with stressful situations
- Balancing and working through powerful feelings and emotions
- Managing anger in healthy ways
- Navigating interpersonal relationships effectively
- Overcoming rejection and failures
- Staying focused in the moment
- Effective and productive communication
- Understanding common mental health diagnoses and their impacts
- Developing peace of mind

Open to Grades 9-12

Wellness II or Wellness: Special Topics required in Grade 11

1/3 credit

Prerequisites: None

Physical Education: Lifetime Sports

Lifetime sports are sports and physical activities that people of all ages and all levels of ability can participate in and enjoy, such as tennis, badminton, golf, shuffleboard, table tennis, pickleball, washers, and cornhole. In this course, students discover the joy of staying active while exploring different sports, recreational pursuits, and fitness routines tailored to promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Physical Education: Outdoor Education

This trimester-long course is part of the Outdoor Activated Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) program, which combines an appreciation of the outdoors with focused attention to students' physical, emotional, social, and intellectual well-being. Outdoor Education introduces students to outdoor activities, including fishing, fly fishing, fly tying, archery, camping/trip planning, hiking, birding, and tree and plant identification. Students spend time in the classroom learning theory behind the course topics then apply their knowledge in the outdoors.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit each

Prerequisites: None

Physical Education: Mindful Movement

Mindful Movement is a class designed to guide students on a transformative journey toward holistic well-being. This course focuses on the integration of mindful exercises, incorporating elements of movement, breath, and awareness. Students immerse themselves in a nurturing environment that encourages self-discovery, stress reduction, and physical vitality. This class is suitable for all fitness levels, providing a safe and inclusive space for self-exploration. This comprehensive course seamlessly blends the ancient wisdom of yoga, the serene practice of meditation, the flowing movements of Tai chi and Qigong, the core-strengthening principles of pilates, and the joyful connection of acroyoga to cultivate a mindful approach to exercise that can enhance overall quality of life.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Physical Education: Strength and Conditioning

This dynamic course is designed to elevate students' physical fitness. This comprehensive one-trimester course integrates weightlifting, plyometrics, and cardiovascular exercises to optimize strength, endurance, and agility. This course is designed for students of all skill and experience levels, and all students can benefit from a structured approach to developing their physical fitness. Throughout the course, students gain knowledge and practical skills to enhance athletic performance, build lean muscle, and improve overall fitness.

Open to Grades 9-12

1/3 Credit

Prerequisites: None

Peer Leadership Seminar

This year-long leadership seminar prepares seniors to mentor younger students. Working closely with a partner peer, students serve the needs of groups of Grade 9 students as they move through their first year of Upper School. This program gives seniors the opportunity to develop and apply their leadership skills. Students work extensively on group facilitation skills and discuss specific topics that may arise in their mentorship groups. Coursework entails learning about group dynamics, conflict resolution, communication skills, and issues of common concern to high school students. Throughout the course, students develop ways to facilitate the discussion of these topics.

This program requires students to demonstrate maturity and responsibility, as students in Grade 9 regard their peer leaders as role models and will be influenced by their behaviors and attitudes. Peer leaders are also expected to make a substantial commitment to the students they mentor. Peer leaders lead outreach activities with Grade 9 students during the Friday advisory period about every two weeks and other required events may emerge throughout the year. All students must be in good academic standing and have a record of strong citizenship within the Thaden community. If the amount of interest shown during course selection exceeds the number of seats available in the course, enrollment will be determined by random selection.

Open to Grade 12

1 Credit

Prerequisites: instructor approval

Intensives

Intensives are one- or two-week periods of study in which students eschew their regular weekly schedule to participate in one course that meets all day, every day. This allows students to engage in educational experiences that are not always easily facilitated during our typical 60- and 90-minute class periods. Intensives also allow for the development of creative interdisciplinary course offerings that are complementary to but distinct from Thaden's core curriculum.

Intensive courses carry academic credit. All Intensive courses are graded on a Pass / No Credit basis, and credit earned during Intensives can be used to fulfill graduation requirements in Community-Based Learning (CBL), Signature Programs, Visual and Performing Arts, and Additional Courses.

The descriptions below are representative samples of Intensive course offerings. Students receive the Intensives Course Offering Guide and the Intensives Course Selection form in December. They receive their Intensives course assignments in February.

Representative Intensives Courses

The Art of the Hike

Students spend time outdoors – in Devil's Den State Park, White Rock Mountain, Hobbs State Park, and more – hiking and creating. Students develop skills to hike in a way that is well-planned, safe, fun, and leaves no trace. Following the example of nature sculptor Andy Goldsworthy, students endeavor to create sculptures in nature, exploring themes of creativity, impermanence, patience, playfulness, and humor. A visit with a National Park Service ranger helps us negotiate and consider the sometimes fraught relationship between our goals of leaving no trace and creating sculptures.

Over the course of two weeks, students go on regular day hikes, enjoying nature and contributing to it by creating sculptures made with found natural materials. In the interest of immersing ourselves in the experience and leaving no trace, students capture their sculptures on celluloid film – the only hard evidence of our art in the woods.

An overnight trip to Kansas City allows students to better understand Goldsworthy's work. Hike along the Missouri River and visit the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art which houses three of Goldsworthy's pieces: "Walking Wall" and photographs of two other sculptures. The Intensive culminates in a gallery walk showcasing photographs of student-made nature sculptures, a "how to hike" guide, and reflections on our experiences.

Bamboocycles (CBL)

Bamboo is a miracle material. Technically a grass, it grows fast, it's stronger than steel, it dampens vibrations better than carbon fiber, produces 30% more oxygen than trees, and it's biodegradable.

These qualities make it an ideal material for building bike frames. In an industry obsessed with the cutting-edge and a culture concerned with climate change, it might seem that bamboo bicycles are the next futuristic development, but they've actually been around since the dawn of the modern bicycle in the late 1800s.

With his company Bamboocycles — featured on Shark Tank México, Popular Mechanics, and Vogue — Diego Cárdenas of Mexico City melds the past and present of bike tech and breaks down the barriers to production by leading do-it-yourself workshops for folks to build their own bicycles with bamboo, carbon fiber, and modern components. In this two week Intensive, students work with Diego to build their own bicycle, from plant to pedals, from jig to joy-ride. In week two, students plan and execute a one-night bikepacking trip using their new Bamboocycles. Finally, students donate their bicycles to Pedal It Forward NWA, a local nonprofit that supplies bikes to people in need.

No prior mechanical experience is necessary. Students will bike approximately five miles (which takes approximately 30 minutes) one-way for the bikepacking trip.

Epidemiology: An Exploration of Ancient and Modern Disease Outbreaks

Explore the rich history of the field of epidemiology and learn how epidemiologists help us to understand the causes of outbreaks of disease, to inform public health policies on containing and treating current and preventing future outbreaks, and to study the effects that these outbreaks have on societies and economies.

In the first week of the course, learn about the founding of epidemiology and how research is conducted in the field as well as compare worldwide public health responses to several of history's outbreaks including the 1918 Spanish flu, HIV/AIDS, ebola, and SARS-CoV. In the second week, speak with community partners who work in the field of epidemiology and public health to see and hear first-hand how the state of Arkansas deals with public health emergencies. Research a current or past disease outbreak and complete a poster presentation that gives recommendations for solving the public health crisis that results when an outbreak occurs.

New France Arkansas

The French were the first to establish a permanent settlement in the territory that would become Arkansas. This Intensive explores the substantial influences France has had on Arkansas culture. Beginning with the exploration of the Arkansas River to a culinary and artistic presence that lives on today, students are exposed to vast historical connections between France and Arkansas. Meaningful learning takes place with a day trip to Arkansas Post, the first French settlement in the state; an inspired lunch and discussion of Arkansas history with local scholars at Bienvenue restaurant in Springdale; a cooking exposition in the Thaden teaching kitchen involving ingredients that Indigenous Peoples and French explorers shared as a symbol of friendship; a day trip to the French settlement of Old Mines, Missouri to learn about the dying dialect known as “Paw Paw French”; and a final day trip to “La Petite Roche” (Little Rock) to examine the settlement of our capital city followed by a French cooking demonstration hosted by Louis Petit and Jim Keet of Petit & Keet restaurant.