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

---

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

---

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

This Course is for...students who are visual and hands-on learners who enjoy the process of making and using their creativity.

Course Description: This course will introduce students to a brief history of architecture and the fundamentals of architectural and interior design. Through model making, sketching, and a field trip to New York City, students will explore aesthetic, structural, and spatial concepts and how they relate to the contemporary built environment. A variety of media--watercolor, colored pencils, pens, plaster--will be used to create renderings, floor plans, and 3D forms. Students can expect to have a small body of work upon completion of the class.

ASIAN MOVIES, CULTURE, AND COOKING
Ms. Zhang and Ms. Wang

This Course is for...students who are interested in Asian culture and cooking.

Course Description: We will look at some popular Asian movies about food, explore the culture, and cook some of the foods presented in the movies. Be prepared to read a lot of subtitles, learn about the importance of the various types of foods in the cultures being studied, and get ready to roll up your sleeves to do some cooking. Knives will be used, so kitchen etiquette will be strictly enforced along with hygienic practices. Everyone is expected to pitch in to prepare, cook, and clean up each day. A variety of Asian cultures will be represented and a field trip or two is a possibility to get the foods we'd need for our classes. Some ingredients include: pork, shrimp, and wheat and soy based products. Please be conscious of food allergies as some ingredients cannot be substituted. We want to ensure a safe and enjoyable cooking experience for everyone so that we can all explore the rich flavors and traditions of Asian cuisine safely.

BARBIE
Ms. Stine and Mr. Coll

This Course is for...students who are interested in film, pop culture, childhood, identity, questions of gender and power, and the Barbie phenomenon.

Course Description: In this course, we'll watch, discuss, and analyze Greta Gerwig's “Barbie” movie; read, respond to, and perhaps write cultural criticism; consider and discuss related feminist history and theory; interact with -- and make art and writing about -- our own Barbies (everyone will have one); write and/or film Barbie-related interviews and oral histories; and produce a culminating project that represents a deep dive into a personally meaningful aspect of our study. Our guiding questions are these: Why and how did “Barbie” become a cultural phenomenon? What do the film and the reaction to the film reveal about our culture, our nation, our parents, our school, ourselves? Is Barbie a feminist icon or the opposite? How can an understanding of feminist history and theory illuminate Barbie (and vice-versa)? Is “Barbie” a great film? Why or why not? What role, if any, did the Barbie toy play in the lives of people we know? What can we learn about ourselves and our culture by paying attention to a child's toy? And why do Ms. Stine and Mr. Coll love this movie so much?

CPR AND LIFE-SAVING
Mr. Steiner

This Course is for...students who want to learn the basics of how to respond to emergencies

Course Description: What separates an injury from an emergency? When does a situation become life-threatening? How can you help care for someone experiencing an emergency until more advanced medical care arrives? Learn about the fundamentals of being prepared for potential day-to-day emergencies and keeping yourself and others safe from disease while in the process of responding. Students will also dive into responding to a variety of breathing, and cardiac emergencies, including heart attacks, cardiac arrest, basic first aid, and the operation of an AED. We'll also get a chance to talk to people who use these types of skills, though at a much more advanced level, in their day-to-day lives. This course highlights practical and experiential skills and is designed to result in first aid, CPR, and AED certifications through the American Red Cross.

DANCING AND DISHES
Dr. Mederer and Ms. Borken

This Course is for...students who enjoy learning about diverse cultures, moving their bodies, have adventurous taste buds, and are looking to expand their culinary horizons. There will be long periods of dance time as well as gluten, dairy, and meat in the culinary component.

Course Description: We will explore the connection between culture, food, and dance in various global regions and learn about how some practices moved from one place to another. We will compare dance and food traditions of different cultures and meet people from different ethnic backgrounds. Together, we will experience first-
hand storytelling of the diffusion of these cultural components as we practice them. We will specifically look at traditions from Hawai’i, Europe, South America, and Africa.

**Dragons in the Wild**  
*Dr. Jump, Mr. Serach, Mr. Zarco, and Ms. Oseguera*

**This Course is for**...students who want to be in the outdoors and to challenge themselves, both physically and mentally.

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

This course will culminate in a required overnight camping trip in one of Connecticut’s beautiful state parks. To make the most of our time outside, we will leave campus promptly at 8am each day. This course is open only to 9th and 10th graders.

**Exploring Math Through Magic**  
*Mr. Matte*

**This Course is for**...students who are curious about (and often amazed at) mathematical relationships and connections

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

**The Art of the Chinese Strategy Game-Go (Weiqi)**  
*Ms. Liu and Mr. Karolinski*

**This Course is for**...students who want to challenge themselves by learning a new and fun strategy game.

**Course Description:** Learn the most popular strategy game in the world from a professionally trained player! Go, or Weiqi (围棋), is an abstract strategy board game for two players for which the goal is to occupy more territory than the opponent. Invented in China over 2,500 years ago, Go is believed to be the oldest board game played to the present day and one of the four essential arts of cultured aristocratic Chinese scholars. The rules of Go are considerably simpler than those of chess, but playing it well takes some practice because actual gameplay is quite complex. We will start by learning the basic five-in-a-row game, then play on 9x9 and 13x13 boards, and finally move on to play on a 19x19 full board. We will make a field trip and end by watching and discussing a documentary movie about how Deep Mind’s AlphaGo beat the world Go champion from South Korea. No experience is needed, just come with an open mind and a positive attitude. The course is designed for both Mandarin students and non-Mandarin students who would like to discover and deepen their understanding of one aspect of Chinese culture. Let’s Go!!

**Jazz Improvisation 101**  
*Dr. Cadwallader*

**This Course is for**...students who have a deep interest in improvised music, and are willing to take creative risks.

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

**JOURNEY INTO MIDDLE-EARTH**  
*Mr. Lowenstein and Ms. Ferrante*

This Course is for...students who want to read, watch movies, eat, create, and chat in a cozy fantasy setting; this course is for anyone who is curious or passionate about Tolkien, whether they’ve read the books, watched the film adaptations, or neither.

Course Description: This course aims to explore the life, works, and influence of J.R.R. Tolkien. Students will investigate the rich tapestry of Tolkien's imagination, gaining insights into his writing process, world-building, influences, and the thematic depth of his works. To discover the world of Middle-earth, students will read and watch parts of The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings trilogy, and other short stories by Tolkien. They will learn about how Tolkien's life, academic interests, and wartime experiences shaped his writing and world-building. Students will also experience a day in the life of a hobbit, having second breakfasts, playing games, taking pleasant walks, and generally enjoying each other's company. They will have the opportunity to create fantastical worlds of their own through writing, discussion, or art, all inspired by our collective learning and exploration.

**THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE**  
*Mr. Jones and Mr. Kravitz*

This Course is for...students who want to not only learn about the Harlem Renaissance but also engage directly with cultural artifacts and figures of the era and experience contemporary Harlem.

Course Description: Between the end of World War I and the onset of the Great Depression, Harlem witnessed an explosion of Black art and thought that continues to reverberate today. Across disciplines, Black thinkers and artists made work that interrogated the notion that artistic and intellectual achievements could effect change and bring about equality of condition for Black Americans. Their legacy continues to be politically, artistically, and intellectually relevant and powerful, and this course will be an opportunity to engage it together firsthand. Much of the term will see us "on location", with visits to include places like The Harlem Renaissance exhibit that has just opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in February, The Louis Armstrong Museum, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Apollo Theater, a Harlem Renaissance Multimedia Walking Tour, and the like. We'll complement these trips with readings from David Levering Lewis' The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader and other sources.

**MEDIA & MADNESS**  
*Mr. McCloskey and Ms. McGee*

This Course is for...students who have an interest in psychology and/or film.

Course Description: Media & Madness explores the ways that mental health is portrayed in all forms of media, including movies, TV shows, books, magazines, news programs, and social media. The course examines the issue of stigmatization and marginalization of people...
with mental health disorders, which is exacerbated by misleading and negative images presented in the media. The course also provides a very basic scientific explanation of different psychological disorders and their treatment.

**Mock Trial**
*Ms. Fratto and Dr. Freeman*

This Course is for… students who want to learn about the court system and the careers of attorneys.

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

**Movies v. Reality: The Science (or Lack Thereof) in Hollywood**
*Dr. Kuhn and Mr. Ramaley*

This Course is for… students who say “yeah right” instead of applauding.

**Course Description:** How realistic are the action scenes in popular movies/shows like Marvel/DC? Do science fiction movies give a good or bad representation of what can actually happen in the future? Students will learn how to critically evaluate action and science fiction movies using the laws of physics and Fermi-type estimation techniques. After being given the basic background physics required to understand a particular topic, students will be shown movie clips and asked to quantitatively judge the ‘realness’ of the physics in the scenes. Are they good or bad representations of what actually happens in the real world or what could happen in the future? Potential activities will involve both solving physics word problems and evaluating movie clips such as an action scene, a ‘doomsday scenario,’ or a science fiction topic like traveling through a wormhole.

**Painting and Drawing through Observation**
*Ms. Betancourt and Mr. Dalesio*

This Course is for… students who want a deeper exploration of painting and drawing techniques and find outlets of expression and creativity.

**Course Description:** Through the in-depth exploration of traditional mediums such as charcoal, acrylic, and oil, students will learn observational skills to interpret the world around them. In a warm and creative environment, we will work on different themes, including still lives, portraits, and plein-air painting. Classes will include outdoor activities, museum visits, and studio time. Students will be given the space to create their works of art independently and partake in a collaborative learning environment.

**Physically Cultured**
*Mr. Casella and Dr. Gerdes*

This Course is for… students with an interest in competitive strength sports, sports history, biomechanics, and functional anatomy.

**Course Description:** In this course we will explore the theoretical, historical, and practical aspects of competitive strength sports. Examples include Powerlifting, Strongman, and Bodybuilding. Students will learn the rules, history and common training principles of each sport. Through daily competitions, training sessions and lectures we will provide a science-based education of the various disciplines and a basic understanding of how to safely train for each one. Students should expect to participate in daily exercise.

**A Puzzler’s Paradise**
*Ms. Hunt and Mr. Martocchio*

This Course is for… students who enjoy collaborating with others to create and solve many kinds of puzzles.

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

**WABI SABI**
Ms. Sommer and Ms. Greiner

This Course is for…students who are creative, enjoy hands-on clay and dye work, are interested in the Japanese philosophy of aesthetics, and in practicing Japanese poetic forms. It’s for students who enjoy the art studio, the outdoors, and time for quiet, contemplative work.

Course Description: Explore the ancient wisdom of Wabi Sabi, finding beauty in simplicity (wabi) and serenity in the rhythms of the seasons (sabi) by creating art using materials and processes from the natural bounty around us. Wabi Sabi teaches us that all things are impermanent and imperfect, giving us permission to be our imperfect selves as we create art in harmony with nature. We will hand-build tea sets and sculpt “netsuki” (small animal figurines). We will also use plants and flowers to dye fabrics using traditional Japanese techniques. We will stitch on these fabrics and mend our own jeans, using sasshiko mending practices. We will also study the art of Haibun poetry, writing our own poems in quiet moments between art projects. Participating in a traditional tea ceremony at the Urasenke Chanoyu Japanese tea house in Manhattan will allow us to experience the wabi sabi philosophy first-hand. We will visit Henny Penny Farm in Ridgefield to experience an on-site dye workshop with master dyer and farmer, Whitney Freeman.
MISSION STATEMENT
GFA engages students as partners in an innovative, inclusive, and globally minded community to prepare them for lives of purpose.

PHILOSOPHY

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

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

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

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

CORE VALUES
PASSION • INTEGRITY • EMPATHY • CURIOSITY • EXCELLENCE