

Upper School Curriculum Guide

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR



WESTCHESTER
COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

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Mission & Philosophy

Our Mission

To cultivate responsible citizens and leaders by embracing all backgrounds and nurturing personal excellence.

Our Philosophy

Westchester Country Day School seeks to educate each child toward **moral, academic, artistic, and athletic excellence** in a community-centered learning environment that fosters independent thinking, personal growth, and service to others. Our challenging college-preparatory program integrates academics with fine arts offerings, athletic opportunities, and community service projects in support of our mission. Because we believe character education is critical to lifelong success, we cultivate honor, respect, responsibility, compassion, and service through all academic and extracurricular activities.

1. The WCDS community believes that a student is best prepared for the future by actively participating in a challenging academic program that enriches the acquisition of knowledge with opportunities for independent critical thought. While we provide a demanding curriculum that imparts the information and develops the skills essential for academic success, we recognize that students need more than mere knowledge or skills to succeed: they must also possess the self-confidence and the self-awareness that enable them to rely on their own judgment and capabilities. WCDS, therefore, helps students develop as individuals, encouraging them to express their own ideas while appreciating and valuing the ideas of others.

2. The WCDS community believes that a supportive school environment provides the best opportunity for personal growth. We believe that respect, trust, encouragement, and understanding foster a sense of community from pre-kindergarten through graduation. Because we believe that this sense of community is conducive to self-discovery and creative expression, WCDS cultivates supportive relationships among students, faculty, and families from various social, economic, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds to support our shared mission and goals.

3. The WCDS community believes that service learning enriches our students' lives by raising awareness and consciousness of issues affecting not only our own neighborhoods but also the global community. Incorporating service learning into our curriculum instills a sense of responsibility and compassion by providing students with opportunities to positively partner with local and global communities. Service learning also will enhance students' understanding of sociological concepts, offer insight into their career paths, and promote a lifelong commitment to civic and environmental engagement.

By embracing these beliefs in all aspects of student life, WCDS offers its students an opportunity for development — one that melds the acquisition of knowledge to personal growth in a uniquely supportive academic community.

Guiding Principles

Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

We firmly believe our continued pursuit of excellence demands an emphasis on the values of diversity¹, inclusion², and belonging³.

WCDS is committed to creating and sustaining an environment of respect. We celebrate and recognize that much is learned from many different perspectives and identities in a diverse community. By honoring differences, we build a community of belonging and success for all.

¹ Diversity is the range of human differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical abilities or attributes, religious or ethical value systems, national origin and political beliefs.

² Inclusion is a process of bringing people together from various backgrounds and creating an environment for success for all people.

³ Belonging is a feeling of active security, acceptance, and celebration within a group or in an environment.

Drew, J. M. (2020). Step 2: Eliminate Confusion & Chaos. In *Sharpen Your Inclusion Edge* (Vol. 1, pp. 44-47). Greensboro, NC: Social Designs.

Honor Code

All students at Westchester Country Day School operate under an Honor Code. To make the system of honor work, students are responsible for their own conduct, and students are expected to lead by example. In addition, students are encouraged to challenge fellow students who are suspected of committing an honor offense or to consult a teacher or administrator with concerns.

“As a member of the WCDS community, I resolve to uphold the Honor Code of my school and to endeavor to promote honor and

integrity. Therefore, I pledge not to cheat, lie, steal, plagiarize, or behave in any manner that exhibits dishonesty.”

The centerpiece of the Honor System in the Upper School is represented by an elected Honor Council. In addition, students are asked to demonstrate their commitment to this standard of honor by signing the Honor Pledge at the beginning of each year during the annual fall Honor Ceremony. The Pledge represents one’s affirmation of the values of the Honor Code. Once this pledge has been made, students may be required to write PLEDGED followed by their signature on assignments, an action which is tantamount to saying,

“On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this work. I have followed and will continue to follow all guidelines regarding the WCDS Honor Code, and I acknowledge that ignoring a suspected honor offense compromises both WCDS’s Honor Code and the honor by which we operate.”

Adapted with permission from the Honor Pledge of Davidson College, Davidson, NC.

Teachers will instruct students about how and where to pledge any given assignment. Students may be required to write this Honor Pledge in full on semester exams and take-home tests/quizzes. Honor violations are handled by the Upper School Honor Council and the Head of Upper School. Honor Council procedures can be found in the Community Handbook.

Portrait of a Graduate

Curious

WCDS graduates are self-motivated and take initiative to continuously grow and develop.

Resilient

Ready for a rapidly-changing world, graduates of WCDS take risks, fail, try again, and succeed.

Flexible

With an open willingness to understand different perspectives and ideas, WCDS graduates know how to approach problem-solving creatively.

Articulate

WCDS graduates express their thoughts clearly and speak eloquently as a result of intentionally developed communication skills.

Empathetic

WCDS graduates develop a sense of caring for the community around them while fostering inclusion and building relationships with others.

Globally Aware

Students who graduate from WCDS seek knowledge and understanding about global issues; they are informed citizens, ready for active engagement in their communities and beyond.

Prepared

Students who graduate from WCDS have a solid academic foundation, think critically, and are ready to face challenges in college, future careers, and life.

Academic Guidelines

Graduation Requirements

English	4 credits — At least 1 credit of English is required each year
Modern Languages	2 credits of the same language (consecutive courses)
Mathematics	4 credits — At least 1 credit of math is required each year. Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 are required for graduation. If any of these courses are taken in Middle School, they do not count for credit in Upper School.
Sciences	3 credits including Biology and Chemistry
Social Studies	3.5 credits including Government Honors, Geography & Economics Honors or AP Human Geography, World History, and US History
Fine Arts	1 credit
Electives	3 credits — At least one of these elective credits must be earned in any one of the core subject areas (English, mathematics, modern language, science, or social studies).
Health	0.5 credit
Physical Education	Upper School students satisfy their PE requirement for graduation in one of three ways: 1) through participation in one or more seasons of interscholastic JV or Varsity team membership at WCDS during their Upper School years; 2) by committing comparable time to community athletic programs or athletic disciplines not offered at WCDS (in sports such as gymnastics, dance, rowing, or equestrian competition, for example); or 3) by enrolling in the Upper School Exercise Science course or other electives focused on physical fitness. The application for approval of participation in community athletic programs will be made in advance of participation to our Head of Upper School. Approval will be contingent on an assessment of documented hours of participation.
Senior Capstone	Each senior is required to complete a Capstone Project during May of the senior year. Planning for the project begins early in the fall and continues throughout the year. This process involves conducting research on a personal or professional field of interest. During the winter months, each senior composes and delivers a research-based speech on the chosen topic to the Upper School student body. The final project in May offers each student the opportunity to continue one's study by designing and executing a week-long immersion learning experience off campus, in the local community. This undertaking may take many forms including an internship, apprenticeship, service learning endeavor, independent study process, or travel experience. The final stage of the project involves preparing and delivering an oral and visual presentation about the project to an audience of students, parents, faculty, and administrators.

A minimum total of 21 credits earned in grades 9–12 is required for graduation from Westchester Country Day School. The chart provides a description of those credits as well as non-credit-bearing graduation requirements.

The Board of Trustees establishes graduation requirements at the school, and these academic standards are a major symbol of the school's priorities and of the rigorous academic nature of the school. On very rare occasions, the curriculum of a sending school or the specific academic profile of a student requires a slight adjustment in these WCDS standards. Also, there are occasional scheduling difficulties that may impact graduation requirements. In these cases, the Head of School will make the final decision after consultation with Upper School administrators.

Course Load

In general, Upper School students are scheduled for six periods of instruction and one study hall, for a total of seven periods in their schedule. Study hall is regarded as an important part of a full schedule as it provides students valuable time during the school day to work on homework and prepare for quizzes and tests. This time is intended to alleviate the amount of work each student must complete after school and in the evening so that students can participate in after-school activities and maintain healthy sleep habits. Enrolling in fewer than six periods of instruction is not permitted, except in very unusual circumstances. Doing so requires approval from the Head of Upper School.

In some circumstances, a student may feel compelled to enroll in a seventh period of instruction and forego his or her study hall. Enrolling in a seventh period of instruction always requires approval by the Head of Upper School. This option should be considered only if a student is in very good academic standing and has a favorable attendance record. Some

courses may not be added as a seventh period of instruction due to course sequencing requirements or required prerequisites, as well as grade-level requirements (for example, some courses are reserved for seniors only). Additionally, some courses may be unavailable due to enrollment caps. When enrolling in a seventh period of instruction, students may not exceed the maximum number of AP courses permitted at each grade level (1 AP in ninth grade, 1 AP in 10th grade, 3 APs in 11th grade, and 4 APs in 12th grade). Please note that AP Biology and AP Chemistry, although worth 2 credits each, are considered single courses when counting the number of AP courses a student may take.

Students and parents should be aware that adding a seventh period of instruction can have an impact on a student's cumulative GPA.

Course Levels

HONORS COURSES

Westchester's Upper School courses begin at an honors level. Honors level courses move through material at a more vigorous pace than non-honors courses and demand more complexity from learners. These courses require students to make inferences, think critically, and apply and understand the material beyond basic recall.

ADVANCED COURSES

Advanced-level courses are a level above honors but not yet Advanced Placement and carry one extra quality point to reflect the increased expectations and workload. Pacing is rigorous and the amount of content broader in scope than an honors course. Students in advanced courses exhibit a willingness to engage with material at a more sophisticated level, complete higher level readings or solve more intricate problems, and demonstrate a high level of intrinsic motivation to learn. Students who wish to enroll in an advanced course must meet the course prerequisites and receive a teacher recommendation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

Advanced Placement (AP) courses adhere to the College Board's prescribed curriculum and cover material to prepare students for the AP exams in May. These courses carry two extra quality points to reflect the scope of material covered and the depth and breadth of content application required. AP classes require extensive out of class preparation by students and mirror the learner independence expected at the college level. Successful AP students demonstrate a facile ability to manipulate and synthesize knowledge and are adept at both analysis and reasoning. All students enrolled in an AP class are required to take the AP exam in order to receive course credit. Students who wish to enroll in an AP course must meet the course prerequisites and receive a teacher recommendation.

Credit, GPAs & Transcripts

A student's WCDS grade point average (GPA) refers to the weighted cumulative WCDS GPA calculated by adding the quality points earned at WCDS and dividing that sum by the number of credits attempted at WCDS. Only grades earned at WCDS (including those earned in approved online courses completed during the school day as part of the student's course load) are used in the calculation of a cumulative WCDS GPA. Computations are carried out to three decimal places and are rounded to two decimal places.

When a student transfers from another high school, the WCDS transcript will show only the cumulative WCDS GPA. Only grades earned at WCDS are used in the calculation of the WCDS GPA unless the student transfers to WCDS in the middle of a semester, in which case grades from the sending school may be used to calculate a term or semester average. WCDS transcripts for students who transfer to WCDS at the end of the first semester will show only the second semester averages for that year.

A student who repeats a course at WCDS that has already received credit will not receive credit for the course being retaken. Both grades will be used in calculating the student's WCDS GPA, provided both classes were taken at WCDS.

A student receives no credit for a course in which the year-end grade is an F. In order to receive credit for the course the student must either repeat it the next year, schedule and core course requirements permitting, or take it in a credit-granting summer school approved by WCDS.

Only grades earned at WCDS will be used in calculating a student's WCDS GPA, but courses completed during the summer will be included in the student's official record in the Notes section of the transcript. A student may not receive double credit toward graduation requirements for the same passed course taken twice.

In accordance with the school's philosophy, students may participate in additional academic programs or courses during the school year and/or during the summer. These endeavors may be undertaken to strengthen an individual's coursework, to enrich his or her present curriculum, or to accelerate a student's program of study. If a student in the Upper School wants to meet a graduation requirement or accelerate the program of study outside of the regular school schedule, the student is required to have the course approved by the Head of Upper School prior to taking the course. **Grades earned in such additional programs or courses, however, will not be used in computing the student's WCDS GPA.**

The courses or programs may, however, be documented in the Notes section of the transcript. In certain situations, a student may be required to sit for WCDS's end-of-course exam for a particular course in order to advance in a program of study or meet a graduation requirement. **A student may not meet graduation requirements or accelerate a program of study through independent study.** Courses in the

Upper School curriculum at WCDS are weighted in some cases when determining a student's GPA. Students shoulder the responsibility of awareness that course selection and course load impact one's GPA.

Online Courses

While Westchester recognizes the availability of myriad virtual courses through online schools, the school supports the in-person programming offered through Westchester's teachers and curriculum first and foremost; our course scheduling and staffing are based on the expectation that students will enroll in courses offered at Westchester. Therefore, it is the school's policy to approve online courses only under the following circumstances:

- If, due to scheduling constraints and all potential schedule changes are exhausted, Westchester is unable to provide a student with a course (ex: no electives offered during the student's only possible free period), an elective of similar content and caliber may be offered via one of several online course programs. In this case, Westchester will cover the cost of the online course.
- If a student wishes to pursue a foreign language course not offered at Westchester, such as Latin, German, or French, or wishes to enroll in American Sign Language in order to meet the language graduation requirement, the student must find and enroll in an online program approved by the Head of Upper School or the Head of School. The student's family will be responsible for the cost of this programming.

Only under one of the two circumstances above will the online coursework be included in the student's transcript/GPA. Online courses completed for other reasons, such as enrichment or to gain college credit, will be included in the Notes section of the student transcript and will

need to be completed outside the WCDS school day.

Schedule Changes

A student may drop/add a course with the approval of their parent, the Head of Upper School, and the Director of Academic Affairs & College Guidance prior to the end of drop/add period, which is typically the **Friday after Labor Day**, provided there is room in an alternate course for the student to enroll.

A student enrolled in a core Advanced or AP course may drop down one level of the same or similar course (AP Math to Math Honors) **before the midpoint of the first quarter** with approval of their parent, the Head of Upper School, and the Director of Academic Affairs & College Guidance.

Course Selection & Enrollment

All student course requests are reviewed by teachers each spring and requests are approved or denied based on multiple factors. In general, teachers consider the following guidelines (although specific courses may have other requirements):

- Students moving from honors to advanced-level courses should have a minimum semester 1 course average of **90** in the course prerequisite.
- Students moving from honors or advanced-level into an AP class should have a minimum semester 1 course average of a **93** in the course prerequisite.
- Students who wish to move from one AP-level course to another AP-level course (in the same subject/content area) should have a minimum semester 1 course average of **85** in the course prerequisite.

- Students requesting advanced-level and AP courses must also demonstrate the academic behaviors below:
 - ◊ Intellectual curiosity and a strong ability to think in an abstract manner
 - ◊ A commitment to timely and thorough assignment completion
 - ◊ Positive contributions in their current course
 - ◊ A capability to independently handle the more complex readings, problem-solving tasks, and writing assignments required of the higher level course

Appeals Process for Placement Review

Students who are not approved for an advanced or AP course may appeal to a faculty committee composed of five individuals:

- The Head of Upper School
- The Director of Academic Affairs and College Guidance
- Three Upper School Faculty Members: one humanities teacher, one science teacher, and one math teacher.

Appeals must be submitted no later than **May 15** of each academic year. To initiate an appeal, the student is required to provide a one-page written statement outlining the reasons for requesting a reconsideration of their placement. In addition to the written statement, the student must submit documented evidence of their academic performance. This could include, but is not limited to, test scores, study strategies, or a documented record of improvement (e.g., an increase in grades from a 79 to an 85 over the course of a quarter).

All appeal materials must be submitted directly to the Head of the Upper School for review by

the placement committee. **The decision of the faculty committee is final.**

Limits on AP Course Enrollment

It is Westchester’s policy to limit the number of AP courses in which a student can enroll in order to foster positive mental health and a more well-rounded Upper School experience:

- Grade 9 students: ONE AP course
- Grade 10 student: ONE AP course
- Grade 11 students: THREE AP courses
- Grade 12 students: FOUR AP courses

Students wishing to enroll in more AP courses than the limit set for their grade level must complete an appeal form before **May 15** of each school year. The [appeal form](#) requires students to acknowledge the nightly homework and study demands along with potential impact on sleep, mental health, and social life. [Parents must also submit a form](#) indicating their acknowledgment of the demands of extra AP course work.

Recommendations from the College Office

While the high school transcript is the single most important factor colleges consider in admissions, the courses a student takes should reflect “right fit.” In the college admissions process, Westchester students are evaluated in the context of offerings provided by Westchester, not in the context of other schools. Each student will meet with the Director of Academic Affairs and College Guidance during the registration process, and juniors and their families will also have the opportunity for 45 minute registration and college planning meetings with the College Office. Some key points to remember:

- We encourage students to choose courses that model a gradual increase in rigor along with courses in which they will find the most success.
- Students should select courses that align with their college and career goals.
- Appropriately challenging courses ensure students develop the resilience needed for college and post-graduate life while also allowing for a healthy balance between school work, extracurriculars, and social and family life.
- While Westchester only requires two consecutive years of a foreign language for graduation, we recommend that students take more than two years to show a continued rigor of courses and to prepare themselves for college-level language courses. Many colleges still require students to take foreign language courses as part of their degree requirements.
- Choose courses that are based on personal goals and strengths rather than pressure from peers.

Registration Timeline

To honor our small, independent school priorities, the registration process takes place over several months to allow for individual student meetings and for tailoring the schedule to meet the needs of multiple divisions. While exact dates may vary from year to year, students can expect the following timeline:

Mid-Late January	Curriculum Guide and registration information is shared with families.
Late January – February	The Director of College Guidance visits English classes to help students in grades 9-11 submit course requests. Faculty then preview requests for course approvals.
February	Current juniors and their parents meet individually with the Director of College Guidance to discuss the senior year schedule along with the beginnings of a college list formation. Meetings are scheduled to take place during the student’s study hall or after school and when parents are able to come to campus.
March	Students in grades 9 and 10 meet with the Director of College Guidance during their study halls to finalize and confirm course selections based on teacher recommendations; printed copies of the course requests will be sent home for parent signatures.
April – May	Course enrollment appeals take place (by May 15 of each year). Registration information is communicated with rising 9th grade families.
August	Class schedules are posted in the Student/Parent Portals.

Course Selection

Suggested Course Progression

Standard courses for each grade level are underlined. Graduation credit requirements for each department appear in parentheses and recommendations are in italics in the left column.

Subject	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
English (4 credits; English required every year)	<u>English 9 Honors</u>	<u>English 10 Honors</u> Advanced Humanities Advanced English 10	<u>American Literature Honors</u> AP English Language	<u>World Literature Honors</u> AP English Literature
Mathematics (4 credits, including Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and a higher level course for which Algebra 2 is a prerequisite; math required every year)	Algebra 1 Honors <u>Geometry Honors</u> Algebra 2 Honors	Geometry Honors <u>Algebra 2 Honors</u> Advanced Pre-Calculus	Algebra 2 Honors <u>Functions & Modeling Honors</u> Advanced Pre-Calculus AP Statistics	Functions & Modeling Honors <u>Statistics Honors</u> Advanced Pre-Calculus AP Statistics AP Calculus AB
Social Studies (3.5 credits, including US Government, Geography & Economics or AP Human Geography, World History, and US History) <i>4 years of social studies</i>	<u>US Government Honors</u> (.5 credit) Human Geography Honors AP Human Geography	<u>World History Honors</u> AP World History	<u>US History Honors</u> AP US History	World Religions (.5 credit) Art History (.5 credit) AP European History AP Psychology
Sciences (3 credits, including Biology and Chemistry) <i>4 years of science</i>	<u>Biology Honors</u>	<u>Experimental Physics Honors</u> <u>Chemistry Honors</u>	<u>Experimental Physics Honors</u> <u>Chemistry Honors</u> <u>Environmental Science Honors</u> Advanced Engineering AP Biology (2 credits) AP Physics I AP Chemistry (2 credits)	
Modern Languages (2 credits of the same language in consecutive courses) <i>4 years of a modern language</i>	Mandarin 2 Honors Spanish 1 Honors Spanish 2 Honors	Advanced Mandarin 3 Advanced Mandarin 4 Advanced Spanish 3 Advanced Spanish 4	AP Chinese Language & Culture AP Spanish Language & Culture	
Fine Arts (1 credit)	Art 1, Art 2, Advanced Art, AP Studio Art, Play Production*, Music Appreciation, Concert Choir*, Contemporary Music Ensemble*, AP Music Theory, Film History & Production, and Yearbook*			
Electives (3 credits) At least one must be an additional unit of English, math, social studies, science, or modern language.	Fine Arts courses in excess of the required credit; additional courses offered within the English, Mathematics, Sciences, Social Studies, Modern Languages, or Technology departments			
Health/Physical Education (.5 credit for Health)	<u>Health</u> (.5 credit)	The PE requirement may be met through participation in one or more seasons of JV or Varsity team membership at WCDS or comparable time to dedicated community programs or disciplines.		
Minimum Credits in Grades 9-12 Required for Graduation: 21 <i>Recommended credits for graduation: 24</i>	Attempting fewer than 6 credits per year (courses split evenly between two semesters) requires approval by the Head of Upper School. Additional, non-coursework requirements for graduation include the PE Requirement and Senior Capstone Project. The Senior Capstone Project is a yearlong endeavor that requires research, public speaking, and an internship. A minimum number of service hours is not a graduation requirement. As indicated by our school philosophy, service is a part of our school culture, and therefore, students complete service on their own initiative.			

Quick Guide: Course Offerings for 2025-2026

These are planned offerings for the 2025-2026 academic year. Offerings may change based on student enrollment and staffing availability. Please see the detailed course descriptions for credits and prerequisites.

ENGLISH

- English 9 Honors
- English 10 Honors
- Advanced English 10
- American Literature Honors
- AP English Language & Composition
- World Literature Honors
- AP English Literature & Composition
- Journalism

MATHEMATICS

- Algebra 1 Honors
- Geometry Honors
- Algebra 2 Honors
- Functions & Modeling Honors
- Statistics Honors
- Advanced Pre-Calculus
- AP Statistics
- AP Calculus AB

SOCIAL STUDIES

- U.S. Government Honors
- Human Geography Honors
- World History Honors
- U.S. History Honors
- Honors Seminar: African American Studies
- Honors Seminar: Latin American Politics
- Entrepreneurship Honors
- Introduction to Psychology Honors
- AP Human Geography
- AP World History – Modern
- AP U.S. History
- AP European History
- AP Psychology

SCIENCES

- Biology Honors
- Advanced Biology
- Chemistry Honors
- Advanced Chemistry

SCIENCES (CONTINUED)

- Experimental Physics Honors
- Environmental Science Honors
- Advanced Engineering
- AP Chemistry
- AP Biology
- AP Physics 1

MODERN LANGUAGES

- Spanish 1 Honors
- Spanish 2 Honors
- Advanced Spanish 3
- Advanced Spanish 4
- AP Spanish Language & Culture
- Mandarin 2 Honors
- Advanced Mandarin 3
- Advanced Mandarin 4
- AP Chinese Language & Culture

FINE ARTS

- Art 1
- Art 2
- Advanced Art
- AP Art & Design
- Contemporary Music Ensemble
- Music Appreciation
- Concert Choir
- Film History and Production
- Yearbook

TECHNOLOGY

- Introduction to Computer Science
- AP Computer Science Principles
- AP Computer Science A
- Graphic Design

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Health
- Strength & Conditioning

Course Descriptions

This section provides descriptions for all of the courses that may be offered in the Upper School at WCDS. Offerings may change from year to year based on student enrollment and staffing availability. Some of the courses listed here may not be available every academic year.

English

ENGLISH 9 HONORS

English 9 Honors is an exciting year of thematic reading and intensive writing. When actively studying novels or stories, students can expect to read up to 20 pages per night. Daily participation and engagement in whole-class and small-group discussions are expected. Great emphasis is placed on parenthetical citation within the text of essays as students utilize and learn MLA formatting. Writers move from simple and compound sentences to compound-complex sentences to match the maturation and complexity of the material being studied. Vocabulary development is stressed throughout the year, research and library skills are reinforced, and critical evaluation of sources and the development of sound arguments are emphasized. The course also studies poetry and ends with a joint research project with Biology Honors.

ENGLISH 10 HONORS

English 10 Honors is the traditional English course for sophomores. Although many texts will focus on British texts that serve as a basis for understanding American literature and other literature in a broader context, the course will also expose students to contemporary works that serve to develop thematic units. Students continue to develop critical reading skills, and the course is accompanied by a heavy emphasis on composition; students write in a variety of genres, from creative prompts and journals to essays and research papers, all related to the classroom texts. Direct vocabulary instruction is provided in addition to vocabulary development

through reading context. By the end of the course, students are making great strides towards writing academically at the college level and thinking critically about difficult texts.

ADVANCED ENGLISH 10

Advanced English 10 offers students the opportunity to read some of the world's earliest works of literature as a framework for studying the traditional English 10 coursework and to have a foundation of the influences on major writers for future study. This course includes literature and composition and combines nightly reading assignments, writing in a variety of modes, vocabulary development, and student-generated discussion. Students enrolled in Advanced English 10 are strong readers and writers who welcome a more challenging literature experience. Faculty approval is required to enroll. Typically an option sophomore year as an alternative to English 10 Honors.

AMERICAN LITERATURE HONORS

American Literature Honors is a yearlong study of the major literary topics and themes across the history of the United States. Students focus on the major literary forms of the emerging nation and analyze the literary themes and trends while continuing to develop close reading skills. Students research and compose several essays and presentations that correlate with the studied texts and time periods. Direct vocabulary instruction is provided in addition to vocabulary development through reading context. This course is for juniors, complementing their US History course.

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition is a study of the intrinsic power of language: the ways that words and sentences move us, affect us, change our minds. Students examine carefully the interrelationships among the elements of speaker, audience, purpose, and context and study carefully the intricacies of language — diction, connotation, syntax, and organization, to name a few. Written work plays an important role in this endeavor. Students write a great deal in AP English Language — in class during a discussion or at home in response to a reading assignment, at times creatively mimicking an essayist and often as scholars analyzing and evaluating others' arguments to determine their worth and merit. This yearlong course carries two extra quality points. Strong critical reading and writing skills are key to successful performance in this course. Faculty approval is required to enroll. Typically an option junior year as an alternative to American Literature Honors. [View AP course details.](#)

WORLD LITERATURE HONORS

World Literature Honors is designed to give seniors exposure to a wide variety of texts outside of the traditional British/American literary canon. This yearlong course teaches students how to respond to literature based on careful observations of structure, style, theme, and social and historical values. Additionally, many texts emphasize understanding how philosophy or religion (i.e. Absurdism, Surrealism, Magical Realism) influence a text. Writing and rewriting are a frequent part of class as is the mastering of the MLA style.

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition is designed to expose students to the kinds of English literature classes they will encounter at the college level. The course teaches students both to read and to respond to a text based on a careful observation of

textual details. The course works through six “Big Ideas”: Character, Setting, Structure, Narration, Figurative Language, and Literary Argumentation, with associated discrete skills for each. Students write and rewrite formal, extended analyses and timed, in-class responses to develop critical and rhetorical awareness. In addition to preparing students for the AP exam in May, this course also will provide students the opportunity to consider issues raised in a given literary text and make connections between the content of our course and their broader experiences. This yearlong course carries two extra quality points. Faculty approval is required to enroll. Seniors only; offered as an alternative to World Literature Honors. [View AP course details.](#)

JOURNALISM

With a focus on authentic, real-world writing and production opportunities, the journalism elective introduces students to a variety of topics in journalism such as news writing, sports writing, ethical considerations in journalism, editorial writing, multimedia, videography, social media, and more. Students have the opportunity to pursue school-oriented topics (sports, arts, academics, and other) in addition to other local and national subjects in the production of their content.

Mathematics

ALGEBRA 1 HONORS

This is a yearlong standard Algebra 1 course that includes the study of polynomial factoring and quadratic equations. Topics covered include linear equations, systems of equations, complex fractions, graphing linear equations, inequalities, and radicals. Word problems are scattered throughout to help develop analytical skills. This is the first course in our Upper School math sequence.

GEOMETRY HONORS

The primary function of Geometry Honors is to develop critical thinking skills through the

deductive reasoning process and to teach students organizational skills and the importance of detail and precision in mathematics. By the end of the year, students will know basic geometric principles including geometric definitions, proof, and theory. During the first semester, students will concentrate on the concepts of parallel lines, congruence, and quadrilaterals and develop deductive thinking through formal proof writing. During the second semester the students will incorporate more algebra into geometric theory. This course is next in the math sequence after Algebra 1 Honors.

ALGEBRA 2 HONORS

This yearlong course expands the student's grasp of algebraic concepts and skills. Advanced concepts include relations, functions, polynomials, rational expressions, solving a variety of equations, and systems of equations and inequalities. Students will be expected to describe and translate among graphic, algebraic, numeric, tabular, and verbal representations of relations and use them to solve problems. Students will use quadratic functions to model problems and solve by factoring and graphing. This course is next in the math sequence after Algebra 1 Honors and Geometry Honors.

FUNCTIONS & MODELING HONORS

Students who have completed Algebra 2 Honors may be recommended to take Functions & Modeling Honors based on their performance in Algebra 2 Honors. The course begins with a review of essential algebraic concepts and provides students with an in-depth study of modeling and applying functions. Consumer issues, public policy, scientific investigations, recreation, work, and home are just a few of the areas from which applications originate. Graphing calculators and other technology will be used for instruction and assessment. Students will describe graphically, algebraically, and verbally phenomena as functions and identify independent and dependent quantities, domain, and range. Linear, quadratic, cubic, exponential, and logarithmic functions will be used to model

and solve problems. Students will use the trigonometric ratios to model and solve problems and will use logic and deductive reasoning to draw conclusions and solve problems.

STATISTICS HONORS

This yearlong course explores the essential topics of statistics. Students will learn the language of statistics and probability. They will explore descriptive statistics, probability, estimation, and hypothesis testing. Graphing calculators and other technology will be used for instruction and assessment. Students will be able to create a means for gathering data and determine the best means to report their findings in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their audience. Students will learn to recognize bias and state ways to avoid it.

ADVANCED PRE-CALCULUS

Advanced Pre-Calculus continues topics introduced in Algebra 2 Honors and emphasizes understanding and application of concepts related to functions, polynomials, and graphing. The course, designed to prepare students for calculus, also includes a study of logarithmic, exponential, circular, and trigonometric functions, as well as analytic geometry. Students use graphing calculators in their study of functions. This is a yearlong course that carries an extra quality point. Faculty approval is required to enroll.

AP STATISTICS

AP Statistics is equivalent to that of a semester college statistics course. The course introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. It exposes students to four broad conceptual themes: exploring data, sampling and experimentation, anticipating patterns, and statistical inferences. Written expression is essential in AP Statistics. Students learn to communicate succinctly and clearly. Graphing calculators are utilized throughout the course for data analysis. This is a yearlong course that carries two extra quality points. Advanced Pre-Calculus is a prerequisite, and faculty approval is

required to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

AP CALCULUS AB

AP Calculus AB is equivalent to a first-semester college calculus course. The course is designed to help students develop a conceptual understanding of college-level calculus content, as well as proficiency in the skills and practices needed for mathematical reasoning and problem solving. After completing the course, students should be able to apply critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills in a variety of contexts; use calculus terminology and notations appropriately; and clearly communicate their findings using mathematical evidence and justifications. The course is divided into two main topics: differential calculus and integral calculus. Emphasis is placed on practical application as well as theory, and problems are assigned in such a way as to give students practice with both. This is a yearlong course that carries two extra quality points. Advanced Pre-Calculus is a prerequisite, and faculty approval is required to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

Social Studies

U.S. GOVERNMENT HONORS

From our earliest days, the history of the United States of America contains a complicated mix of peoples, nations, colonies, geographies, religions, and economies. Our task in this semester course is to understand the basics of a government that has lasted for over 200 years, though not without struggle, compromise, and adaptations. We will consider both historical and current events as we seek to understand how our government works. This course is required for graduation, and typically students take it during ninth grade, paired with a semester-long Health class.

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY HONORS

Where are people and cultures located across Earth's surface? Why are they located in particular places? These two simple questions are the basis of our study in Human Geography

Honors. We approach these questions by examining population, healthcare, migration, popular and folk culture, religion, ethnicity, agriculture, development, and industry. This yearlong course is the standard social studies course for ninth graders.

WORLD HISTORY HONORS

World History Honors provides a broad overview of human interactions and societies from 1200 to the present day. We focus on how and why societies have thrived and failed through the examination of social and gender relationships, political constructs, economic systems, cultural contributions, religions and belief systems. This yearlong course is the standard social studies course for tenth grade students.

U.S. HISTORY HONORS

United States History Honors is a yearlong survey course usually taken during junior year that explores the key events and changes over time in America from earliest migration and European colonization to the forming of a new nation and its struggle towards the American Dream. Students will be collaborators in the course with research and discussion on historical and contemporary issues. The course will blend a study of political history, reaching back to a previous study in U.S. Government Honors, while simultaneously reaching into a social understanding of the various peoples that make up the nation. A central theme is an understanding of the United States Constitution and its role in keeping a large and diverse population on a solid path of improvement.

HONORS SEMINAR: AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

This engaging course offers students an in-depth exploration of the rich and complex history of African Americans from the colonial period to the present. Through critical analysis of key events, movements, and figures, students will examine topics such as the Reconstruction era, the Civil Rights Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, African American contributions to

culture and the arts, and the ongoing struggles for equality and justice. The class emphasizes inquiry-based learning, primary source analysis, and interdisciplinary connections, encouraging students to think critically about historical contexts and their impact on contemporary society. Designed for students with a passion for history and social studies, this honors-level course fosters intellectual discussion, research, and a deeper understanding of African American experiences and their pivotal role in shaping American history. This course is one semester.

HONORS SEMINAR: GENDER THEORY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

This course examines contemporary gender theory in the context of American society, exploring how gender, women's rights and roles are constructed and challenged. Students will analyze key texts and movements that have shaped modern understandings of gender, including feminism, essentialism and intersectionality. The course also addresses the implications of gender theory in various spheres, such as politics, media, and the workplace. Through discussions and critical analysis, participants will gain insight into how gender dynamics influence contemporary social issues and personal identities. This course is one semester.

HONORS SEMINAR: LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

This course explores the dynamic political, social, and economic transformations of Latin America from the end of the Spanish-American War to the present, with a particular focus on Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and the nations of Central America. Students will examine the major political movements, revolutions, U.S. influence, and social changes that have shaped the region over the last century. Through the study of key events, figures, and movements, such as the Cuban Revolution, U.S.-Latin American relations, military dictatorships, and struggles for democracy, students will gain insight into the complexities of governance, imperialism, and

national identity. Emphasizing critical analysis, primary source exploration, and discussion, this course offers students the tools to better understand the region's diverse histories and its enduring impact on global politics. This course is one semester.

HONORS SEMINAR: ASIAN POLITICS AFTER WORLD WAR II

This honors seminar examines the complex political landscape of Asia from the end of World War II to the present, with a particular focus on the geopolitical relationships between China and Japan, the division of Korea into North and South Korea, and Taiwan's evolving role in regional and global politics. Students will explore the historical roots of these relationships, key events such as the Korean War, the Chinese Revolution, and U.S. involvement in the Pacific, as well as the ongoing tensions surrounding Taiwan's sovereignty and its relationship with China. Through analysis of primary sources, historical context, and current events, students will critically assess how these dynamics have shaped the political and economic development of the region and continue to influence international relations today. This course emphasizes research, discussion, and interdisciplinary analysis to provide students with a deeper understanding of the complexities of modern Asian politics. This course is one semester.

HONORS SEMINAR: CIVIL LIBERTIES

This one-semester course explores humanity's ongoing efforts to coexist and the complex struggles for equality and justice by examining the intersection of historical events and contemporary issues. Through critical analysis, inquiry, and in-depth research utilizing both primary and secondary sources, students will investigate the evolution of civil liberties over time. Primary sources such as historical documents, speeches, letters, and legal cases will provide direct insight into key moments and decisions, while secondary sources, including scholarly articles and historical analyses, will offer context and interpretation. Through

research projects and critical reading, students will develop the skills to assess evidence, build arguments, and synthesize information to draw meaningful conclusions about civil liberties and their global impact. This course challenges students to recognize patterns, draw connections, and engage in thoughtful dialogue about civil liberties, social change, and the responsibilities of citizenship in diverse societies while seeking to understand the social, political, and cultural forces that have shaped our present moment—our “NOW.”

HONORS SEMINAR: GLOBAL CONFLICTS IN THE MODERN ERA

This one-semester course examines the origins, development, and evolution of global conflicts in the modern era, focusing on the political, institutional, economic, and environmental factors that drive their persistence. Students will analyze how contemporary conflicts have shifted from primarily interstate wars (involving conflicts between nations) to intrastate conflicts (centered on divisions within a single nation, such as civil wars and insurgencies) by exploring key case studies and their underlying causes, including competition for natural resources, territorial disputes, colonial legacies, and modern geopolitical strategies. Through critical research and the analysis of both primary and secondary sources, students will investigate pivotal events, decision-making processes, and varying perspectives. Students will assess evidence, analyze bias and reliability, and synthesize information to build coherent arguments about the causes, consequences, and resolution of global conflicts, while considering the role of international organizations and peace-building strategies. This course emphasizes the development of critical research and analytical skills through inquiry, source evaluation, and thoughtful discussion, equipping students with the tools to explore historical patterns, ideological divides, and economic inequalities shaping today’s global conflicts and their potential paths to stability and peace.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP HONORS

This course is designed to introduce students to the concept of entrepreneurship. Students will acquire the knowledge of the nature and scope of entrepreneurship and understand the impact of entrepreneurship on market economies. Students will examine and develop the personal traits and behaviors fundamental to becoming a successful entrepreneur, and will be exposed to the first steps of the entrepreneurial process including the development of business plans. In addition, students will develop an understanding of economic concepts and marketing functions. There will be a field trip experience included in this course. This is a one semester course.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Financial literacy is essential in meeting the financial challenges of the 21st century. The competencies, which form the basis for this semester course, enable students to analyze their personal financial decisions, evaluate the costs and benefits of their decisions, recognize their rights and responsibilities as consumers, and apply the knowledge learned in school to financial situations encountered later in life. Students taking Personal Finance will demonstrate an understanding of SMART Goals, the career decision making process; money management, including budgeting, banking, and saving; risk management, including property and automobile insurance; and credit management. This is a one semester course.

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY HONORS

The purpose of the Introduction to Psychology course is to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and their mental processes. Psychology attempts to identify biological, social, and environmental factors, which help to describe, explain, predict, and control behavior. We will explore and apply many of psychology’s fascinating findings. Here are just a few of the topics we will be discussing: the founders of psychology to current trends in psychology; cognition and

intelligence; personalities; social psychology; and psychological disorders. This is a yearlong honors level course.

INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMICS

This introductory course to economics will help students understand the importance of economics in society and its impact on their daily lives and the world around them. The study of economics equips students with valuable soft skills beneficial to their personal and professional development. Economics provides students with the core knowledge and insights about financial management, budgeting, investing, and saving. This is a one semester course.

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Advanced Placement Human Geography is the study of our physical world, including natural features and human-made features. Human Geography considers how humans have shaped the development of our modern world. The course not only asks, “Where are things in the world?” It also asks, “Why are they located as such?” This knowledge will help to inform our perspective on a range of contemporary issues. Units of study include Geographic Tools and Methods, Population, Migration, Agriculture and Food Production, Industrialization and Economic Development, Cities and Urban Land Use, and Political Geography. This is a yearlong course that carries two extra quality points. It is reserved primarily for ninth graders who are selected based on their demonstrated reading ability and work ethic during the eighth grade Global Studies course. [View AP course details.](#)

AP WORLD HISTORY – MODERN

AP World History is a challenging course that focuses on the interactions among diverse human societies primarily over the past 1,000 years. The objective is for students to develop a greater comparative understanding of the causes and effects of such interactions upon different classes of peoples in different areas. The course will focus on the history of Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, and Europe from 1200-2001.

This yearlong course carries two additional quality points and requires faculty approval to enroll. Typically an option sophomore year as an alternative to World History Honors. [View AP course details.](#)

AP U.S. HISTORY

The Advanced Placement United States History course is designed to provide a rigorous college-level experience in preparation for the AP examination. An emphasis will be placed on interpreting documents, mastering a significant amount of informational content, and writing critical essays. Students will develop historical thinking skills including writing arguments using historical evidence, chronological reasoning, and historical interpretation and synthesis. Through a variety of individual and collaborative activities, students will focus on reading, writing, and communication skills that will serve them well in the future. This yearlong course carries two additional quality points and requires faculty approval to enroll. Typically an option junior year as an alternative to United States History Honors. [View AP course details.](#)

AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

Advanced Placement European History is designed to be the equivalent of an introductory college or university European history course. In AP European History students investigate significant events, individuals, developments, and processes in distinct historical periods from approximately 1450 to the present. Students develop and use the same skills, practices, and methods employed by historians: analyzing primary and secondary sources; developing historical arguments; making historical comparisons; and utilizing reasoning about contextualization, causation, and continuity and change over time. The course also provides six themes that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places: interaction of Europe and the world; poverty and prosperity; objective knowledge and subjective visions; states and other institutions

of power; individual and society; and national and European identity. This course carries two additional quality points, and faculty approval is required to enroll. Seniors only, and ideally the course should be taken after completion of either AP US History or AP World History. [View AP course details.](#)

AP PSYCHOLOGY

Whether a student is desiring to pursue a major in psychology or is just interested in the subject matter, this course will prepare students to understand human behavior, improve their critical thinking skills, and apply psychology in their own personal lives as they build relationships with others. We will cover several content areas, including research methods, biology, developmental psychology, personality, social psychology, and several others before ending with the understanding and treatment of psychological disorders. This is a yearlong course that carries two extra quality points. Faculty approval required to enroll. Open to seniors and juniors if space is available. [View AP course details.](#)

Sciences

BIOLOGY HONORS

Biology Honors is a comprehensive introduction to a broad range of topics within the field of the modern biological sciences. Chemistry, biochemistry, cellular processes, evolution, and genetics will form the core material of the class, but there will be ample opportunities to broaden the survey to include other related subjects. Laboratory procedure and the scientific method also will be a major focus and, as such, labs will be offered frequently with a focus on independent inquiry. In addition, the tenets of science writing, research, and presentation will be thoroughly explored throughout the year. This is a required course for ninth graders.

ADVANCED BIOLOGY

Advanced Biology is an introduction to modern biological sciences with an emphasis on methods

and data analysis. Core topics include chemistry, biochemistry, cellular processes, evolution, and genetics. The emphasis will stress the importance of laboratory procedures and the scientific method, incorporating frequent labs and qualitative data collection. Students will engage with science writing, focusing on interpreting and presenting findings from qualitative surveys and open-ended data. Research and presentation skills will be integral throughout the year. This course requires teacher approval for enrollment.

CHEMISTRY HONORS

Chemistry Honors provides students with an understanding of chemical principles and various laboratory skills that are essential for future chemistry programs. This course also provides students the opportunity to interpret and understand how chemistry affects their lives, community, and world. Chemistry Honors is required for graduation and is a prerequisite for the Advanced and AP science courses we offer. A student's math placement is taken into consideration when deciding whether to take Chemistry Honors sophomore or junior year. Students who will be enrolled in Algebra 2 Honors or a higher level math class sophomore year typically take Chemistry Honors that same year. Those who will be enrolled in Geometry Honors sophomore year must wait to take Chemistry Honors their junior year.

ADVANCED CHEMISTRY

Advanced Chemistry takes the principles introduced in Chemistry Honors and elevates them to a more challenging level. The course is fast-paced in order to cover a more detailed range of chemical concepts alongside essential laboratory techniques and real-world applications of chemistry. Students will deepen their understanding of atomic and molecular structures, physical changes, and chemical reactions, and will be expected to engage in complex problem-solving. Students will also explore interdisciplinary connections, making links between chemistry, biology, physics, and mathematics. Labs will emphasize critically

analyzing data in order to draw meaningful conclusions. This course is ideal for students who wish to prepare for AP Chemistry or other advanced science courses, and it requires a high level of motivation, self-discipline, and intellectual curiosity. This course requires teacher approval for enrollment.

EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS HONORS

Experimental Physics Honors is an algebra-based, introductory physics course covering the basic topics from both a conceptual and analytical point of view. Problems are presented in a historical context whenever possible. Students will be required to conduct experiments in which they will collect data, perform analysis, and present conclusions. Application will be made to current, real-world problems. Students should have a good understanding of linear equations from Algebra 1. Some basic geometry and trigonometry will be introduced as part of the course material. (Note: For sophomores not taking Chemistry Honors, this is the required yearlong science course in 10th grade; sophomores enrolled in Chemistry, juniors, and seniors may opt to take it as an elective.)

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE HONORS

Environmental Science Honors is a yearlong course dedicated to understanding the interactions between Earth's natural systems and the demands placed on them by the human population. Topics for discussion include weather and climate, biodiversity, ecosystem management, energy transfer and balance, population growth, bioremediation, and environmental toxicology. This course will build upon the knowledge gained in Biology Honors and Chemistry Honors to deepen a student's understanding of the environment. Environmental Science Honors will be open to students who have completed Biology Honors and either are enrolled in or have completed Chemistry Honors.

ADVANCED MARINE BIOLOGY

Advanced Marine Biology will be open to students who have completed Biology Honors

and either are enrolled in or have completed Chemistry Honors. The course covers invertebrate and vertebrate zoology, ocean ecology, geomorphology, and Earth and ocean-atmospheric dynamics. There will also be an opportunity to focus on individual interests related to these subjects. Weekly and biweekly labs and dissections will complement the subject material. The main focus of the course will be a research project to be prepared over the course of the year and executed during a 4-5 day field trip to the North Carolina coast in early April. The field trip is required for completion of class and will be funded by Westchester. Due to the nature of the required fieldwork, enrollment in this course may be limited. The course requires faculty approval to enroll.

ADVANCED ENGINEERING

Much of our modern society depends on engineered artifacts to function, but many of us are not aware of the engineering techniques and practices that have developed the technology and infrastructure on which we rely: cell phones, airplanes, bridges, vehicles, computers, etc. This course introduces engineering techniques and practices with the goals of (1) helping students gain an appreciation for engineering and its role throughout history and (2) understanding what engineers do and the skills and processes they bring to their work. The midterm project is designed to thoroughly model both the current unit and engineering skills studied thus far. The final project requires students to work on a team to create a prototype product that addresses a real human need. Although this course provides an introduction to engineering, it will be taught at a more advanced level than an Honors course, and so it carries an additional quality point. This yearlong course is open to students who have completed Biology Honors and are either enrolled in or have completed Chemistry Honors. The course requires faculty approval to enroll.

AP BIOLOGY

Advanced Placement Biology is designed to be enjoyable, challenging, and extremely hands

on. Please keep in mind that AP Biology is not a college preparatory course, but a college-level course with college-level expectations for behavior, attendance, engagement, study habits, and effort. Also, AP Biology is an interdisciplinary field of study, integrating biological, chemical, mathematical, historical, and sociological concepts. It will be rigorous, time consuming, and demanding and will put particular emphasis on the laboratory experience, with up to three per week. Unlike some other science courses, AP Biology is worth two credits, so it occupies two periods of a student's schedule. Each credit carries two additional quality points. Faculty approval is required to enroll. Open to juniors and seniors who have completed both Biology Honors and Chemistry Honors. [View AP course details.](#)

AP CHEMISTRY

The Advanced Placement Chemistry course is designed to be the equivalent of the general chemistry course usually taken during the first college year. The course centers around six big ideas: atoms; chemical bonds and forces of attraction; chemical reactions; kinetics; thermodynamics; chemical equilibrium. Unlike some other science courses, AP Chemistry is worth two credits, so it occupies two periods of a student's schedule. Each credit carries two additional quality points. Faculty approval is required to enroll. Open to juniors and seniors who have completed Biology Honors and Chemistry Honors. [View AP course details.](#)

AP PHYSICS 1

Advanced Placement Physics 1 is an algebra-based, introductory college-level physics course. Students cultivate their understanding of physics through inquiry-based investigations as they explore all of the topics in the College Board list of content areas, including motion, forces, and energy. Students spend 25% of the instructional time, including some tutorial sessions, engaged in laboratory work. They must have completed Biology Honors, Chemistry Honors, Geometry Honors, and Algebra 2 Honors and have acquired

an understanding of basic trigonometry. This is a yearlong course that carries two additional quality points. Faculty approval is required to enroll. Open to juniors and seniors. [View AP course details.](#)

Modern Languages

SPANISH 1 HONORS

Spanish 1 Honors is an introduction to the study of Spanish grammar, vocabulary, and culture. The year begins with an introduction to the Spanish phonetic system, as well as everyday vocabularies, especially those needed for communication in the classroom, in which they are expected to speak Spanish as often as possible. Spanish 1 students will learn basic grammar concepts as well as conversational, reading, writing, and listening skills. Students are expected to practice and review the course material independently in order to create a solid foundation of the Spanish language.

SPANISH 2 HONORS

Spanish 2 Honors reviews and builds upon grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills introduced in Middle School Spanish classes and/or Spanish 1 Honors. The study and understanding of Hispanic world cultures are important parts of this course. Students are expected to participate in the classroom discussions and conversation exercises. The class moves at a faster pace in comparison to Spanish 1. Students are expected to practice and review the course material independently in order to create a solid foundation of the Spanish language.

ADVANCED SPANISH 3

In Advanced Spanish 3, speaking and reading skills are further enhanced, and more in-depth writing and grammar study are emphasized. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities are integrated in meaningful and dynamic contexts. Class activities include small group communicative activities, writing and reading assignments, and short oral presentations.

Once students have completed the course, they should be able to communicate in Spanish at an advanced intermediate level. This yearlong course carries one additional quality point. Faculty approval is required to enroll.

ADVANCED SPANISH 4

Advanced Spanish 4 is a yearlong course for students who wish to continue developing their Spanish language skills. It is an advanced language course intended for students seriously interested in learning about the language and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. Students will be expected to apply past knowledge and previously learned grammar structures to communicate and interact in class. Class activities include small group communicative activities, writing and reading assignments, and short oral presentations. Students will be expected to interpret oral, visual, and written messages in Spanish. This course carries one additional quality point. Faculty approval is required to enroll.

AP SPANISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

In this course, students not only will prepare for the AP exam, but also will strengthen and solidify their Spanish language skills through small classroom communicative activities that will incorporate the reading and understanding of more complex textual and authentic resources, listening and writing exercises, and advanced speaking practice. The four language skills will be evaluated through the discussion of topics related to six social and cultural themes: Beauty and Aesthetics, Global Challenges, Science and Technology, Culture and Identity, Contemporary Life, and Families in Spanish-Speaking Societies. This course carries two additional quality points, and faculty approval is required to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

MANDARIN 2 HONORS

The Mandarin 2 Honors course seeks to develop low-intermediate to intermediate language proficiency as well as cultural competency. Students will ask the essential question “How

can people connect with each other and across cultures?” and receive instruction that focuses on self-introduction, building friendships and planning special cultural events such as the Lunar New Year. Students will be exposed to a variety of texts that reflect how people live and think in contemporary China while they conduct their learning. This course will be conducted primarily in Mandarin. The students are expected to complete all of their homework, assignments, and assessments in Mandarin unless given special instructions to do otherwise.

ADVANCED MANDARIN 3

In Advanced Mandarin 3, students are getting introduced to college-level content and topics. By the end of the year, students will be able to acquire upper-intermediate level of the five language skills — listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural understanding. At the same time, students are directed to advance their language proficiency as they research and compose cultural projects that correlate with studied topics. Students strive for not only being able to perceive the Chinese language and culture in a critical manner, but also for finding their place and voices in cross-cultural discourse. The class is primarily conducted in Mandarin and moves at a faster pace in comparison to Mandarin 2 Honors. The students are expected to complete all of their homework, assignments, and assessments in Mandarin unless given special instructions to do otherwise. This yearlong course carries one additional quality point. Faculty approval is required to enroll.

ADVANCED MANDARIN 4

In Advanced Mandarin 4, students will focus on learning different language skill sets to function in higher-level discourses and develop language proficiency. The grammar, vocabulary, and discourse styles will be more complex and help students participate in more in-depth discussions on familiar topics. Students will be expected to apply previously learned grammar structures and knowledge to interact in classroom activities. Additionally, students will keep

developing their multicultural awareness as they learn about different social aspects of Chinese culture. Students also will be exposed to AP-level practices. The classroom instruction will be primarily in Mandarin, and the students are expected to complete all their homework, assignments, and assessments in Mandarin unless given special instructions. This yearlong course carries one additional quality point and requires faculty approval to enroll.

AP CHINESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE

AP Chinese Language & Culture is a course built upon Advanced Mandarin 4 and geared to help students prepare for the AP exam. Students will participate in modes of communication activities, including reading and interpreting authentic resources, speaking and writing in different discourses, and discussions on various social phenomena. The four language skills and cultural competence will be developed by discussing topics related to six themes: Families in Different Societies, Personal and Public Identities, Beauty and Aesthetics, Science and Technology, Contemporary Life, and Global Challenges. The classroom instruction will be conducted primarily in Mandarin, and students are expected to complete all their homework, assignments, and assessments in Mandarin unless given special instruction. This yearlong course carries two additional quality points and requires faculty approval to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

Fine Arts

ART 1

Art 1 is a yearlong course that introduces foundational techniques in drawing, painting, introductory design theory, color theory, and 3-D design. Observational analysis, spatial relationships, and compositional strategies are emphasized in the progressive stages of the curriculum. Working from observation, students will increase their perceptual ability and skills through studio assignments utilizing a wide range

of media. Previous artistic experience is not required for this course.

ART 2

Art 2 is a yearlong course that is an intermediate technical studio class for students seriously interested in improving and refining their artistic skills in drawing, painting, design, and three-dimensional art. Through the practice of studio habits, the Art 2 curriculum embodies visual literacy, aesthetic understanding, and the pursuit of personal expression. Emphasis on working from observation with a wide variety of media and artistic processes is explored. Art 1 is a prerequisite for Art 2, and Art 2 is a prerequisite for AP Studio Art.

ADVANCED ART

Advanced Art is an advanced-level art class for committed art students. The course curriculum concentrates on the exploration of intentional ideas and images to develop and encourage personal expression as well as visual communication. This course provides an opportunity for students to pursue independent work in drawing, painting, 2-D design, or 3-D design. Individual artistic practice and student-initiated creation are emphasized. Advanced Art is considered a “Pre-AP Art and Design” course. Art 2 is a prerequisite for Advanced Art, and faculty approval is required to enroll. This course carries one extra quality point.

AP ART & DESIGN

The AP Art & Design Program consists of three different tracks: Two-Dimensional Design, Drawing, and Three-Dimensional Design. Students work toward submission of a portfolio exam for ONE of the three tracks. The goal of AP Art and Design is to create a portfolio of college-level work. Students that do well in this course are committed to serious work and are willing to sustain a long-term interest in their art study with considerable time invested both in the studio and outside the studio. Art 2 is a prerequisite for AP Art & Design. Advanced Art (Pre-AP Art) is not necessarily a prerequisite for AP Art and Design,

but would be beneficial and is encouraged. AP Art & Design carries two extra quality points. Faculty approval is required to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ENSEMBLE

This course is a study of music performance, theory, and history. Subject matter will strengthen the concepts learned in Middle School music, including singing alone and with others, instrumental performances, improvisation, composition, analyzing and evaluating music, and connecting with audiences using music and song. This is a yearlong course.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

The first semester of Music Appreciation focuses on rock and roll. Students will trace its history from the roots to modern times. The unit culminates with a trip to the NC Music Hall of Fame. The second semester's focus is on songwriting. The techniques used are accessible to beginners as well as practiced lyricists. The songwriting unit culminates with professional songwriters in Nashville setting student lyrics to music. Alongside these units, students will explore instruments such as guitar, ukulele, piano, and even bucket drumming. This yearlong course is open to all students.

CONCERT CHOIR

This yearlong performance course is open to students who enjoy singing. Members of this group will perform frequently at school and in the community. Students will continue to develop good musicianship through the study of proper vocal technique, music theory, and music history and through the practice of sight-reading, listening, and critical interpretation. Students then will apply these musical skills to the rehearsal and performance of varied literature. Students interested in enrolling in this course are encouraged to set up a meeting with Mrs. Jennings.

FILM HISTORY & PRODUCTION

Most students are familiar with literary concepts

such as plot, theme, and symbol, but few are aware of the analogous film concepts. In the first quarter of Film History & Production, students study film history and technique while developing film vocabulary and watching numerous historically important film “shorts.” In the second and third quarters, students move on to screening full films — roughly one per decade of cinema — and making their own individual projects. In the last quarter, students complete complex group projects, which require them to serve in various individual roles (writer, director, lighting technician, script supervisor, editor). Additionally, once a month students participate in an electronic conference call with individuals who currently work in the film industry, after viewing their materials such as their finished scripts or edited shows. This course meets the fine arts requirement for graduation.

YEARBOOK

In this class, students will learn firsthand about the business of putting to press a substantial publication. We will begin the year by learning the basics of yearbook terminology, design, reporting, writing, and photography. Then we will move on to using online design software to complete page layouts. It is critical in this course that students are able to turn in work on time in order to meet deadlines. Students will need to be prepared to take photos during and after school. This is a yearlong course that may count towards the fine arts requirement for graduation.

Technology

INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER SCIENCE

This course is designed to offer an introduction to computer science. Students will learn the basics of programming in Python, along with the basics of computer science. The material emphasizes computational thinking and helps develop the ability to solve complex problems. The course gives a foundation in the tools used in computer science and prepares students for further study

in computer science, including AP Computer Science Principles and AP Computer Science A courses.

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE PRINCIPLES

This course introduces students to the creative aspects of programming, abstractions, algorithms, large data sets, the internet, cybersecurity, and how computing impacts our world. Students will develop the computational thinking skills needed to fully exploit the power of digital technology and help build a strong foundation in core programming and problem solving. This is a yearlong class that carries two extra quality points. Faculty approval required to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE A

Computer science embraces problem-solving, hardware, algorithms, and perspectives that help people utilize computers to solve real-world problems in everyday life. The AP Computer Science A course introduces students to computer science with fundamental topics that include problem-solving, design strategies and methodologies, organization of data (data structures), approaches to processing data (algorithms), analysis of potential solutions, and the ethical and social implications of computing. The course emphasizes both object-oriented and imperative problem-solving and design. These techniques represent proven approaches for developing solutions that can scale from small, simple problems to large, complex ones. This course requires a strong foundation in English and mathematics, and students must have completed Algebra 2 prior to enrollment. In addition, students must be comfortable with functions and the concepts found in functional notation. Computer programming experience is optional. Faculty approval is required to enroll. [View AP course details.](#)

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Students will learn the essentials of graphic design using Canva, Photoshop, Illustrator, and physical media. This course covers design

principles such as color theory, typography, and layout through hands-on projects like posters, logos, and digital collages. There will be a continual emphasis on peer feedback and refinement of ideas. Students will build skills in photo editing, illustration, and portfolio creation, culminating in a final capstone project.

Physical Education

HEALTH

The purpose of the semester-long Health course is to explore current topics of health and wellness. Students will have the opportunity to develop skills needed to achieve and sustain lifelong healthy decisions and attitudes. The course provides an understanding of how health is interconnected physically, mentally, and socially. Typically this course is taken in ninth grade, paired with a semester of Government Honors.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

The Strength and Conditioning course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental principles of physical fitness, strength training, and conditioning techniques. This course aims to enhance students' athletic performance, promote lifelong fitness habits, and reduce the risk of injury through proper training and recovery strategies. Students will learn and apply various exercises and routines that focus on building strength, improving endurance, flexibility, and agility, as well as enhancing cardiovascular fitness. The curriculum incorporates both individual and team-based activities, emphasizing proper form, safety, and the importance of consistent effort in achieving fitness goals. This is a semester-long course and fulfills the PE requirement for graduation should a student not meet this requirement through playing a Varsity sport.

Questions & Support

The administrators and faculty of WCDS commit to supporting students and families throughout the Upper School academic and college guidance experience.

Please reach out for questions and additional support.

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