



BLAIR ACADEMY

COURSE CATALOG

2025-2026



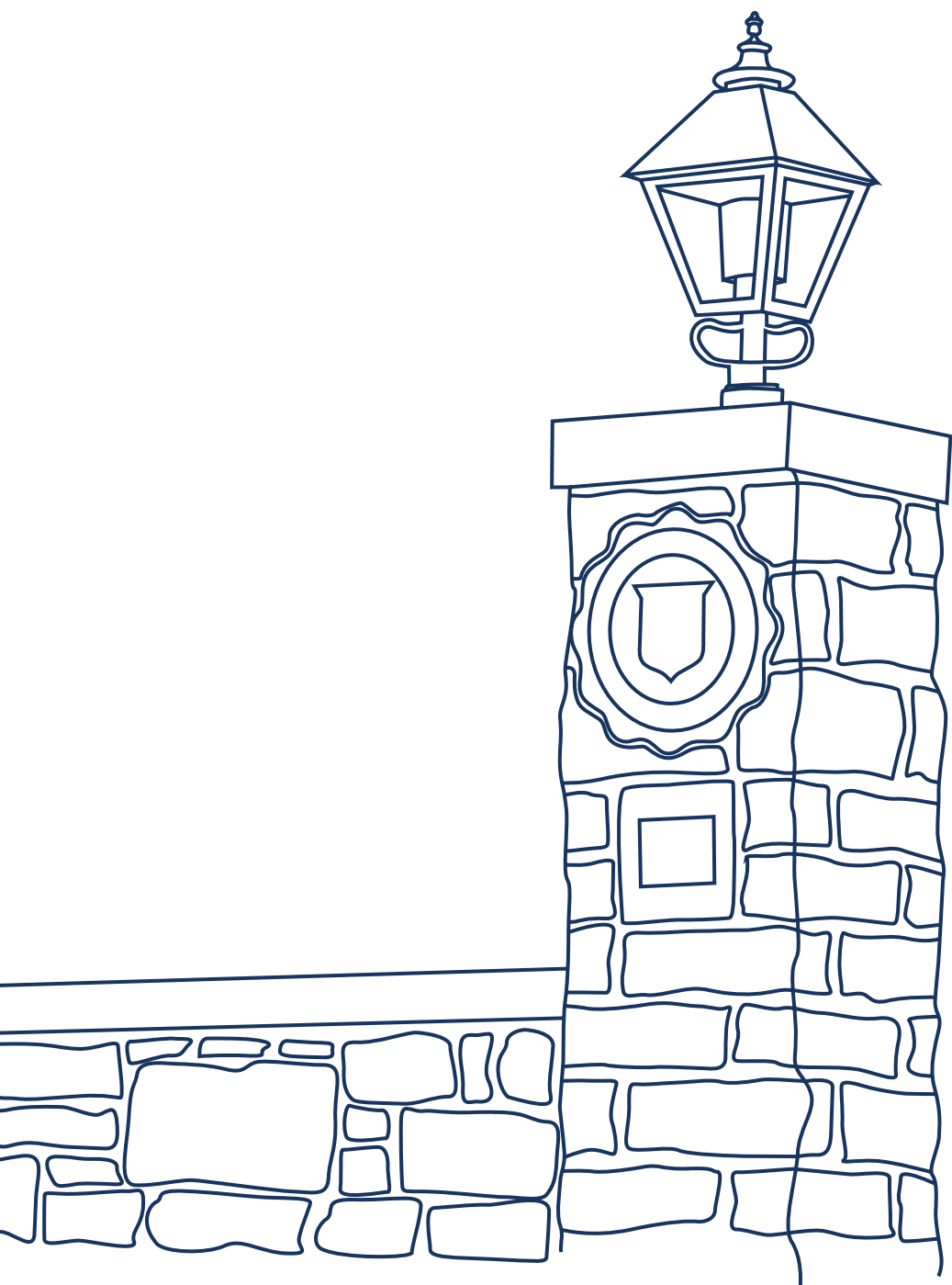
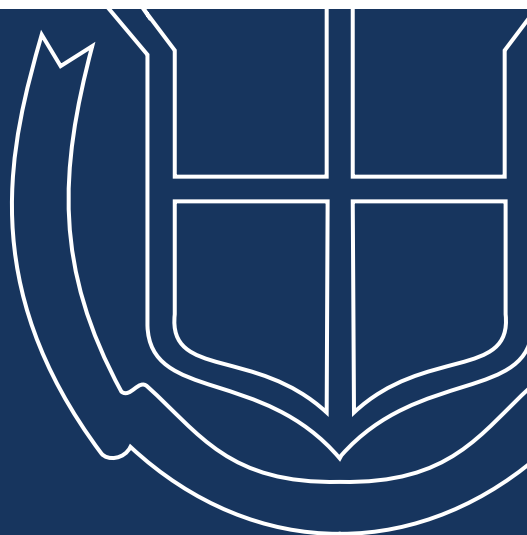


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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS



The Blair diploma is granted to students whom the faculty and Head of School judge to be members in good standing of the school community and who have met the following requirements for graduation.

Students will be eligible for a Blair diploma only if they have been enrolled for at least one full academic year, including senior year, and if they have successfully completed 54 units of academic work for four-year students, 51 units for three-year students, and 48 units for two- and one-year students. For each year that the student has attended Blair, he or she must complete three units of physical activity. For the ninth, 10th and 11th grades, two of the three units must be in the form of interscholastic team sports or the approved equivalent thereof. Only under very unusual circumstances will the faculty, through the Athletic Committee, make exceptions to these requirements.

The academic year is divided into two semesters and a student receives 1.5 units of credit for the successful completion of a single semester and 3 units of credit for a successfully completed yearlong course. No partial credit is awarded.

The units of academic work must include the following:

English: 3 units of English each year—*total 12 units for a four-year student.*

Mathematics: 9 units in mathematics—*Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II or their equivalents.*

Languages: 6 units in a modern or classical language—two years of one language.

Sciences: All students must present 6 units in a laboratory science—*3 units in Biology and 3 units in Chemistry, Robotics or Physics.* All ninth graders will take either Biology or Biology Honors for their science. Students repeating the grade and who have high school credit for an acceptable, full-academic-year biology lab science and a grade of B or better (or its equivalent) will not have to meet this requirement.

History: 6 units in U.S. History/Modern European History—*see department requirement regarding two-year U.S. History courses taken at another school.* In addition, four-year students will have taken Global Issues for a total of 9 units.

Fine & Performing Arts:

For four-year students: Three semesters of art. At least one of these semesters must occur in grades 9-10 and at least one in grades 11-12. In addition, at least one of the three courses must be a performing art and at least one a fine art.

Students who take seven or eight semesters of fine arts are exempt from a performing arts course; students who take eight semesters of performing arts are exempt from a fine arts course.

For three-year students: Two semesters of fine or performing arts taken at Blair before graduation. Coursework at prior schools does not count for this requirement.

For two-year students: One semester of fine or performing arts taken at Blair before graduation. Coursework at prior schools does not count for this requirement.

Religion & Philosophy: 1.5 units of religion or philosophy in courses outlined in the Self and Society department below. Coursework at prior schools does not count for this requirement.

IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS ABOVE

REQUIRED FOR 9TH GRADERS ONLY, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

.5 units of Design and Maker Space
.5 units of Foundations of Well-Being I

REQUIRED FOR 10TH GRADERS, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1.0 units of Foundations of Well-Being II

REQUIRED OF NEW 12TH GRADERS & POSTGRADUATES

Irrespective of other requirements, these one-year students must carry a minimum of five courses each semester. Four of those five must be full-year courses.

SPECIAL 12TH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

No matter how many acceptable credits a re-enrolling student may already have, a returning senior must carry no fewer than 6 credits per semester, none of which may take the form of an independent study (*see below*). Returning seniors must pass the minimum academic load of 13.5 credits for the year, satisfactorily.

12th grade/PG students must take a minimum of 9 credits in the major disciplines. The final course may be in any discipline within the catalog. A postgraduate is considered to be a member of the senior class and must fulfill all requirements, academic and nonacademic, that seniors must meet, as well as those listed in the “Required of New Seniors & Postgraduates” section of the course catalog.

In addition, seniors or postgraduates who elect to take a Senior Project must complete it satisfactorily to graduate. Participation in Commencement exercises by seniors who do not successfully complete the appropriate pattern of disciplines and a minimum of 13.5 units of credit will be determined by the faculty.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Students in the 11th or 12th grades wishing to take a course that the School does not offer or a course that does not fit their schedules may propose an independent study as a sixth course or, in rare cases, as a seventh course. Students select a faculty advisor with whom they work to create a written proposal. The proposal must make clear the purpose, process and outcomes of the independent study and receive the written approval of the faculty member, the student’s advisor and class monitor, the relevant department head(s) and—finally—the Assistant Head of School for Academics. A student may undertake only one independent study per semester.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Mr. Samuel Adams, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

All courses in the department require that a student own a laptop computer that runs in the English language.

INTRO TO PROGRAMMING (SEMESTER)

This semester-long computer science offering is designed for students new to programming. The course focuses on the basics of the Python programming language and centers on project-driven work aimed at deepening students' conceptual understanding. *No prior experience is required. **1.5 units.***

ROBOTICS (FULL YEAR)

Offered in conjunction with the science department, Robotics meets the lab-science requirement for a physical science. This full-year course explores the combination of electronics and computer science, covering robotic history and the construction of working autonomous robots (which requires design and programming skills). Topics include components of robotic systems, sensors and feedback loops. An important aspect is the design of computer algorithms that intelligently make use of sensor information describing the environment and purposefully act upon it. Students are required to have their own laptops. The course is strictly limited to 10 students. *Prerequisite: Completion of Biology or Biology Honors. **Three units.***

SOFTWARE DESIGN 1 (SEMESTER)

This semester-long computer science offering builds on the concepts introduced in the introductory class or might represent a good starting point for students with programming experience, regardless of the programming language they have pursued previously. Students will complete more complex and involved projects, including one of their own choosing, to continue their learning in the discipline. **1.5 units.**

SOFTWARE DESIGN 2 (SEMESTER)

This semester-long computer science offering allows students to continue the work they began in the software design course. *Approval of the instructor required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: DATA SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

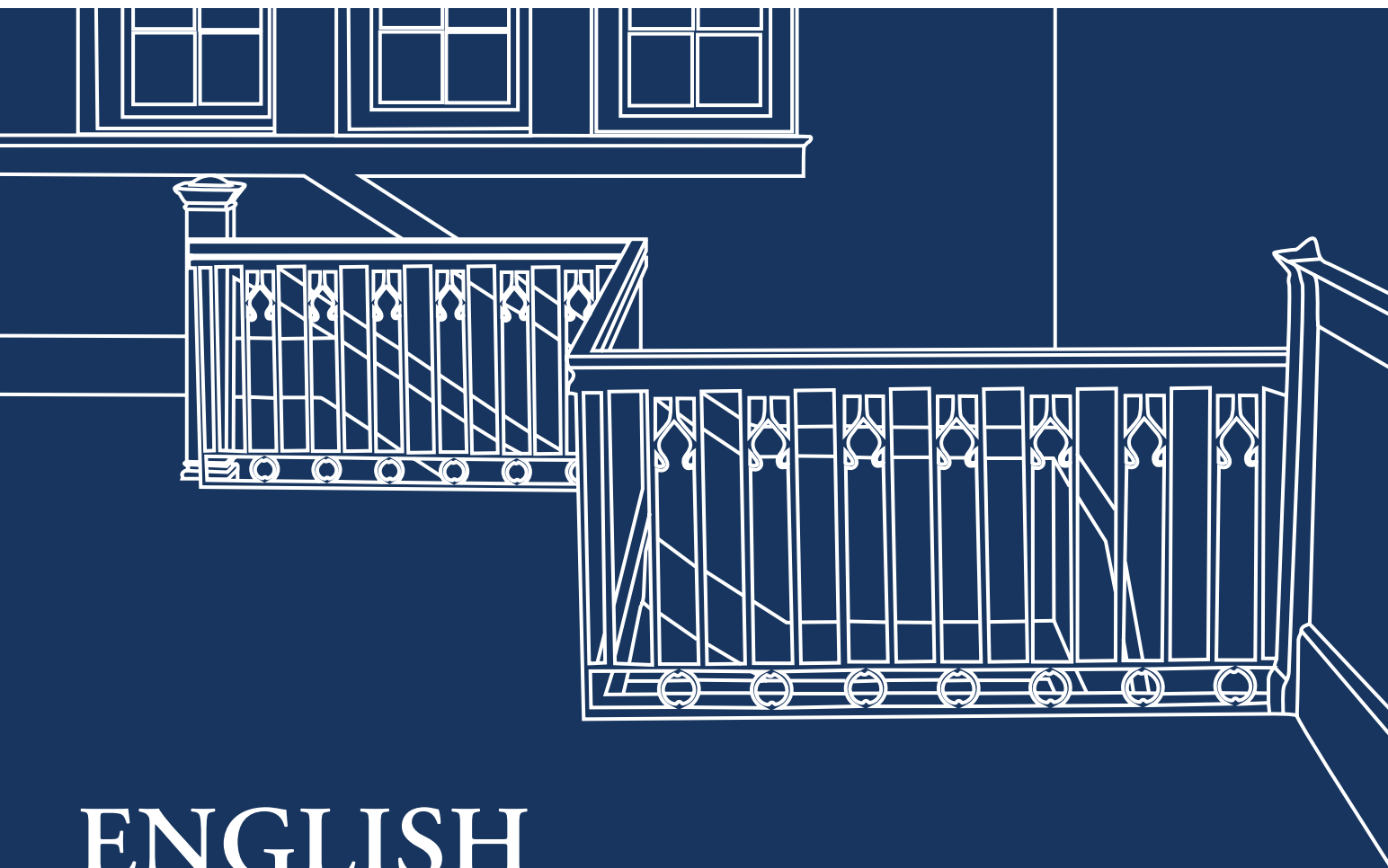
Transcript Name: AdvSem Data Science

How can data be used to show us more about the world? How do we know which data we can trust? These questions are at the core of this course, in which students learn how to use fundamental statistical concepts and the Python programming language as they explore meaningful answers. In addition to the relevant mathematical and technical skills, students learn about various biases that can exist in data collection, analysis and aggregation, as well as their limitations. This course, which is cross-listed with the mathematics department, culminates with a project in which the students analyze multiple large data sets. *Prerequisites: Completion of Algebra 2 Honors & an introductory-level programming course, with teacher approval. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: COMPUTER SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Computer Science

This advanced course explores concepts foundational to all computer coding. Using the Java programming language, students explore ideas in computer programming, transitioning from concepts to practical application. After students develop a strong understanding of object-oriented programming, they move on to more specific coding projects and applications. In addition to gaining experience in traditional coding exercises, students apply what they learn to a year-long project to develop an instruction set for a robotics platform. This capstone provides students with opportunities to think creatively about how to apply code to real-world systems. *Prerequisite: Completion of Introduction to Programming or equivalent course; departmental approval required. Three units.*



ENGLISH

Mr. James Moore, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

To graduate, students must take English each year and in each term of the 12th grade. Placement in honors sections of English is by performance in the preceding year.

ENGLISH 1 (FULL YEAR)

English 1 is designed to develop the reading and writing skills of ninth-grade students while fostering a knowledge and appreciation of literature. The course is organized around several units in which students read and write extensively. In a typical year, they will read a Shakespeare play and a modern novel, a selection of short stories and an assortment of poetry. In addition, there is a short but formal introduction to public speaking, which examines key skills and rhetorical devices and provides students with the opportunity to record and deliver oral presentations to their classmates. Vocabulary enrichment, public-speaking opportunities and punctuation study are also integral to the year's work. ***Three units.***

ENGLISH 2 (FULL YEAR)

English 2 builds on the various components of English 1 as it continues to strengthen reading, writing and study. After an initial review of essay elements and of good writing practices, students study units on poetry, the short story, Shakespeare and the novel. In a typical year, authors have included Lahiri, Vonnegut, Irving and Dickens. Emphasis is on reading critically and writing persuasively. Written work demands personal response, close literary analysis and a familiarity with literary criticism; vocabulary enrichment and grammar study are integral parts of the course. *Prerequisite: English 1. **Three units.***

FOUNDATIONS OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN LITERARY WRITING (ALW) (SEMESTER)

Foundations of Literary Writing is the required spring semester introduction to the year-long Advanced Seminar in Literary Writing course. Foundations introduces students to a range of literary forms, including fiction, poetry, narrative nonfiction, script-writing for stage or screen, and literary criticism. The final project is a proposal for an independent project that will guide the production of a significant literary manuscript during the subsequent summer and academic school year.

Applications are reviewed and approved by the ALW Committee.

Prerequisite: English 1. 1.5 units.

AMERICAN STUDIES & RHETORIC 1 (FALL); AMERICAN STUDIES & RHETORIC 2 (SPRING)

Rhetoric and American Studies 1 & 2 are an exploration of American literature from the pre-Revolutionary era to the present, combined with an intensive focus on improving students' reading and writing skills. Along the way, students consider the questions: Who gets to be an American and who decides? What makes someone "American?" What are the values and ideas that we have come to understand as uniquely American? How has American literature been used to influence, critique and applaud society? Texts from some of the greatest American writers are read and discussed in order to understand the American experience from its early beginnings. Knowledge gained from a concurrent U.S. history course enhances students' understanding of texts and helps them make interdisciplinary connections between history and literature. *Prerequisite: English 2. 1.5 units per semester.*

MEANING OF LIFE 1 & 2 (SEMESTER)

The 20th century might legitimately be characterized as the century of alienation. We largely rejected traditional sources of meaning and spiritual comfort and struggled to make sense of the void that rejection left behind. The 21st century has presented us with existential threats, generated by humans and nature, so we continue to struggle with purpose and direction. This course examines a variety of attempts to provide some meaning, some comfort, in what appears to be an essentially indifferent universe. Our exploration will lead us to examine our own answers to the eternal questions as well as those suggested by artists as diverse as Ernest Hemingway and Monty Python. *Prerequisite: English 2 & American Studies & Rhetoric. Cross-listed with the self & society department & fulfills the religion & philosophy requirement for students; departmental approval required for juniors. 1.5 units per semester.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Af. Am. Literature

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* begins with the narrator's declaration: "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me." The anonymity of the narrator underscores the identity crisis experienced by African Americans who were denied basic human rights and stripped of their identities during slavery and the postwar era of Reconstruction. Paradoxically, Black literature itself is an assertion of Black identity; the works studied in this course shed light on what it means to be African American. At one point, the unnamed protagonist of *Invisible Man* asks himself a universal question: "WHO...ARE...YOU?" Given that we all struggle to find an answer to that question, students can intrinsically relate to the unnamed narrator's experience. Examining different works from the African American canon, including *Invisible Man*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *The Color Purple*, *Giovanni's Room* and *The Women of Brewster Place*, this course offers a parallel journey of self-discovery as students read about characters who endeavor to find themselves and express their individuality in American society. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: AUTHORIZING AMERICA ON THE ROAD 1 & 2 (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem America on the Road 1

Transcript Name: AdvSem America on the Road 2

Have you ever wanted to climb out your window and run away when an endless pile of tedium awaits you on your desk? Through the lens of those who have traveled into the heart of America, students in this course embark on a literary adventure outside the Blair bubble. Strange encounters, philosophical musings and vivid descriptions encourage students to imagine and define what it means to be American and how our landscape fosters a unique national identity. The class juxtaposes different types of memoirs and fiction, examining the United States through the metaphorical window of different authors who have taken to the road. After studying how the story of America is told through fiction and nonfiction, students produce a memoir in tandem with their analytical portrait of America. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units per semester.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: COMPARATIVE GENRE (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Comparative Genre

This course focuses on four genres of literature, each celebrating a single, different author. With a reading list comprising poems, short stories, plays and a novel, this course seeks to recognize the use of language—written and spoken, dramatic and playful, intensely private and conspicuously public. Specifically, students consider the strengths of each form in presenting material to make us think, laugh, empathize and understand. A range of authors from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds push us to consider themes particular to a group of people, as well as those themes universal to the human experience. Assessments include regular presentations to classmates as an extension of seminar discussions, journal reflections, and a final exhibition that includes producing both a longer analytical essay and engaging in small group discussion. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION—LOOKING INTO THE PAST & THE FUTURE TO SEE THE PRESENT (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Fantasy and Science Fiction

While we often think of science fiction as predictive—and, perhaps, to some extent as prescriptive—this course is descriptive in its ability to help us understand essential, timeless aspects of being human more clearly by casting us in a setting seemingly different from the present. Acknowledging that our enjoyment of good fantasy as an escape can be misleading, the course underscores how fantasy can be experienced as a welcome jump into a mythological past. At its best, it can also feel like a return or at least a visit to a simpler but mystical setting in which our most humane qualities and closest relationships—stripped of modern complications—can thrive. In both cases, this step away from the concerns and pressures of the present is often an indirect invitation into the very world we had hoped to escape, but presented in a way that is invigorating and authentic. The primary objective of this course, then, is for students and faculty to improve the quality of questions we formulate about who we are in the here and now—individually and collectively—and to offer tentative but thoughtful answers. The portfolio will consist of journal reflections, analytical writings and notes for formal oral presentations. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: HOMER'S *THE ODYSSEY* (FALL)

Transcript Name: AdvSem The Odyssey

They say Odysseus, who lends his name to Homer's epic poem, is Western literature's prototypical hero. They also say he's reckless, a liar, a thief, a pirate and a bit of a cad. Using Emily Wilson's recent and groundbreaking translation of *The Odyssey* as our primary text, we'll follow Odysseus and a retinue of Olympian gods, fearsome monsters and his fellow Greeks as he makes his way home from the Trojan War to his kingdom on the island of Ithaca. Along the way, we will read and watch contemporary interpretations by the likes of Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*) and the Coen Brothers (*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*). Throughout, we will dig in to the meaning of "hero" in both antiquity and the modern age while we ask the question everyone has been asking about Odysseus for millennia: Do we even like this guy? *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: LITERARY MODERNISM (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Literary Modernism

This course evaluates modernism as a genre and traces the evolution of modernist literature to the early part of the 20th century, a time characterized by anxiety surrounding the breaking of social structures and the rapid development of economics and industrialization, as well as shifting societal perspectives on sexuality, gender and race. Students read a variety of modernist works, including *Cane*, *The Lost Lady*, *Absolom, Absolom!*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *The Waste Land*. With the goal of identifying how modernism has been shaped by writers belonging to the "Lost Generation" and those who were part of the inception of the Harlem Renaissance, this course explores the psychological themes present in modernist novels and their relevance to the human condition today. Students analyze each work through a social justice lens, asking themselves how literature fosters critique of society and ourselves. Major novels will be supplemented by secondary sources that explore psychology, grief and trauma, delving into how they relate to the radical breaking of social boundaries mirrored in the modernist trait of challenging literary form. Assessments include—but are not limited to—essays, a verbal exam, presentation of writing and structured discussions. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: LITERARY WRITING CAPSTONE (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem ALW Capstone

This two-semester course is for students who have completed Foundations of Literary Writing and submitted an acceptable proposal to pursue the opportunity to develop a significant piece of literary writing. Supported by Blair faculty who guide the process, emphasizing the importance of preparation, structure and time, students develop a plan with their instructor, receive and incorporate regular feedback from peers in workshops, and seek the advice and counsel of external and internal experts. Whether students spend their time on literary or arts analysis and theory, fiction, narrative nonfiction, drama or poetry, their final product includes a significant piece of writing and reflections on the course experience, as well as a presentation shared with the class, faculty and the larger Blair community.

Prerequisites: English 2, completion of Foundations of Literary Writing & acceptance of proposal; departmental approval required.

Three units.

ADVANCED SEMINAR: THE LITERATURE OF BROADWAY MUSICALS (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Literature of Musicals

This advanced English course raises the curtain on Broadway musicals as a form of literary expression. Students consider three long-running Broadway musicals, exploring the intersection of music, lyrics, script, choreography and set production as they gain an appreciation of the musical currently experienced on the Great White Way. Through the study of *Hamilton*, *Into the Woods* and *Hadestown*, musicals produced from 1987 to today, the class closely reads dialogue and lyrics, analyzes musical composition and views live or recorded performances. The course's final project includes the production of an original minimusical (produced individually or in collaboration with others as part of a team), evaluating a current musical in juxtaposition with one or all of the three musicals examined or the study of one of the analyzed plays studied beyond its original run. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: MEMOIR: MEANING & MEMORY (FALL)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Memoir

In this advanced seminar, we will explore the memoir as a literary form that blends storytelling, truth-telling, cultural critique and self-exploration. Through three core texts—*Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston and *Educated* by Tara Westover—we will investigate how writers use memory, myth, voice and silence to shape narratives of identity. Expect to write weekly, engage in structured discussions and present a portfolio-based exhibition of your work. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: NARRATIVE NONFICTION: TELLING TRUE STORIES (SPRING)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Narrative Nonfiction

What happens when journalism meets the art of storytelling? In this advanced seminar, we will explore how writers craft true stories that are as compelling as fiction. Through immersive reading, fieldwork, creative nonfiction writing and critical research, students will analyze and create powerful narratives that reveal hidden worlds, challenge assumptions and imagine possible futures. Our journey will span the invisible struggles of America's working poor, the resilience of communities in the slums of Mumbai and the startling possibilities of a world after humanity. Get ready to investigate, listen, question and write with purpose. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: NUNS, GUNS & ROSES (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Women's Literature

From an abbey on the edge of ruin in the early 12th century to an apocalyptic suburb of Los Angeles, California, this course explores the way women shape and are shaped by the context of their lives. Students examine their own understandings and assumptions of feminine and masculine ideals—and how they may differ between times and places—through discourse and analysis of a wide variety of sources ranging from modern media to medieval texts. How does faith affect personal understanding of the self and others? As characters and authors grapple with questions of faith, identity, power, love and survival in female bodies across centuries, students will delve into the themes through daily writing, active discussion and presentations culminating in a creative work that displays the breadth and depth of their engagement with course material. *Prerequisite: English 2. Cross-listed with the self & society department & fulfills the religion & philosophy requirement for students; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: PHILOSOPHY & LITERATURE (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Philosophy and Literature

How do we understand what philosophers call the “good” or attack the “problem of evil” as we negotiate our lives? What does it mean to believe in God, “the Force” or a higher power and how do various religious and cultural belief systems share common underpinnings? This course asks students to approach a variety of prose, poetry, film and other forms of rhetoric with a thematic lens and asks them to read in depth on the philosophical questions that most haunt them. This reading-intensive course begins with an essential question—Where do we find God and what does that mean to a variety of cultures?—leading students to consider what is monstrosity or miracle and where we find such themes in literature and in our lives. Texts: Stoics (Seneca, Epictetus, etc.), Plato, Martin Luther King Jr., Dostoyevsky, Mary Shelley, John Donne, John Green, and various short works and films.

Prerequisite: English 2. Cross-listed with the self & society department & fulfills the religion & philosophy requirement for students; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.

ADVANCED SEMINAR: REEL READING 1 & 2 (SEMESTER)

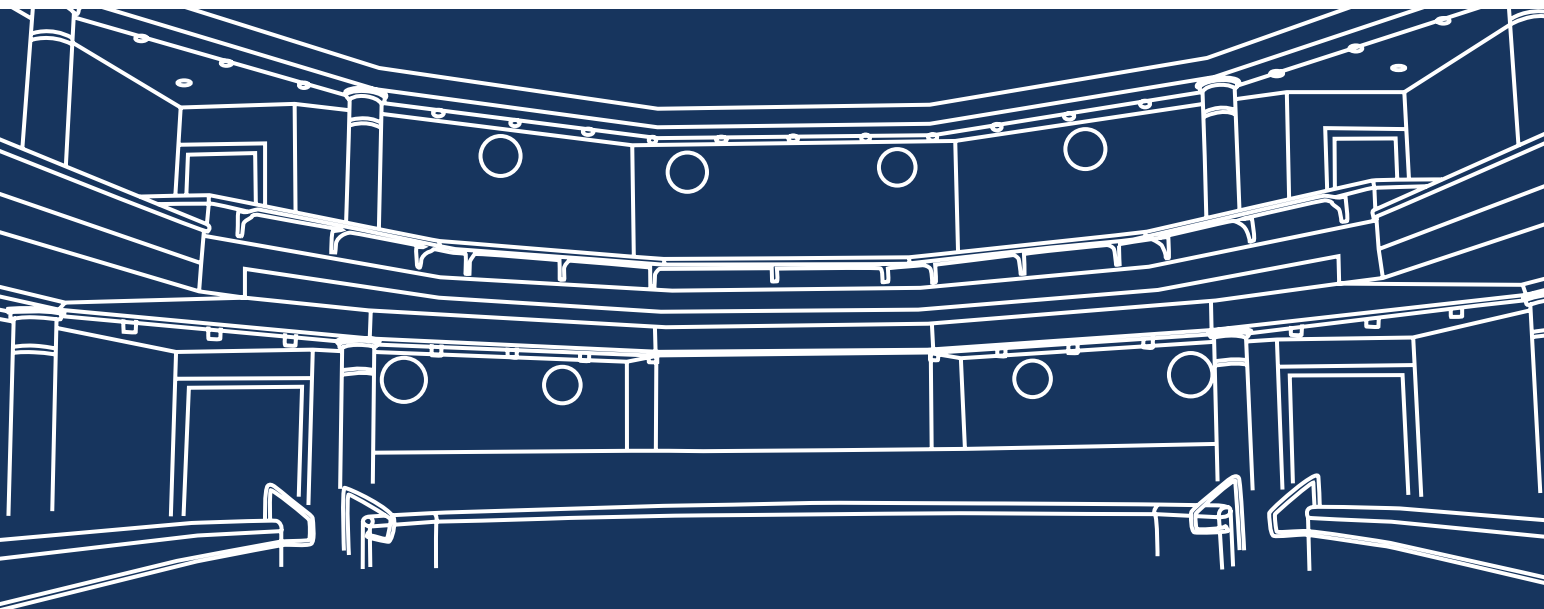
Transcript Name: AdvSem Film and Literature Analysis 1 and 2

Students learn to identify the film techniques of shooting and editing, as well as the grammar and rhetoric of film, so that they can use this knowledge as a means of analyzing what they see and hear. Using film as their texts, students watch a range of classic (Reel Reading 1) and contemporary (Reel Reading 2) films. From analyzing singular shots and scenes to entire films and selections from a director’s body of work, students engage in analytical writing, producing personal and creative work that includes written scenes and the production of short films. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units per semester.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: SHAKESPEARE & COMPANY (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Shakespeare

In this course, students read medieval and early modern texts written predominantly by Chaucer and Shakespeare. Encouraged to question and apply how these works are relevant in today’s world and society, students are also challenged to ask how these old books and language relate to secondary sources. Students learn to read Middle English and analyze complex and philosophical ideas with a social justice lens—how can literature inspire us to be critical about our society and ourselves? Course material includes *The Canterbury Tales*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Titus Andronicus* and more. Assessments will include—but are not limited to—essays, a verbal exam, presentation of writing and structured discussion. *Prerequisite: English 2; departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*



FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

Mrs. Katherine Sykes, chair, Fine Arts

Mrs. Jennifer Pagotto, chair, Performing Arts

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Four-year students: Prior to graduation, four-year students must take three semesters of art. At least one of these semesters must occur in the lower grades (9-10) and at least one in the upper grades (11-12). In addition, at least one of the courses must be a performing art and at least one must be a fine art.

Three-year students: Prior to graduation, three-year students must complete two semesters of art.

Two-year students: Prior to graduation, two-year students must complete one semester of art.

One-year students: Prior to graduation, one-year students carrying only four full-year courses must complete either a semester of art or a semester of philosophy/religion.

Alternatives: Four-year students may, ***in the 11th or 12th grade only***, substitute the successful completion of a full school year of instrumental lessons for one semester of their three-semester requirement. No credit awarded.

Alternatively, four-year students may, ***in the 11th or 12th grade only***, substitute the successful completion of a major participation in a school theatre production for one semester of their three-semester requirement. No credit awarded. Approval of the performing arts department chair required.

Only one substitution is allowed in a student's career.

TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART: LEVELS 1 & 2 (SEMESTER)

Two-Dimensional Art 1 students will be exposed to the fundamentals of drawing and painting while developing personally meaningful works. Students will work from life, as well as their imaginations, usually with an eye toward a theme or issue that is relevant to contemporary art. In level 2, students will build on the repertoire of skills presented in 2D Art 1. Some lessons at level 2 may include more robust considerations of composition, color, mixed-media and the figure. **1.5 units each.**

DRAWING 1 (SEMESTER)

Drawing 1 builds on the work of the level 2 Two-Dimensional Art course. Students draw from life, as well as create images from their imagination, usually with an eye toward a theme or issue that is relevant to contemporary art. There is an emphasis on experimentation. Many Drawing 1 students are preparing for the Advanced Seminar: Portfolio course. *Prerequisite: Two-Dimensional Art, level 2. 1.5 units.*

PAINTING 1 (SEMESTER)

Painting 1 builds on the work of the level 2 Two-Dimensional Art course. Students paint from life, as well as create images from their imagination, usually with an eye toward a theme or issue that is relevant to contemporary art. There is an emphasis on experimentation. Many students in Advanced Painting are preparing for Advanced Seminar Portfolio or another advanced course. *May be taken more than once for credit. Prerequisite: Two-Dimensional Art, level 2. 1.5 units.*

PHOTOGRAPHY 1: ANALOG (SEMESTER)

Photo 1 at Blair Academy is an immersive and hands-on experience that teaches students the fundamentals of photography and composition by exploring traditional analog photography. The black-and-white process encourages students to slow down, pay attention to detail and think creatively. Through class projects, students have the opportunity to challenge themselves and develop their unique perspective on the world. Analog cameras are provided for students to use during the course. **1.5 units.**

PHOTOGRAPHY 2: DIGITAL (SEMESTER)

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of digital photography. Emphasis and instruction will focus on four areas: digital photo-editing software, Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom, digital asset management, advanced composition and lighting techniques. Students will also experiment with smartphone-based photography, editing software and social-media publishing platforms. Examples of modern and historical photography will shape regular class discussions. Students will present their work and provide constructive feedback on classmates' work during regular critique sessions. A 35-mm manual digital SLR camera and a portable hard drive are required for this course. *Prerequisite: Photography 1: Analog. 1.5 units.*

PHOTOGRAPHY 3: ANALOG OR PHOTOGRAPHY 3: DIGITAL (SEMESTER)

Students continue to work at achieving proper exposure using either a 35-mm manual or a digital SLR. The course focuses on creating pictures with strong composition, working with alternative light sources and exploring different photographic techniques. Students are evaluated on three essential factors: composition, subject matter and technical facility. Ideally, each student in Photo 3: Analog or Photo 3: Digital will develop a consistent body of work that explores a continuous or developing theme while exhibiting increasing technical mastery. Personal responsibility for time management, research and exploration of the history of photography and technique is an expectation of the course. Students are to record ideas in a visual journal. Either a 35-mm manual or a digital SLR camera and a tripod are required for this course. *Prerequisites: Photo 1: Analog & Photo 2: Digital & teacher approval. May be taken more than once for credit. 1.5 units each.*

ART PORTFOLIO (FULL YEAR OR SEMESTER)

This preparatory course is for serious art students who wish to master essential skills and techniques while also developing ideas for their own work. The course will allow students to begin creating ideas and working toward the Advanced Seminar: Portfolio class and have a body of work for their college portfolio. *By permission of the instructor only. Three units per year; 1.5 units per semester.*

GRAPHIC DESIGN & GRAPHIC DESIGN 2 (SEMESTER)

Graphic design students create digital works of art that promote the development of digital design skills in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, as well as an understanding of design concepts and fundamentals. The projects are designed to be personally meaningful while fostering creative thinking, project planning, time management and problem solving. The next course in the sequence, Graphic Design 2, challenges experienced students to expand their vision and techniques.

1.5 units each.

ARCHITECTURE (FULL YEAR)

This course emphasizes the development of accurate drawing and visual presentation skills, the ability to visualize three-dimensional forms, multiview drawing, basic geometric constructions, isometrics and perspective work. As well as applying these skills to the design of shelter, students will explore the principles of architectural design such as the relationships of space and human activity. Students will work with drafting instruments. *Preference given to fourth-year students. Three units.*

FILM PRODUCTION 1 (SEMESTER)

In Film Production 1, students are immersed in all aspects of digital film production, from script to screen. With an emphasis on storytelling, projects are designed to develop basic skills in screenwriting, directing, cinematography, sound design and editing. In addition, students hone their cinematic literacy through guided peer critiques. *Owning a digital camcorder is not a requirement. 1.5 units.*

FILM PRODUCTION 2 (SEMESTER)

Building on the skills learned in Film Production 1, students have the opportunity to pursue projects independently while focusing on either film or animation. Time management is an essential skill for this course. Ideally, students will have the tenacity to stick to their ideas and conclude the semester with three to five finished pieces. Students work on Apple computers, using industry-grade software. *Owning a digital camcorder is not a requirement. Prerequisite: Film Production 1. 1.5 units.*

ART FOR SOCIAL CHANGE (SEMESTER)

This course is a collaborative experience designed to raise awareness about critical issues within our Blair “bubble” and beyond. Students create and participate in a wide variety of art forms to foster dialogue and action in the community, which empowers them to understand art as a catalyst for change.

Course also fills the religion & philosophy requirement. 1.5 units.

CERAMICS 1 & 2 (SEMESTER)

The goal of this course is to expose students to the process of ceramic art making. Students will make hand-built, wheel-thrown and sculptural pieces, as well as learn to glaze their projects using high-temperature and Raku glazes. **1.5 units each.**

CERAMICS 3 (SEMESTER)

Ceramics 3 is a continuation of the basic course and focuses on creating more complicated forms, appendages to pots (spouts, lids, knobs and handles), and refined clay techniques. Students will work on refining the form, shape, height and weight of their pots. In addition to experimenting with glazes, students are encouraged to employ decorative techniques such as faceting, sgraffito, stamping, texturizing, carving and incising. Successful completion of the course requires a sketchbook.

Prerequisite: Ceramics 1 & 2. 1.5 units.

Advanced & Independent Study Opportunities in Fine Arts

ADVANCED SEMINAR: EXPERIMENTAL ART—MATERIALS & METHODS (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Experimental Art

How did Jackson Pollock create his large-scale paintings? Why did Picasso use wallpaper and cardboard to create masterful works of art? In this advanced-level seminar, students are challenged to embrace novel and innovative techniques, thereby stretching their creative boundaries and diversifying their portfolios. This course explores the use of integrated materials to make art, including nontraditional and alternative techniques. By exploring the work of other artists, and through engaging hands-on practice, students make mixed media creations that demonstrate use of color, spatial composition and texture. The seminar's focus on both two- and three-dimensional design revolves around a self-driven thematic body of work or style using dry and wet pigments, ink, metal leaf, printmaking, plaster, clay, encaustic, found objects and more. The course culminates in students assembling and presenting a materials portfolio in either digital or printed form. *By permission of the instructor only. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: PORTFOLIO (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Portfolio - Ceramics/Film/2D Art/Graphic Arts/Photo/Architecture

Designed for qualified students wishing to pursue advanced study in two-dimensional, three-dimensional, photo, film, graphic design or architecture, this course asks students to create a unique body of work, identify how and why they crafted their artwork, and explore a diverse range of working artists. Building upon their existing portfolios, students engage with one another on collaborative projects as they seek peer feedback geared toward helping them refine their ideas and grow artistically. Students create a body (or bodies) of work based on a continuum of thought and investigation with four required cohort checkpoints, which then culminates in a two-part, final display (portfolio, webpage, exhibition, performance, screening or art book) of work among the cohort. Students work from a recursive series of reflections and develop their personal voice and technical skills to work with independence. *By permission of the instructor only. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: WHY ART MATTERS—MAKING GLOBAL CONNECTIONS (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Art History

Why does art matter? Art is a material record of human creativity, resourcefulness and shared experiences. It serves as a catalyst for understanding and forging a shared sense of identity. By studying art, we deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world to see things from varied perspectives and to help reconstruct vanished or threatened cultures. This art history course adopts an all-encompassing approach using visual arts as a tool to introduce students to interwoven themes, diverse social customs, religions and belief systems spanning the globe. Students look to art of the past to make connections about how different parts of the world approached similar problems throughout time. They will refine their skills in visually analyzing, decoding visual culture and thinking with an art historical lens, while developing their ability to identify commonalities and differences. The in-class experience, which will be complemented by visits to local museums to ground learning in real-world contexts, includes discussion-based learning with hands-on applications of art and art history, including sketching, sculpting, crafting museum replicas and curating exhibitions. *Preference given to students in grades 11 & 12. Three units.*

PERFORMING ARTS

THEATRE

THEATRE 1 (SEMESTER)

The course is designed to teach the rudiments of acting. A primary focus is the development and interpretation of a character through use of body, voice and imagination. Coursework entails the presentation of wide-ranging performance projects with emphasis on scene work. **1.5 units.**

THEATRE 2 (SEMESTER)

This course allows students to explore and improve their performance techniques. A primary focus is the development and interpretation of character through script analysis into dramatic presentation. Coursework entails the presentation of a wide range of performance pieces from the classical tradition to the modern. The goal of this course is for the student to develop an understanding of thousands of years of theatrical traditions and break away from simply playing in the style of realism. This course will focus a great deal on what the class as a whole can bring to a common understanding of different eras, from the Greeks to the present. **1.5 units.**

THEATRE 3 (SEMESTER)

This course is geared toward the advanced theatre student, particularly for those interested in polishing their acting skills, and directing a student-run production or writing a play to be performed at Blair. Students will work closely with teachers to help design the curriculum based on their goals and will ultimately prepare material to perform during a future semester. *Open to students in the 11th & 12th grades who have previously taken a theatre course. 1.5 units.*

MUSIC: GENERAL CLASSROOM

Music offerings at Blair are scheduled into the academic day, allowing more structured time for rehearsal. There are offerings for academic credit in both choral and instrumental music. These courses are graded. Other offerings, not for credit, are scheduled into the school day and may, in certain circumstances, meet part of the School's performing arts requirements.

DIGITAL MUSIC 1 & DIGITAL MUSIC 2 (SEMESTER)

Students will create, record and produce their own music in this course. By the end of the semester, they will have learned how to use music software including Logic ProX, Finale and GarageBand to compose songs in various popular styles and produce digital- and professional-quality recordings in the audio recording studio in Blair's Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration. *Preference given to fourth-year students. 1.5 units.*

INDEPENDENT STUDY IN MUSIC (SEMESTER)

Students with prior background in music are offered an opportunity to work on individual projects, the scope and content of which will be structured in cooperation with music faculty members. Academic credit will be given for the successful completion of a music independent study. *Prerequisites: Prior study in the project area, as well as permission of the teacher and department chair. 1.5 units.*

FOUNDATIONS OF MUSIC THEORY (SEMESTER)

In this course, students will explore the foundational elements of music theory, beginning with note names and concluding with four-part harmony. The course will also incorporate elements of musicianship training, including dictation, basic keyboard skills, sight singing and harmonic analysis. Enrolled students must be concurrently taking an ensemble class (i.e., Singers, Symphony Orchestra or Jazz Ensemble) or Digital Music 2. *Foundations of Music Theory serves as a prerequisite for students wishing to enroll in Advanced Composition. 1.5 units.*

CHORAL MUSIC

BLAIR ACADEMY SINGERS (FULL YEAR)

This is the School's main vocal performing ensemble. The majority of its performances take place on campus (at seasonal concerts and festivals, as well as Christmas Vespers, among many others). While the course meets during the school day, extended rehearsals prior to performance, often in the evening, will be an occasional requirement. Students may audition for an honors section of the group; for those selected, participation in the honors group will require some extra rehearsal time. *Three units.*

RELIGIOUS ROOTS IN CHORAL MUSIC (FULL YEAR)

This course allows students to continue their participation in the Blair Academy Singers and meets the School's religion and philosophy requirement. The course adds homework to the usual rehearsal time, work that takes the form of special lectures, assigned readings and viewings, written reflections and—in the second semester—a final project that is presented to the entire group. *Open only to third- & fourth-year students who participated in Singers during all their semesters at Blair. 1.5 units.*

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Instrumental music is open to all students who have at least three years of experience with an instrument and who wish to continue their study of music through ensemble playing. Ensembles may require extended rehearsals prior to performances, often in the evenings.

FULL-YEAR ENSEMBLES

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (FULL YEAR)

This ensemble is available to all students who have at least three years' experience playing string, wind or percussion instruments. Students focus on various aspects of ensemble playing, which are studied primarily through our performance literature that includes a wide range of classical and contemporary genres. Performances include (but are not limited to) seasonal concerts, Christmas Vespers, and off-campus performances and field trips. Students may audition for an honors section of this ensemble; for those selected, participation in the honors group will require some extra rehearsal time. *Additional evening rehearsals prior to concerts are required. Three units.*

JAZZ & ORCHESTRA (FULL YEAR)

This section is designed for the wind, brass, piano or percussion player who wishes to participate in a variety of instrumental ensembles—Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra. These students focus on many aspects of musicianship through the study of a variety of classical and jazz repertoire. Performances include (but are not limited to) seasonal concerts, off-campus performances and field trips. *Additional evening rehearsals prior to concerts are required. Three units.*

RELIGIOUS ROOTS IN ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (FULL YEAR)

This fourth-year-only course runs concurrently with the Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Ensemble. The course, which meets the School's religion and philosophy requirement while allowing students to continue to participate in their chosen ensembles, adds homework to the usual rehearsal time in the form of special lectures, readings, viewings, written reflections and—in the second semester—a final project that is presented to the entire group. *Open only to fourth-year students who participated in an instrumental ensemble during all their semesters at Blair. 1.5 units.*

Advanced & Independent Study Opportunities in Performing Arts

ADVANCED SEMINAR: MUSIC PERFORMANCE (FULL YEAR)

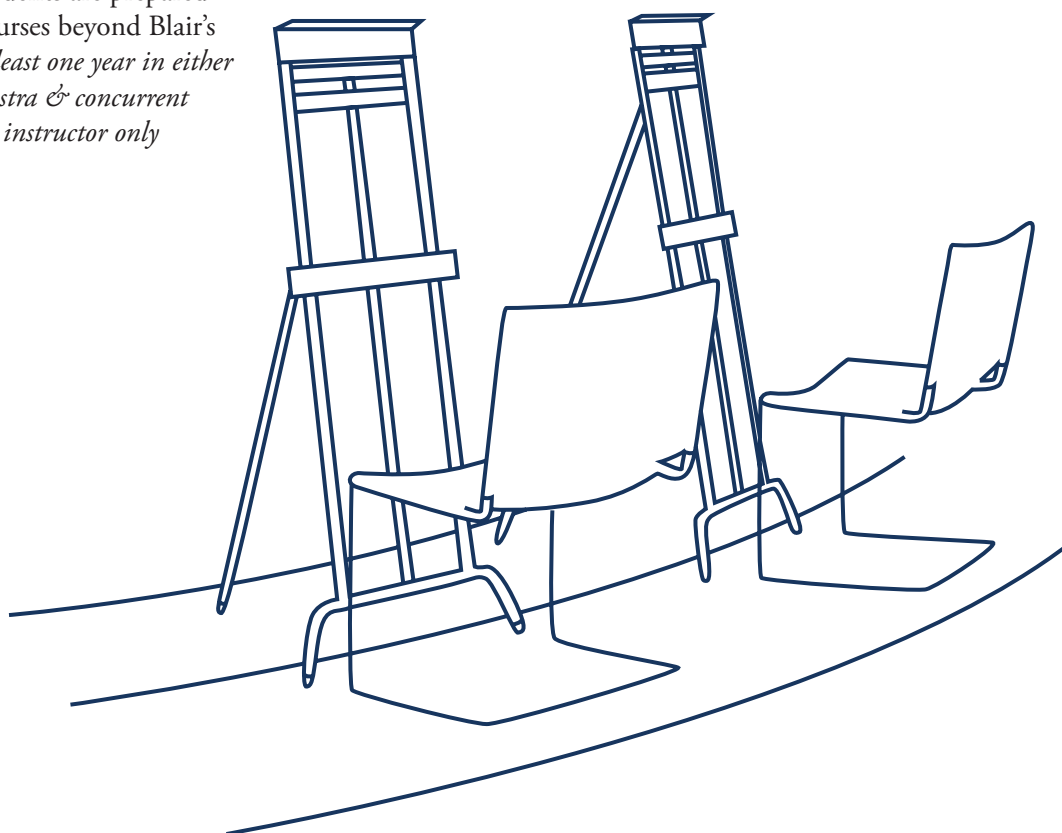
Transcript Name: AdvSem Music Performance

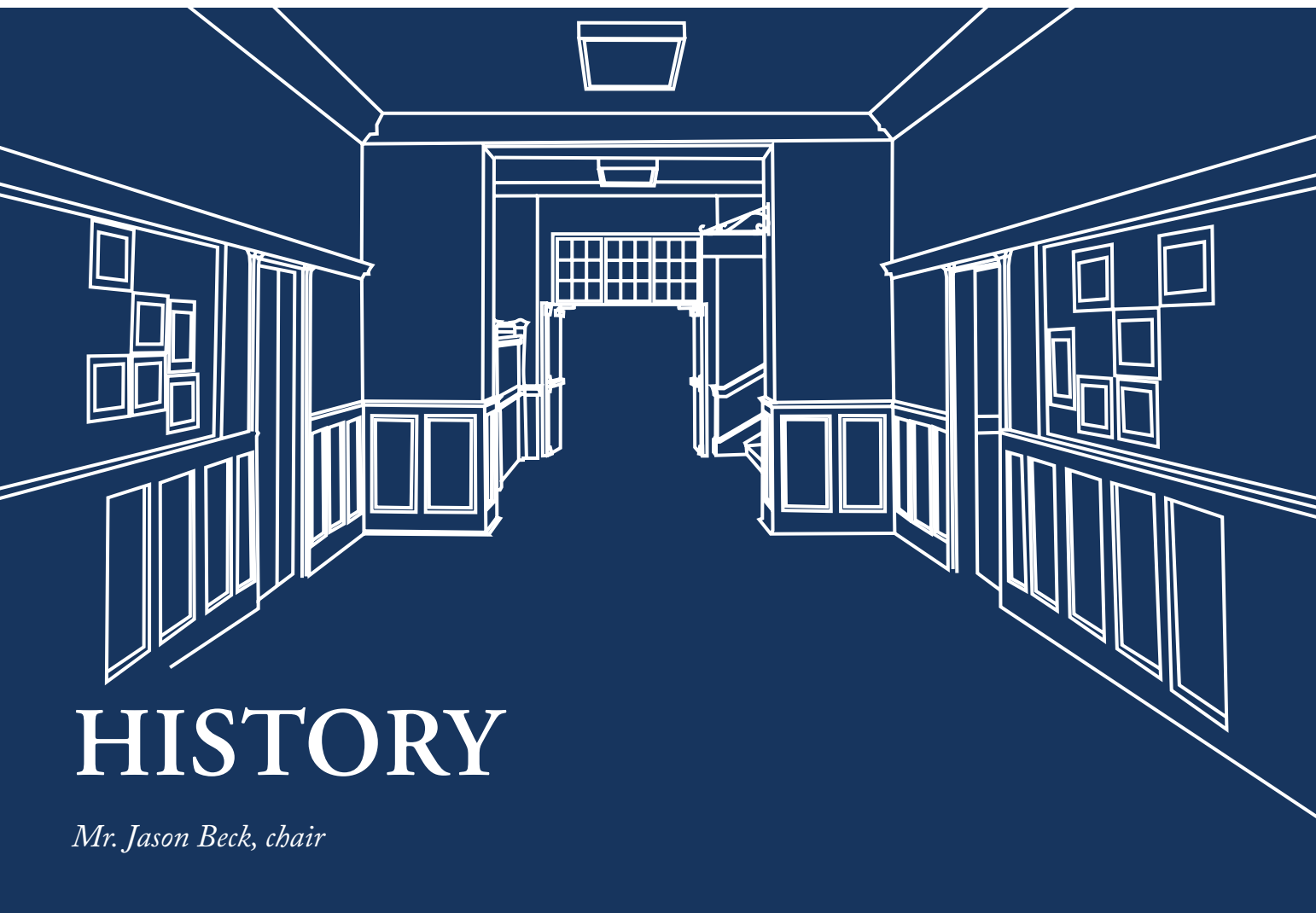
Advanced performance students opt into coursework in ensemble and solo music study, which builds upon the department's mission of developing artistic expression, collaborative performance, a reflective learning process, and rigorous study of collegiate-level and diverse repertoire. In addition to their primary ensemble, students participate in a weekly advanced chamber ensemble rehearsal and attend additional performances off-campus, as well as engage with their performance cohort to study topics in advanced musicianship. By the end of the course, students are prepared to enter collegiate ensembles and music courses beyond Blair's curriculum. *Prerequisites: Completion of at least one year in either Blair Singers, Jazz Band or Symphony Orchestra & concurrent enrollment in the group; by permission of the instructor only (audition required). 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: MUSIC, THEORY & COMPOSITION (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Music, Theory and Composition

In this course, students build on work completed in non-advanced Blair performing arts courses, specifically the digital music sequence, which is focused on music theory, composition and creation. This course serves as an advanced continuation, allowing students the opportunity to dive deeply into written and aural principles in music theory, explore music history from the early 19th century to the present, and build a living portfolio of original compositions and recordings demonstrating their knowledge and skill. *Prerequisite: At least one year's study of an instrument or voice. Reduced meetings each week; by permission of the instructor only. 1.5 units.*





HISTORY

Mr. Jason Beck, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Global Issues is required of all ninth-grade students; Modern European History is required of all three- and four- year students and is taken in the second and third years, always preceding the required U.S. History course.

Students entering Blair who have taken the first year of a two-year high school U.S. History course/requirement must complete the Modern European History course if they have not already taken a similar course. Depending on the nature of the U.S. History course at the former school, these students may have to complete the single-year U.S. History class at Blair.

GLOBAL ISSUES (FULL YEAR)

This course focuses on a singular question for the entire year: How should the world respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalization? Topics include the changing demographics of the world, the rise of China and globalization of trade, energy and the environment, and recent history and current developments in Russia. In addition to a variety of texts, students follow current affairs in the region of study, attend lectures presented on Tuesday nights by the Society of Skeptics and read historical novels. A range of electronic media is used in instruction. Basic academic skills such as note taking, following the news, study techniques, writing and argumentation are incorporated into the course. *The course is required of all ninth graders. **Three units.***

MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY (FULL YEAR)

Most students will take Modern European History in their second year, as much of its material serves as a foundation for the U.S. History requirement. The course is a European-focused survey of the Western tradition. Modern European History focuses on major historical themes and the development of student skills (such as note taking and essay writing) through various student projects and activities, including a research paper. Films, literature and primary documents further complement study. ***Three units.***

U.S. HISTORY (FULL YEAR)

This course surveys and analyzes significant events and issues in U.S. history, beginning with the first colonial settlements. The main goals are for students to develop a sense of historical continuity; to appreciate the interrelationships of the past, present and future; to be aware of current issues facing the United States; and to engage in the practice of critical reading and thinking. Special attention is given to the development of public speaking, research and writing skills. Students will complete a significant research paper on a topic of their choosing. *Prerequisite: Modern European History or its equivalent. Three units.*

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY (FULL YEAR)

Using a variety of texts, this course explores the role of the individual in shaping historical narrative and asks fundamental questions about the good, the beautiful and the true. In doing so, the class seeks to address how these ideas and questions are reflections of the historical narrative of their times. The curriculum revolves around readings, films, discussion and writing. Students are expected to be active participants in each class and will be graded accordingly. Authors include Sartre, Camus, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Melville, Dostoyevsky, Fromm and Arend. *Three units.*

RACE IN AMERICA (FULL YEAR)

This course examines the question “What is race?” through the lens of American history. Other questions addressed include: How have definitions of whiteness changed over the course of American history? How do racial classifications in America differ from those elsewhere? Is race biological or cultural? Issues considered include immigration, labor, crime, wealth, education, and ever-shifting legal identifications along racial and ethnic lines. Discussions are wide-ranging, drawing on a diverse array of readings and independent student review of current events. *Prerequisite: Completion of a course in U.S. History or departmental approval. Three units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem US Constitutional Law

This advanced constitutional law course challenges students to refine their skills in analytical reading, critical thinking, and the art of conveying complex ideas in clear and accessible language. Through in-depth reading of landmark Supreme Court opinions, students dissect constitutional doctrines, as well as their moral, political and practical foundations. Students learn through engaging and lively discussions, developing their ability to listen to and articulate diverse viewpoints and ask thoughtful questions that advance understanding. Assessments are based on a role-play of a Supreme Court oral argument where students act as attorneys and justices, plus essay writing and podcast assignments. *Prerequisite: U.S. History or Advanced Survey: U.S. History; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Comp. Government and Politics

Advanced Seminar: Comparative Government & Politics centers on one main question: What influences who holds power in government and how is that power wielded? The course uses the United States and six other main case study countries—each from a different region of the world and with different types of governments—to compare and analyze constitutional, electoral and party systems. Further, those countries demonstrate how demographics, culture and history interact with those systems. Portfolio assessments designed to scaffold and build students’ research skills include student projects that compare a course concept across multiple countries three times throughout the year. *Prerequisite: U.S. History or Advanced Survey: U.S. History; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: MODERN EVENTS & THOUGHT

Transcript Name: AdvSem Modern Global Thought

Modern Events & Thought will serve as a culminating course in the history curriculum and is designed to provide strong humanities students with an opportunity to more fully engage in the types of conversations at the heart of current intellectual engagement. Designed as an application-only course, students will play a key role in shaping its design, focus and assessment types. Source materials will be drawn from current periodicals, newly published historical monographs and modern reflections on historical questions relevant to current events. Students will engage with Society of Skeptics guest lecturers, help to guide Skeptics programming in the spring semester, and also have opportunities to participate in and attend conferences, colloquia, lectures and museum events throughout the region. *Prerequisites: Advanced Survey: U.S. History & departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: EUROPEAN HISTORY (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur European History

This college-level course surveys the cultural, economic, political and social developments shaping Europe from c. 1450 to the present. Students analyze primary and secondary sources and develop historical thinking skills while wrestling with overarching questions about postmedieval Europe. Questions include: Where have European governments historically derived their power? What is the relationship between citizens and their government? How does the nature of society impact the development of art and music? What voices have not been represented in traditional historical narratives? Students demonstrate their proficiency through active participation in discussions, regular assessments and creative projects. *Prerequisite: Modern European History, U.S. History or Advanced Survey: U.S. History; preference given to 12th-grade students. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: MICROECONOMICS (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Microeconomics

This full-year course provides an introduction to microeconomic concepts, the equivalent to a first-semester college economics class. Students learn about opportunity costs, supply and demand, elasticity, market structures, factor markets and the role of government. Portfolio assessments include a marketing plan presentation and an industry research project. Other skills emphasized include analyzing graphs and charts, as well as learning how to relate current and historical events to classroom concepts. *Prerequisites: Algebra 2 & U.S. History or Advanced Survey: U.S. History; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: U.S. HISTORY (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur US History

Advanced Survey: U.S. History addresses the fundamental question of identity in the American experiment. While studying early colonialism and the birth of the republic, students consider the cultural, economic and social diversity of early America, the tension between local and central authority during the struggle for independence, the establishment of the Constitution, economic and social change, slavery, and the growing sectional conflict that culminated in secession and Civil War. Addressing overarching questions related to economic and social changes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the United States emerged as a world power, the course culminates with a study of the Cold War, the Civil Rights movement, the social and political turmoil of the 1960s, the crisis of Vietnam, and the Reagan revolution. Throughout the class, students consider how current events reference or reflect these historical developments. Driven primarily through source analysis and discussion, learning takes place independently and in small groups. *Prerequisite: Modern European History; departmental approval required. Three units.*



LANGUAGES

Ms. Cristina Castillo, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

To graduate, students must complete 6 units of study in one foreign language.

CHINESE

CHINESE 1 (FULL YEAR)

Chinese 1 is a basic, introductory course in standard Chinese (Mandarin) intended for students with no exposure whatsoever to the languages of the area. The course guides students through the development of four basic skills (aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing), while also emphasizing functional use of language. Instruction begins with learning pinyin, the Romanization system of Chinese pronunciation. Students then progress to learning vocabulary, grammar and how to write 200 Chinese characters. **Three units.**

CHINESE 2 (FULL YEAR)

This course is a continuation of the work begun in Chinese 1. Learning advances beyond the survival level to include more extensive classroom interaction and systematic grammar development. Students are asked to use learned vocabulary to express their own thoughts, respond to simple statements and maintain face-to-face conversations dealing with daily life. Students learn to write their thoughts in sentence and paragraph form, as well as master another 200 characters. *Prerequisite: Chinese 1. **Three units.***

CHINESE 3 & CHINESE 3 HONORS (FULL YEAR)

In these courses, we prioritize the enhancement of grammar, syntactic structure and vocabulary while placing a strong emphasis on effective communication with native speakers. Our class materials encompass articles, daily life conversations and stories, supplemented with projects centered around Chinese food culture, travel in China and sports. Through dialogue in class and continuous writing practice, students refine their linguistic skills. The Chinese 3 Honors course delves deeper into the material, with a specific focus on characters and vocabulary. Expectations for spoken and written performance are higher in this advanced level. *Prerequisite: Chinese 2. Three units each.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: CHINESE LANGUAGE A (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Chinese Language A

Students in this course, offered in alternate years, not only engage in developing their proficiency in the Chinese language by focusing on advanced vocabulary and sentence structures, but also learn about authentic Chinese culture and how language relates to the culture. The curriculum revolves around various topics, including modern daily life, traditional customs and activities, Chinese food culture, families and communities, social customs and values. Students immerse themselves in reading short stories, novels and current news articles, as well as watching films. During discussions, the class exclusively uses the target language. Additionally, students demonstrate their language skills and cultural understanding through essays, debates, video projects and presentations. The course also explores an essential question that serves as a guiding principle prompting students to critically analyze and understand the profound influence of cultural elements on language use and communication within the Chinese context: In what ways do specific cultural aspects, such as social customs or values, impact communication in Chinese? *Prerequisite: Chinese 3 Honors or the permission of the teacher & department chair. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: CHINESE LANGUAGE B (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Chinese Language B

This course delves into Chinese history, art, culture and literature while deepening language proficiency through advanced vocabulary and sentence structures. Emphasizing cultural integration and understanding, students explore topics such as Chinese dynasties, Tang poetry, historical figures, common expressions and daily habits. The course fosters critical thinking by asking how an advanced understanding of the Chinese language enhances our comprehension of Chinese history and culture. Through extensive reading of stories, articles, novels and film screenings, students expand their knowledge, fluency and grasp of the interconnectedness of language, history and culture, building on their solid foundation in Chinese as they seek deeper insights. *Prerequisite: Chinese 3 Honors or the permission of the teacher & department chair. Three units.*

FRENCH

FRENCH 1 & FRENCH 2 (FULL YEAR)

The first two years of French focus on building vocabulary and developing proficiency in the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Vocabulary is organized by theme, addressing everyday topics and situations. Communication skills are developed through an immersive classroom environment as students work together in paired and group activities. In addition, students acquire cultural sensitivity and awareness of everyday life of French-speaking peoples through exposure to a variety of materials and resources in addition to the primary text. *Three units each.*

FRENCH 3 & FRENCH 3 HONORS (FULL YEAR)

These courses are designed to reinforce and expand upon the grammar and vocabulary skills acquired in the first two years of language study. Students are challenged to synthesize prior knowledge with new material and begin to communicate their ideas using more complex and detailed sentence structures. Students read and discuss a short novel in the target language and read literature selections from a variety of Francophone countries to increase cultural literacy. Several technology tools are used to enhance vocabulary acquisition and to strengthen oral comprehension and expression. Communicative activities such as creative writing and scaffolded conversations help students internalize the language, enabling them to act more independently and successfully in new cultural situations. The difference between the honors and regular sections involves the length and nature of various assignments and expectations for proficiency. *Prerequisites: French 1 & 2. Three units each.*

FRENCH 4 (FULL YEAR)

This course seeks to further improve the proficiencies developed in intermediate French classes across the language domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. French 4 begins to prepare students to function within a French-speaking community. Readings from literature and current articles provide the basis for role-plays, debates and discussions, presentations and essays. Video clips, films and recorded materials expose students to a wide range of accents and views of the French world today. All students at this level are expected to have mastered the essentials of the language prior to beginning the course. *Prerequisite: French 3. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: CURRENT EVENTS & MEDIA PERSPECTIVES IN THE FRANCOPHONE WORLD (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem French Current Events and Media

This course encourages critical thinking, analysis and engagement with real-world issues in the Francophone world through an in-depth exploration of current events and media. The class analyzes key sociopolitical issues, cultural trends and media representations. Through a combination of lectures, discussions and multimedia resources, students develop a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives and realities shaping the Francophone world today. Topics include global affairs, social movements, cultural phenomena, and media landscapes focusing on the French language and its manifestations in different regions. In the portfolio assessment, students demonstrate linguistic and cultural competencies by critically analyzing media representations of a specific cultural phenomenon or current event in the Francophone world. *Prerequisite: Advanced Survey: French Colonization & Culture or the permission of the teacher & department chair. **1.5 units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: FRANCOPHONE CINEMA (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Francophone Cinema

This course dives into the septième art: film. Students learn about the history of film in general before they watch, analyze and discuss both short and feature-length Francophone films (watched together as a class in French with French subtitles). Using cinematography vocabulary as they dissect the sociopolitical, cultural and historical context of the films, students write an original screenplay and produce a short film that references or gives homage to a work the class has studied. The course's final product is a film festival during which students provide the opportunity for a director Q&A. *Prerequisites: Advanced Survey: French Colonization & Culture or the permission of the teacher & department chair. **1.5 units.***

ADVANCED SURVEY: FRENCH LANGUAGE: COLONIZATION & CULTURE (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur French Language

We often hear French referred to as a global language. This course delves into how this came to be, notably through colonization, and explores the ramifications on contemporary Francophone societies. The first semester focuses on the history, literature and politics of French colonialism and the period of decolonization up through the 1980s. Students dive deep into a selection of Francophone regions. During the second semester, the class pivots to looking at contemporary language policies, as well as language use and references to this power dynamic in politics, education and music. The course's culminating assessment is a presentation in which students choose another Francophone region other than the ones covered in class to dissect the contemporary role of French in the context of a trip proposal for a travel company. Throughout both semesters, students also complete a sequential study of advanced grammatical concepts to be practiced in context. *Prerequisite: French 3 Honors or the permission of the teacher & department chair. **Three units.***

LATIN

LATIN 1 (FULL YEAR)

Latin 1 introduces students to fundamentals of the Latin language and its history. Students read adapted stories in Latin of increasing complexity designed to introduce them to the history and culture of Ancient Rome. The course emphasizes frequent comparisons between English and Latin grammar, as well as English derivations and vocabulary roots. Through their study of Latin, students increase their proficiency in both languages and deepen their awareness of language as a medium for thought and communication. Films, projects and online activities are also incorporated. ***Three units.***

LATIN 2 (FULL YEAR)

This second-year course emphasizes the completion of the study of Latin grammar, the broadening of students' Latin vocabulary and knowledge of English derivatives. In the second semester, students will begin an in-depth study of Greco-Roman mythology with increasingly complex grammar and syntax. Continued study of mythology and history will be supplemented by films and research projects. **Three units.**

LATIN 3 (FULL YEAR)

This course is devoted to completing students' understanding of the complex elements of Latin grammar and syntax and to developing the ability to read unadulterated Latin. Students continue their study of Greco-Roman mythology through adapted texts before moving on to antique Latin in the second semester. We will begin with Caesar's *de Bello Gallico*, a standard intermediate Latin prose text. The year concludes with an introduction to Latin poetry through the works of Ovid and Catullus. *Prerequisites: Latin 1, 2 & teacher approval.* **Three units.**

ADVANCED SEMINAR: HOMER & VIRGIL (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Latin B

This course is intended to examine the great works of Homer and his influence on Virgilian poetry, especially the Aeneid. Students will learn how to read Homeric Greek in order to compare and contrast the story telling of Homer and Virgil and the passages that are similar between their respective epics. Students will gain an appreciation for a genre that has been monumental in shaping Western literature. *Prerequisite: Latin 3.* **Three units.**

ADVANCED SURVEY: DEATH OF A REPUBLIC (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Latin A

Faith in institutions is at an all-time low, strongmen vie for power and the columns holding up society are collapsing. Welcome to Rome in the 1st century BCE. This course translates and analyzes the literature and philosophical thought of the time immediately preceding and following the fall of the Roman republic as students consider the question: How should we behave as the world burns around us? Course assessments include exams, essays and presentations; portfolio assessments ask students to engage in argumentative debate, translation and close text analysis from the time period. *Prerequisite: Latin 3 or the permission of the teacher & department chair.* **Three units.**

SPANISH 1, SPANISH 2 & SPANISH 2 HONORS (FULL YEAR)

The first two years of Spanish support and develop the five Cs of language study: communication, culture, connections, comparisons and communities. Components of the program, including interactive lessons and other resources, offer a variety of materials, many of which are technology-based. These address and support a range of student strengths, while encouraging and reinforcing intercultural learning skills, critical thinking, creative problem solving and the ability to work cooperatively in the target language. The two-year sequence introduces and emphasizes all basic grammar and a variety of cultural traditions representative of the vast array of Spanish-speaking places. Language acquisition begins with reading and listening comprehension and progresses from basic to more complex written and oral expression. Spanish 2 Honors will advance at a faster academic pace, involve more homework and include higher expectations of comprehension and expression. *The language department will determine recommendations.* **Three units each.**

SPANISH 3 & SPANISH 3 HONORS (FULL YEAR)

These courses reinforce the grammar skills and basics of the language developed in the first two years of study, while also seeking to develop communication almost entirely in the target language. Reading current, authentic materials provides exposure to modern issues impacting Hispanic cultures. Technology continues to be a major component of the program. Vocabulary activities provide the fundamentals useful for interaction on a daily basis. Creative writing projects each semester allow students to focus on writing skills as they demonstrate their grasp of multiple tenses, moods and grammatical structures. The difference between the honors and regular sections involves the length and nature of various assignments, choice of readings and expectations for proficiency. *Prerequisites: Spanish 1 & 2. Placement by current teacher.* **Three units each.**

SPANISH 4 (FULL YEAR)

This course seeks to improve further the proficiencies developed in intermediate Spanish classes. Spanish will be used almost exclusively in class, for it is expected that students at this level will be committed to developing fluency. Readings will involve excerpts from great writers of Hispanic literature, as well as from essays and articles intended for Spanish-speaking populations. Throughout the year, students will be assigned research, projects and presentations pertaining to a range of social and political topics. Native-language films provide exposure to the varying accents and dialects of the Spanish-speaking world. All students at this level are expected to have mastered the essentials of the language prior to beginning the course. Students must be committed to functioning at an advanced level in each of the four skill areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening. *Prerequisite: Spanish 3. Three units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: MAGICAL REALISM IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN-AMERICAN LITERATURE (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: Contemporary Latin Am. Lit.

The course explores magical realism, a literary style originating in Latin America that combines reality and fantasy and offers sociopolitical insights. Students explore its evolution, key contributors and pertinence in contemporary realms such as social media and virtual realities. Engaging with Latin America's global literary impact, students sharpen their analytical skills through text analysis. Assessments foster both creative and critical thinking capacities and encompass portfolio creation, where students express their understandings through mediums like virtual reality or graphic novels, analytical essays, active class participation and a comprehensive final examination. *Prerequisite: Advanced Survey: Spanish Language or the permission of the teacher & department chair. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: SPANISH-AMERICAN FILM & CULTURE (SEMESTER)

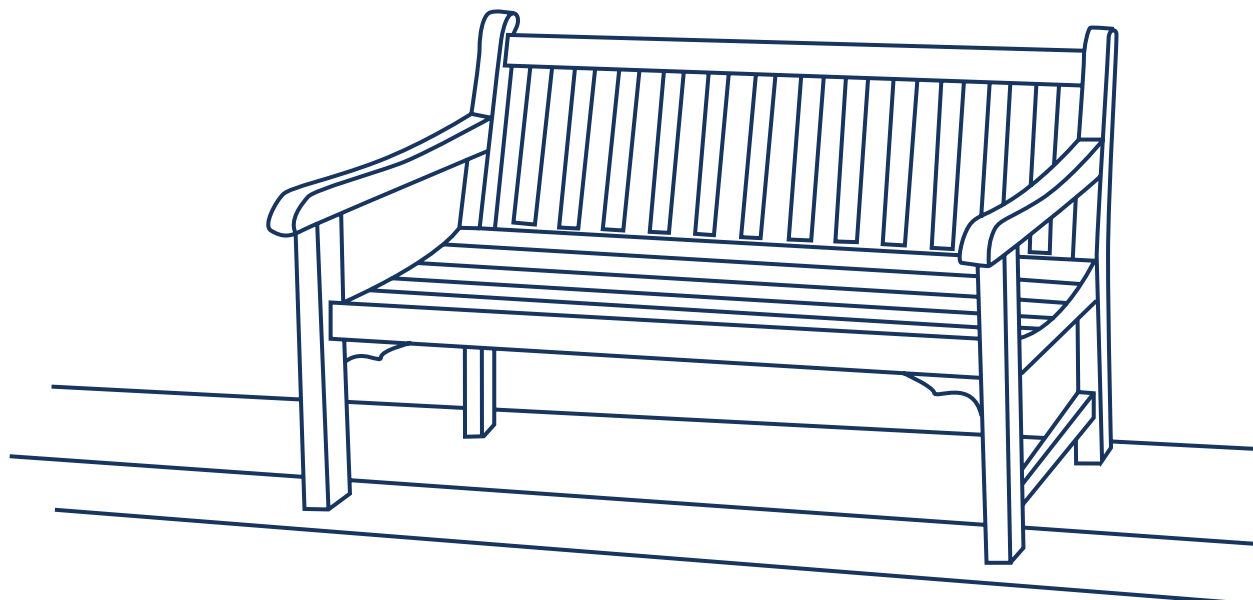
Transcript Name: AdvSem Spanish-American Film and Culture

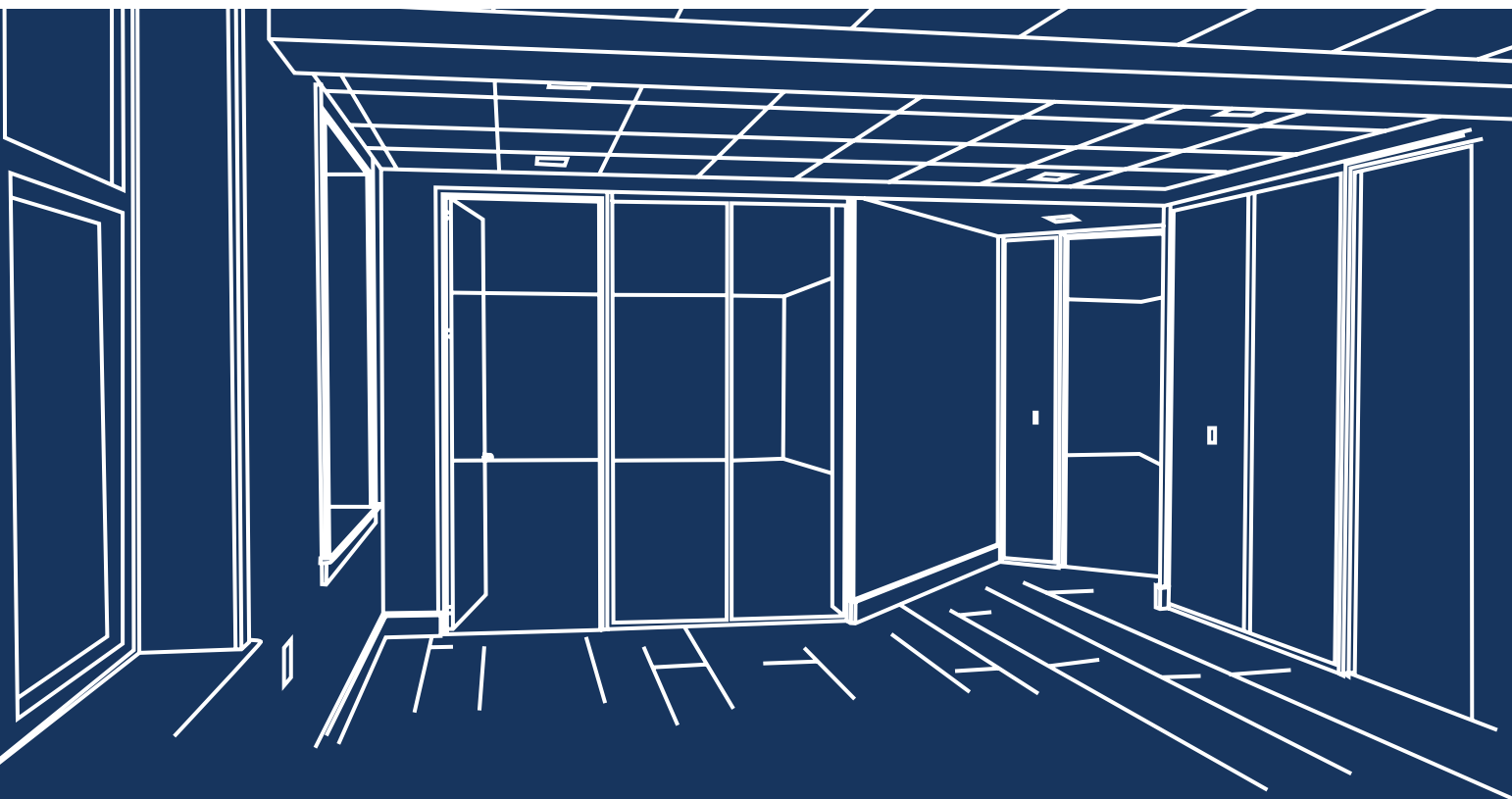
Ever wish you could look into the window of another culture or immerse in the sounds and sights of another country or another time? All of this is possible through film, and, in this course, students practice advanced Spanish language skills and learn about culture by viewing several films and connecting them to the topics of history, art, religion and food. Students can choose a portfolio assessment: writing an essay; creating a slide presentation; or producing short movies, skits and fiction writings on the topics they are exploring. *Prerequisite: Advanced Survey: Spanish Language or the permission of the teacher & department chair. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: SPANISH LANGUAGE—BOOKS ON A BOAT: A STEAMBOAT RIDE THROUGH THE LITERATURE OF LATIN AMERICA & SPAIN (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Spanish Language

This course explores Latin America and Spain via literature as students explore the essential question of what it means to hail from those regions. This maiden voyage through literature and culture uses the metaphor of a steamboat ride that originates in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, then travels south to Puerto Quetzal in Guatemala before continuing to Tribugá, Colombia, then to Callao, Peru, and, finally, arriving in Ushuaia, Argentina, reading “great books” along the way. After a brief pause, students traverse the Atlantic to dock in Barcelona, Spain. Writers representing Magic Realism, Modernismo, Vanguardismo, Indigenismo and Surrealismo are considered, and a study is made of the countries visited. *Prerequisite: Spanish 3 Honors or the permission of the teacher & department chair. Three units.*





MATHEMATICS

Ms. Danyelle Doldorian, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 or their equivalents.

Technology: A graphing calculator will be required in Advanced Survey: Integral Calculus & Sequences & Series. A scientific calculator is recommended at all other levels.

Placement: Returning students select their courses for the subsequent academic year in February. Placement in those courses is dependent on the student's final grade in their current course. New students are placed over the summer by the Assistant Head of School for Academics in conjunction with the department chair. In rare cases, usually for students looking to reach Calculus in the 12th grade, summer work is permitted to advance a program of study, with the sole exception that summer work in Algebra 2 will not be recognized. Students should discuss their plans with the department chair to receive approval and to understand the parameters under which any work will be done.

ALGEBRA 1 (FULL YEAR)

Algebra 1 is a full-year introduction to algebra. Students work with radicals, rational expressions, factoring and the quadratic formula to solve linear and quadratic equations. Linear and

polynomial functions and their graphs are studied extensively, as are linear combinations and linear equalities. *Placement by department. **Three units.***

GEOMETRY (FULL YEAR)

Geometry is a full-year course stressing both the discovery of Euclidean topics and concepts, as well as applications. In the first term, the postulates and theorems of Euclid, revised and restated to agree with contemporary mathematical thinking, form the basis for the study of geometry as a mathematical system. Students use compasses and straight edges to develop a “hands-on” understanding of Euclidean Geometry and other key concepts. Later in the year, the emphasis is on applications, including ratios and similarity, triangle trigonometry, circles, areas and volumes. *Prerequisite: Algebra 1. Three units.*

GEOMETRY HONORS (FULL YEAR)

Geometry Honors is an accelerated course in geometry. Blair's Geometry Honors is Euclidean, but not traditionally so. The area and perimeter of plane figures, volume of solids and special right triangles form the heart of the syllabus. Compass and straight-edge constructions are infused throughout the course. Students need a solid background in the algebra of linear and quadratic equations prior to taking the course. Returning Blair students with a final grade of 5.5 or higher in Algebra 1 may select this course if they evince a strong interest in mathematics. *Prerequisite: Algebra 1. Three units.*

ALGEBRA 2 (FULL YEAR)

The course reviews and extends the study of algebra begun in Algebra 1, with the expectation that students have mastered the fundamentals of geometry. Students gain comfort in exploring and investigating expressions, linear equations and quadratic equations. *Prerequisites: Algebra 1 & Geometry or Geometry Honors. Three units.*

ALGEBRA 2 HONORS (FULL YEAR)

Algebra 2 Honors follows a syllabus similar to that of Algebra 2, but with more rigor. The standard Algebra 2 curriculum is completed early in the spring term so that the remainder of the year can be devoted primarily to intermediate topics. Students in Algebra 2 Honors should expect to progress to Precalculus Honors the following year with placement in Advanced Seminar: Differential Calculus with Applications the year after that. Returning Blair students must earn a final grade of 4.5 in Geometry Honors or 5.5 in Geometry to be placed into the course. *Prerequisites: Algebra 1, Geometry Honors & placement by the department. Three units.*

ALGEBRA 2/PRECALCULUS HONORS (FULL YEAR)

Algebra 2/Precalculus Honors is the first course in a three-year sequence leading to Advanced Survey: Integral Calculus & Sequences & Series. Students study polynomial, rational, trigonometric, exponential and logarithmic functions, all with an eye to the calculus that such study supports. Limits inform the course throughout the year. The course's fast pace and level of rigor are appropriate for students planning to pursue engineering or pure or applied math. Returning Blair students must earn a final grade of 5.5 in Geometry Honors to be placed into the course. *Prerequisites: Algebra 1, Geometry Honors & placement by the department. Three units.*

PRECALCULUS (FULL YEAR)

Precalculus is the final course in a student's preparation for Calculus. Topics studied include linear, quadratic, polynomial and rational functions in the fall semester. In the spring, exponential, logarithmic and trigonometric functions are studied. Emphasis is also placed on perfecting students' fundamental algebraic and arithmetic skills in preparation for success in Calculus. *Prerequisites: Algebra 2 & departmental approval. Three units.*

PRECALCULUS HONORS (FULL YEAR)

Precalculus Honors follows the same syllabus as that of Precalculus. Additional topics include a study of conic sections. Students successfully completing this course will be competent to take Advanced Seminar: Differential Calculus with Applications the following year. To this end, problems requiring significant creative thought and extensive algebraic rigor will be practiced frequently. Returning Blair students must earn a final grade of 4.5 in Algebra 2H or 5.5 in Algebra 2 to be placed into the course. *Prerequisites: Algebra 2 & departmental approval. Three units.*

CALCULUS (FULL YEAR)

Calculus is a non-advanced course in differential and integral calculus of a single variable. The focus of the course is on applications of differentiation (related rates, applied minimum and maximum problems) and integration (area under a curve, volumes of solids of revolution and rectilinear motion) rather than mathematical theory. It is not expected that this course will substitute for the first semester of calculus at the university level. *Prerequisites: Precalculus & departmental approval. Three units.*

MATHEMATICAL MODELING (FULL YEAR)

Mathematical reasoning is an essential part of daily life at both the individual and societal level. Quantitative literacy, or the familiarity with how data is collected and understood, is an essential skill for students to develop. This course will focus on the way math is used to draw and support decision-making in a variety of disciplines including statistics, probability and finance. *Open primarily to 12th-grade students who have completed Precalculus or equivalents. Can be taken concurrently with Calculus or in place of Calculus. **Three units.***

INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICS (SEMESTER)

In this semester-long course, students will be introduced to the fundamental ideas of statistical analysis. We will address how data is gathered as well as types of statistical data display. This course is designed to help students understand the way statistics are used in the modern world to inform arguments, while also helping students get on track to take Advanced Survey: Applied Statistics the following year. *Prerequisites: Algebra 2 & departmental approval. **1.5 units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: DATA SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Data Science

How can data be used to show us more about the world? How do we know which data we can trust? To explain these questions that are at the core of data science, students learn how to use the Python programming language with fundamental statistical concepts. In addition to relevant mathematical and technical skills, students study biases that exist in the data collection and analysis process, as well as the limitations of data collection and aggregation. This course, cross-listed with the computer science department, culminates with a project in which students analyze multiple large data sets in order to answer meaningful questions. *Prerequisites: Completion of Algebra 2 Honors & an introductory-level programming course, with teacher approval. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: DIFFERENTIAL CALCULUS WITH APPLICATIONS (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Calculus A

In Advanced Seminar: Differential Calculus, students undergo a yearlong exploration of tools for analyzing functions, which were developed by Newton and Leibniz in the 1600s. Specifically, methods for describing rates of change are precisely defined and applied to complex questions. The main topics covered include limits, continuity, differentiation and applications of differentiation. Students will demonstrate mastery of skills, as well as an ability to make connections in pure mathematics through projects and multistep problem sets. They apply those skills and connections to real-world problems through projects, such as designing a roller coaster and answering questions related to physics, economics and other areas. *Prerequisites: Precalculus Honors & departmental approval required. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: LINEAR ALGEBRA

Transcript Name: AdvSem Linear Algebra

Linear algebra involves the study of linear equations and linear transformations. It is applicable to several other branches of mathematics as well as to various fields of science, engineering and computing. It is an ideal course in which to foster abstract mathematical thinking and recognition of logical proof. To begin, students will consider multiple dimensions and begin to investigate vectors, matrices and elementary matrix operations. Subsequent topics covered will include solving linear systems, vector spaces, linear transformations, linear independence, basis, determinants, eigenvalues and eigenvectors. *Prerequisite: AdvSur Integral Calculus & Sequences & Series. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: MULTIVARIABLE CALCULUS (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Multivariable Calculus
Not offered in 2025-2026

Students develop an understanding of multivariable calculus and use these concepts to solve realistic problems through class discussion, group practice, homework assignments and projects. Topics covered include surfaces in three-dimensional space, vectors and parametric curves in two-dimensional and three-dimensional spaces, application of vector-valued functions, partial derivatives and optimization problems, directional derivatives, double and triple integrals, the Jacobian and change of variables, vector fields, line and surface integrals, divergence and curl. Students explore Green's theorem, Stokes' theorem and the divergence theorem. In portfolio assessments, students work in groups to model real-world problems, such as how to maximize the profit obtained by targeting the right customers under budget and operational conditions.

Prerequisites: Advanced Survey: Integral Calculus & Sequences & Series; departmental approval required. Three units.

ADVANCED SEMINAR: PRECALCULUS HONORS /CALCULUS A (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Precalc H/Calc A

Advanced Seminar Precalculus Honors/Calculus A is the final course in a student's preparation for advanced courses in calculus. Students prepare for intensive study in Advanced Survey: Integral Calculus & Sequences & Series by digging deeply into the complexities of graphical analysis and the foundations of differential calculus. Particular emphasis is placed on rigorous development of concepts from first principles and coherence of conceptual systems. *Prerequisites: Algebra 2H/Precalculus H & departmental approval. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: APPLIED STATISTICS (FULL YEAR)

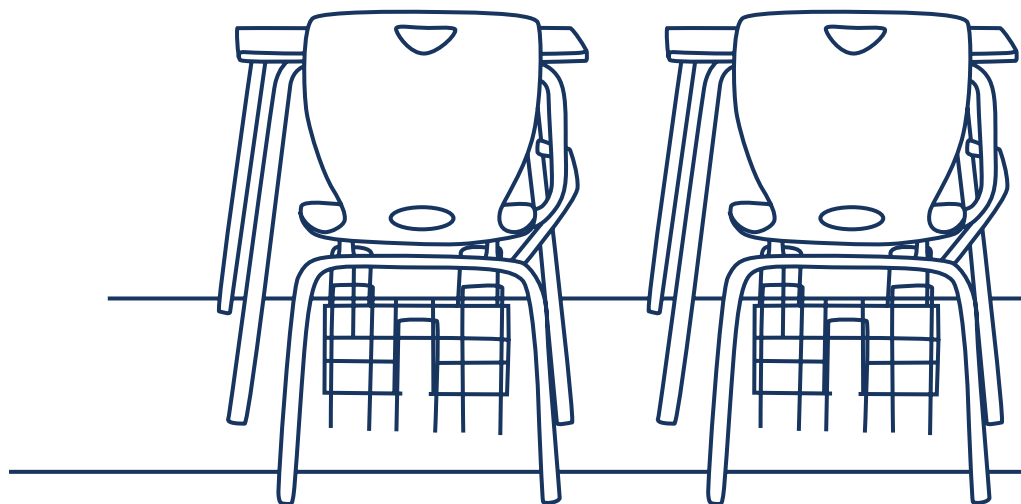
Transcript Name: AdvSur Applied Statistics

This course provides a broad overview of how to aggregate, analyze and interpret data. Using tools like Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets, students will learn how to organize information with a statistical bend and create evidence-based arguments supporting their conclusions. Through a collection of student-driven projects, the course focuses on how to display information effectively and how to use it to support an argument in a cohesive manner. *Prerequisites: Completion or concurrent enrollment in Advanced Seminar: Differential Calculus with Applications or satisfactory completion of the Statistics elective & concurrent enrollment in Calculus; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: INTEGRAL CALCULUS & SEQUENCES & SERIES (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Calculus B and C

The yearlong course surveys the techniques and applications of integral calculus and sequences and series. It completes the two-semester sequence of the typical college calculus courses needed as entry points for the study of pure math and the natural sciences. Beginning with the fundamental theorem of calculus and the antiderivative, students learn such applications as area, volume, accumulation integrals and differential equations, among others. Attempting to explain why calculus wasn't developed until the 17th century and exploring the tools that modern European mathematics have that ancient Greeks, Indians, Mayans and Persians did not, the course ends with a flourish, using the tools of the infinite Taylor series to develop Euler's equation to demonstrate the beauty of mathematics in its purest form. *Prerequisite: Advanced Seminar: Precalc H/Calculus A or Advanced Seminar: Differential Calculus with Applications; departmental approval required. Three units.*





SCIENCES

Mrs. Kelly Hadden, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Students will take either Biology or Honors Biology for their ninth-grade science. Students repeating ninth grade, and who have high school credit for an acceptable, full-year Biology lab science and a grade of B or better (or its equivalent), will not have to meet this requirement. Four-year students at Blair must present 9 units of science, at least 6 units of which must be in the laboratory sciences (3 units in Biology and 3 units in Chemistry, Robotics or Physics).

BIOLOGY (FULL YEAR)

The emphasis of this full-year laboratory course is both investigative and conceptual, seeking to address the major topics in biology as they relate to current events and the world around us. Beginning with the scientific method, topics include cell structure and a variety of functions, genetics and biotechnology, evolution, animals and their adaptations, plants and their functions, and ecology. The course introduces these concepts through the use of real world scenarios of organisms and their interactions in biomes. Students develop critical organizational, reading and note-taking skills, as well as analytical skills important to interpreting laboratory data.

Three units.

HONORS BIOLOGY (FULL YEAR)

Designed for ninth- or 10th-grade students, this course serves as an introductory exposure to major concepts in the field of biology. With an emphasis on research skills, the course covers four major content areas: molecules and cells, heredity and genetics, evolution and ecology. Science is presented as both a process and a body of knowledge, and the emphasis is placed on learning the skills involved in acquiring, interpreting, analyzing and communicating data. An independent research project and a variety of inquiry lab experiences provide opportunities for students to learn these skills. In addition, instructors emphasize the study skills involved in reading effectively, organizing and presenting information, and reviewing for quizzes and tests. ***Three units.***

CHEMISTRY (FULL YEAR)

This full-year laboratory-based course is the “standard” for chemical science education at Blair. It introduces the key methods and ideas of chemistry and their applications in our current technologically based society. Students explore methods for analyzing and presenting information useful in understanding debates over the development and use of technical resources. The course involves extensive hands-on “discovery” of chemical principles and methods so that, by year’s end, students have a solid grasp of the challenges and opportunities that connect chemical methods to our economy, culture and environment. **Three units.**

HONORS CHEMISTRY (FULL YEAR)

This full-year laboratory-based course is designed for strong math and science students. Honors Chemistry covers in depth the complete, standard chemical curriculum. A solid foundation in algebra is essential, and the rigor of this course reflects that of a typical honors-level class. A key theme will be for students to use lab experimentation as an investigatory tool as they develop their data- and record-keeping skills as well as narrative and scientific-communication skills. Successful completion of Honors Chemistry is an excellent foundation for subsequent advanced science classes. **Three units.**

FOUNDATIONS OF INTEGRATED SCIENCE RESEARCH (ISR) (SPRING SEMESTER)

This course gives motivated and scientifically curious students an extensive introduction to the world of independent research. Students accepted into this course learn how to read scientific literature, think critically and understand how scientific experimentation is implemented. Emphasis is placed on the review of scientific literature and experimental design. The class explores current scientific research and cutting-edge laboratory techniques. Upon completion, each student will submit a proposal for an integrated research project which may be pursued during the 11th or 12th grades. *Prerequisite: Completion of Biology/Biology Honors or concurrent enrollment in an honors or an advanced science course. Applications are reviewed and approved by the ISR Committee.* **1.5 units.**

PHYSICS (FULL YEAR)

This introductory course covers many of the basic laws of nature observed in everyday experience. Topics include Newtonian mechanics, waves and oscillations, and electricity. Students perform extensive laboratory work throughout the year. Analytical thinking, mathematical modeling, solid study skills, clear presentation of arguments and organization of materials are emphasized. *Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in Algebra 2 or higher.* **Three units.**

ASTRONOMY (FULL YEAR)

In this full-year elective, students learn about our universe, following the work of astronomers such as Copernicus and Galileo as they expanded our view of the cosmos. We work our way outward from Earth to the moon, to our solar system and to our Milky Way galaxy, studying everything from neighboring planets to the formation and inner workings of stars and black holes. Students taking Astronomy learn about modern advances and applications in the field, gaining a cosmic perspective beyond that of a standard physics or Earth science course. This course necessarily involves some evening classwork with telescopes and may require some last-minute schedule adjustments due to weather and viewing conditions. Astronomy does not meet the graduation requirement for physical science. *Prerequisites: At least one science course meeting the Blair graduation requirement.* **Three units.**

ENGINEERING SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

This science elective’s curriculum is for students interested in engineering as a field of study or a possible profession in the future. Several different areas of engineering will be introduced and explored, with an emphasis on project-based work in each theme or area. Analytical thinking, mathematical modeling, clear presentation of arguments and organization of materials are emphasized. *Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment (or past completion) in Physics.* **Three units.**

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

Environmental Science focuses on exploring environmental and sustainability issues through both a natural and societal lens. In this course, students develop a thorough understanding of key ecological principles through the study of energy, food, water, pollution and population. Students complete both group and individual project-based assessments that require them to investigate our impact on and access to natural resources. In completing these real-life studies, students create and evaluate quantitative and qualitative data on which they can base their possible solutions. Although this course is offered through the science department, the topics covered are interdisciplinary, and students are encouraged to think about the economic, political and social implications of resource use and access. *Prerequisites: Biology & Chemistry. Preference given to students in the 12th grade.* **Three units.**

MARINE SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

Marine Science introduces students to many aspects of the oceans and fosters an awareness of society's connection to the sea. Material covered includes the physical science of oceans, particularly geology and chemistry, and the biology of various marine ecosystems with extensive focus on the living organisms that populate them. Classes include lectures, lab projects, regular class discussions centered on environmental topics and current events, and a possible spring break research trip. Students write several research papers and give presentations on marine science topics. *Prerequisites: Biology & Chemistry. Preference given to students in the 12th grade. **Three units.***

ROBOTICS (FULL YEAR)

Offered in conjunction with the computer science department, Robotics meets the lab-science requirement for a physical science. This full-year course explores the combination of electronics and computer science, covering robotic history and the construction of working autonomous robots (which requires design and programming skills). Topics include components of robotic systems, sensors and feedback loops. An important aspect is the design of computer algorithms that intelligently make use of sensor information describing the environment and purposefully act upon it. Students are required to have their own laptops. The course is strictly limited to 10 students. *Prerequisites: Biology & Chemistry. Preference given to students in the 12th grade. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: INTEGRATED SCIENCE RESEARCH (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Integrated Research

Students investigate questions they proposed as students in the Foundations of Integrated Science Research (ISR) course. Using their proposal as a starting point, students execute experiments of their own devising as they collect and analyze data. Advanced Seminar: ISR students enjoy a large degree of autonomy, as their class time is almost entirely devoted to the completion of their research project with the support of an internal or external mentor. The seminar challenges students to approach the hard skills of original research with proposals that speak to their genuine interests and issues that go beyond their immediate environment. Throughout the course, students complete quarterly reports and share verbal presentations of their progress. The class ultimately culminates in a manuscript-style report in which students not only contextualize their project and summarize their results, but also look to the future in terms of the impact of their findings and where others in the field can pick up their research based on their conclusions. *Prerequisites: Foundations of ISR & Chemistry; departmental approval required. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: ORGANIC CHEMISTRY (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Organic Chemistry

This one-year seminar course provides an introduction to the study of carbon-bearing molecules, as well as their transformations and uses in our world. Students expand their ability to organize large amounts of information regarding these molecules, find common features and use relatively few methods for effecting the transformation between molecules. The course includes very substantial laboratory work as students explore properties, transformations and verification. The work in the class relies heavily on collaboration and feedback, and students regularly present brief summaries of their investigative process, results and potential applications. *Prerequisite: Chemistry Honors; departmental approval required. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SEMINAR: PHYSICS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Physics of Renewable Energy

Advanced Seminar: Physics of Renewable Energy examines in detail the energy systems humans harness for their use and the scientific concepts that govern how they operate. From basic thermodynamics to fossil fuels, nuclear energy and solar power, all fuels have advantages and disadvantages to consider. In-class experiments are performed where possible to provide hands-on exposure to the topics explored. Students investigate both the basic science behind how each energy source works, as well as the consequences of their use. Climate change and socioeconomic impacts are key themes throughout the course, which considers the technical, economic, political, environmental, ethical and social contexts of the topic of energy. Classroom instruction emphasizes understanding the science of each fuel source. Portfolio assessments, including design of a passive solar house and a government proposal presentation, are centered on group work, research, analysis of existing energy systems and proposed changes to future energy systems. *Prerequisite: Advanced Survey: Physics I; departmental approval required. **Three units.***

ADVANCED SURVEY: ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Anatomy and Physiology

This course presents foundational knowledge of human anatomy and physiology to create greater agency in students over their own bodies, as well as prepare them for future careers in health-related fields. The course dedicates substantial time to dissections and model building as students seek to understand the three-dimensional structures of living organisms and the interrelationship of structures. Course assessments include research projects, lab practicals, case studies, model building and formal written assessments. *Prerequisites: Biology & Chemistry; preference given to those in 12th grade. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: BIOLOGY (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Biology

Advanced Survey: Biology builds off the foundations of Biology and Chemistry. The course focuses on the four big ideas of biology (information, interactions, energy and evolution) and introduces concepts through case studies, laboratory work and real-world applications. The class uses the four big ideas to investigate experimental questions, garner and analyze data, and then communicate the findings of experiments in presentations and formal laboratory reports. Students also investigate the most advanced technologies in biology and identify past and future impacts on our society, ranging from ethical implications to access and identification of communities that have been/will be served. *Prerequisites: Biology & Chemistry Honors; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: ENGINEERING SCIENCE (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Engineering Science

Using the fundamental tools learned in previous engineering and science classes, students brainstorm initial proposals before they progress through multiple phases of product or process development, refining and soliciting feedback for potential improvements along the way. This includes design, timeline, resource plan, prototype, creation/fabrication, testing, analysis, iteration and implementation/launch. Goal-setting, planning and problem-solving are among critical skills developed. Through discussion with the instructor, this individually-led project fills an existing “gap” that is proven beneficial to our community in some technical, financial, educational, recreational or aesthetic manner. The “customers” continue to be involved throughout the project’s development. At implementation stages, students consider possible environmental impacts, both short- and long-term in nature, as well as interactive surroundings. *Prerequisite: Engineering Science or Advanced Survey: Physics 1; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: PHYSICS 1 (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Physics 1

The algebra-based Advanced Survey: Physics 1 focuses on describing the interactions of matter and energy by explaining the fundamental mechanisms that underlie natural phenomena. This course investigates topics of classical mechanics: motion, force, gravitation, energy and momentum conservation, as well as oscillations, waves and sound. These concepts are explored through the development of mathematical relationships stemming from lab data collection, problem-solving, and real-world applications. Emphasis is placed on the design and execution of lab investigations that address student-developed research questions. In addition to written assessments, students complete, document and reflect upon performance tasks at the conclusion of each topic. *Prerequisites: Successful completion of Chemistry Honors & concurrent enrollment in Precalculus Honors or above; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: PHYSICS 2 (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Physics 2

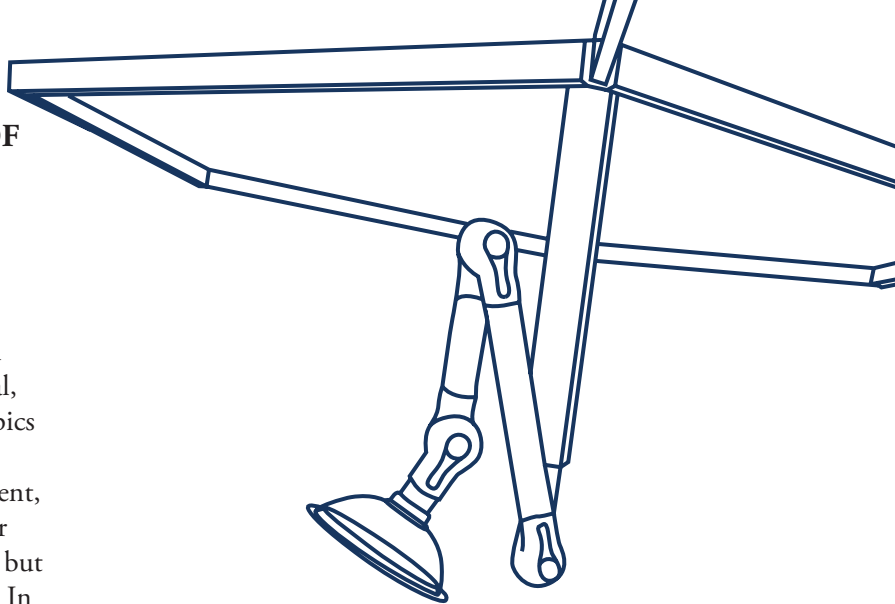
The calculus-based Advanced Survey: Physics 2 focuses on analytical problem-solving and experimental design. The course begins with a review of classical mechanics topics covered in Advanced Survey: Physics 1, layering in deeper calculus connections previously excluded. Students then expand their studies beyond mechanics into other topics, including mechanical waves, electrostatics, magnetic fields, electromagnetism and modern physics (including quantum mechanics and relativity). These subjects require students to become well versed in mathematical practices such as derivatives, integration and basic differential equations. *Prerequisites: Chemistry Honors & Advanced Survey: Physics 1; Precalculus/Calculus or Advanced Seminar: Differential Calculus with Applications; departmental approval required. Three units.*

ADVANCED SURVEY: PSYCHOLOGY— UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE & MIND OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR (FULL YEAR)

Transcript Name: AdvSur Psychology

This course provides an overview of the scientific study of psychology. Students gain insight into human behavior and mental processes by exploring the seven psychological perspectives (biological, evolutionary, cognitive, behavioral, social-cultural, psychoanalytic and humanistic). Other topics covered include nature versus nurture, research methods, biology, learning theories, child-and-adolescent development, social influence and interactions. Students not only master the basics of current psychological theory and vocabulary, but also gain a better understanding of themselves and others. In semester one, students design an experiment to test a research topic of their choice. In semester two, students complete a case study analysis with a developed treatment plan. Throughout the course, students will conduct research and think critically as they apply psychology concepts to real-world scenarios.

*Prerequisites: Biology & Chemistry; preference given to those in 12th grade. **Three units.***





SELF & SOCIETY

Ms. Sarah O'Neil, chair

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

All students entering Blair in the ninth, 10th or 11th grades must complete 1.5 units in religion and philosophy before graduation. These courses are all offered by the self and society department. Not all courses offered in the department meet the requirement.

COURSES THAT MEET THE RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY REQUIREMENT IN 2025-2026

ART FOR SOCIAL CHANGE (SEMESTER)

This course is a collaborative experience designed to raise awareness about critical issues within our Blair “bubble” and beyond. Students create and participate in a wide variety of art forms to foster dialogue and action in the community, which empowers them to understand art as a catalyst for change.

*Course can also fill an art requirement. **1.5 units.***

HUMAN RIGHTS (SEMESTER)

This course addresses the global nature of human rights and integrates a political, social and historical lens for thinking about human rights issues, and course participants play important roles in encouraging dialogue about those topics in the Blair community. **1.5 units.**

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (SEMESTER)

Philosophy gets a bad rap, and not undeservedly. Indeed, much of the time, philosophy seems overly complicated and unnecessarily tedious. Still, there are some philosophers—like Plato—who don't see philosophy as merely a theoretical enterprise, divorced from issues relevant to our daily lives. Rather, Plato saw philosophy as crucial to learning how to live and live well. In this class, students delve into Plato's most famous (and very accessible) writings, and examine how philosophy contributes to the art of living. Plato helps students think through foundational questions about human life and conduct, including: Why should we be moral? How do we become good or virtuous? What does religion or belief in God have to do with deciding the right course of action? What's the nature of the relationship between our individual moral choices and the structures and arrangements of wider society? Students complete short, reflective essays designed to help them think through the many philosophical implications of their everyday beliefs and behaviors. *Open to ninth and 10th graders only. 1.5 units.*

MEANING OF LIFE 1 & 2 (SEMESTER)

The 20th century might legitimately be characterized as the century of alienation. We largely rejected traditional sources of meaning and spiritual comfort and struggled to make sense of the void that rejection left behind. The 21st century has presented us with existential threats, generated by humans and nature, so we continue to struggle with purpose and direction. This course examines a variety of attempts to provide some meaning, some comfort, in what appears to be an essentially indifferent universe. Our exploration will lead us to examine our own answers to the eternal questions as well as those suggested by artists as diverse as Ernest Hemingway and Monty Python. *Prerequisite: English 2 & American Studies & Rhetoric. Departmental approval required for juniors. 1.5 units per semester.*

MINDFUL LIVING (SEMESTER)

The class explores what it means to live mindfully through hands-on practices as well as readings, multimedia content, journal writing, self-reflection, class discussion and several research projects. Students endeavor to become more thoughtful versions of themselves—more rooted in the present moment and more connected to the greater good—by better understanding their relationship with the world around them. The one-semester course invites students to participate in meditation, breathwork and other mindfulness practices such as yoga, mindful walking, mindful eating and more—all with the goal of reducing stress and cultivating more patience, acceptance and joy. *Open to 10th, 11th & 12th graders. 1.5 units.*

RELIGIOUS ROOTS IN CHORAL MUSIC (FULL YEAR)

This course allows students to continue their participation in the Blair Academy Singers and meets the School's religion and philosophy requirement. The course adds homework to the usual rehearsal time, work that takes the form of special lectures, assigned readings and viewings, written reflections and—in the second semester—a final project that is presented to the entire group. *Open only to third- and fourth-year students who participated in Singers during all their semesters at Blair. 1.5 units.*

RELIGIOUS ROOTS IN ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (FULL YEAR)

This fourth-year-only course runs concurrently with the Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Ensemble. The course, which meets the School's religion and philosophy requirement while allowing students to continue to participate in their chosen ensembles, adds homework to the usual rehearsal time in the form of special lectures, readings, viewings, written reflections and—in the second semester—a final project that is presented to the entire group. *Open only to fourth-year students who participated in an instrumental ensemble during all their semesters at Blair. 1.5 units.*

SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS (SEMESTER)

The class explores both the meaning and pursuit of happiness as well as the science of positive psychology around its manifestation in our lives. Students investigate the key ingredients to living a happy life through discussion, research projects, readings, multimedia content, journal writing, self-reflection and experimentation in their own lives. The one-semester course engages students in asking essential questions both of themselves and of the world around them as they work to determine what happiness looks like on an individual basis and to consider their part in the collective consciousness. *Open to 10th, 11th & 12th graders. 1.5 units.*

WORLD RELIGIONS (SEMESTER)

This course introduces students to the background and concepts of five of the world's major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The course also provides a foray into indigenous religious traditions, such as that of Native American tribes. Our objective will be to consider the foundational beliefs, practices and worldviews of these religions, as well as the diverse ways these religions correspond to our lives and how we make meaning today. Emphasizing the theme of transformation, something all religions share, instructors pair each religion with films (or film clips) from some of the world's most renowned filmmakers, allowing students to see and experience the artful ways religious ideas have been represented in cinema. *1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: NUNS, GUNS & ROSES (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Women's Literature

From an abbey on the edge of ruin in the early 12th century to an apocalyptic suburb of Los Angeles, California, this course explores the way women shape and are shaped by the context of their lives. Students examine their own understandings and assumptions of feminine and masculine ideals—and how they may differ between times and places—through discourse and analysis of a wide variety of sources ranging from modern media to medieval texts. How does faith affect personal understanding of the self and others? As characters and authors grapple with questions of faith, identity, power, love and survival in female bodies across centuries, students will delve into the themes through daily writing, active discussion and presentations culminating in a creative work that displays the breadth and depth of their engagement with course material. *Prerequisite: English 2. Departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

ADVANCED SEMINAR: PHILOSOPHY & LITERATURE (SEMESTER)

Transcript Name: AdvSem Philosophy and Literature

How do we understand what philosophers call the “good” or attack the “problem of evil” as we negotiate our lives? What does it mean to believe in God, “the Force” or a higher power, and how do various religious and cultural belief systems share common underpinnings? This course asks students to approach a variety of prose, poetry, film and other forms of rhetoric with a thematic lens and asks them to read in depth on the philosophical questions that most haunt them. This reading-intensive course begins with an essential question—Where do we find God and what does that mean to a variety of cultures?—leading students to consider what is monstrosity or miracle and where we find such themes in literature and in our lives. Texts: Stoics (Seneca, Epictetus, etc.), Plato, Martin Luther King Jr., Dostoyevsky, Mary Shelley, John Donne, John Green, and various short works and films. *Prerequisite: English 2. Departmental approval required. 1.5 units.*

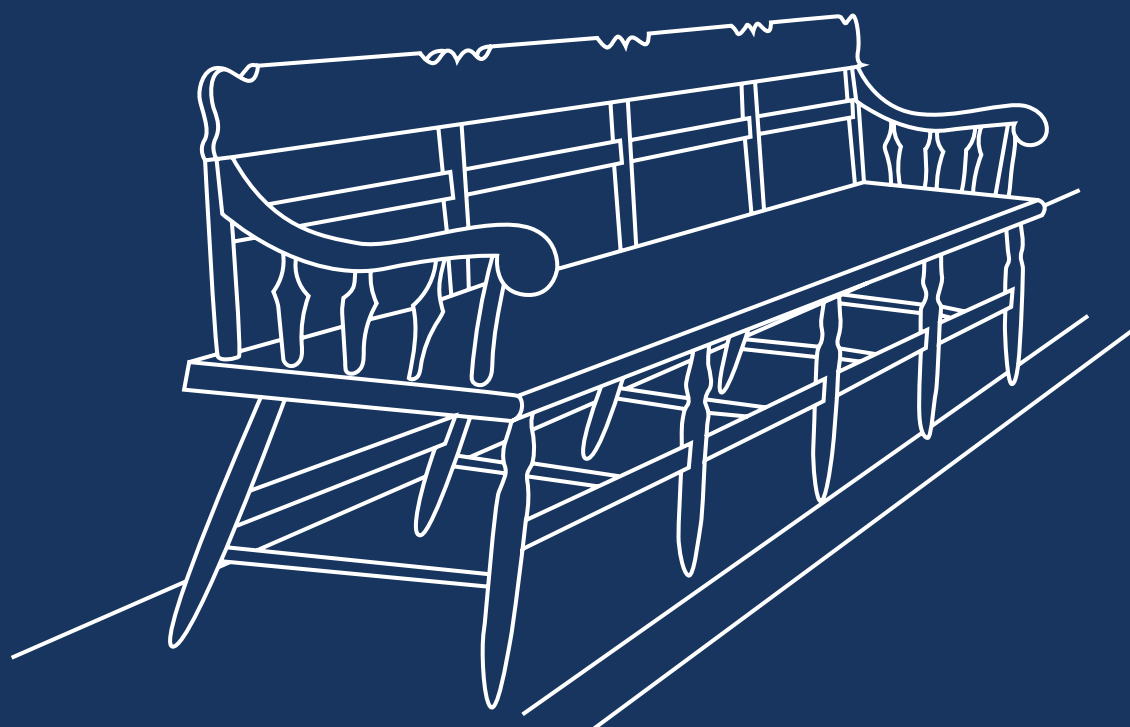
Additional Courses in the Department

FOUNDATIONS OF WELL-BEING 1 (SEMESTER)

This introductory course for all ninth graders covers the essential topics for living a healthy and successful life at Blair as an adolescent. Topics include stress, sleep, conflict management, substance use, body image, social media and a variety of other topics which touch on the day-to-day life of students. Students participate in both large group sessions and small break-out groups where they discuss the topics of the course as a group. The course is graded pass/fail and meets twice a week for a single semester. **0.5 units.**

FOUNDATIONS OF WELL-BEING 2 (FULL YEAR)

Building on the content introduced in Foundations of Well-Being 1, all 10th graders take Foundations of Well-Being 2 for the entire year. The course meets once a week in a small group to add additional content related to key topics from Foundations of Well-Being 1, as well as shifting student attention to how to develop personal leadership and contribute effectively to community life. The course is graded pass/fail. **1 unit.**



INTERSESSION

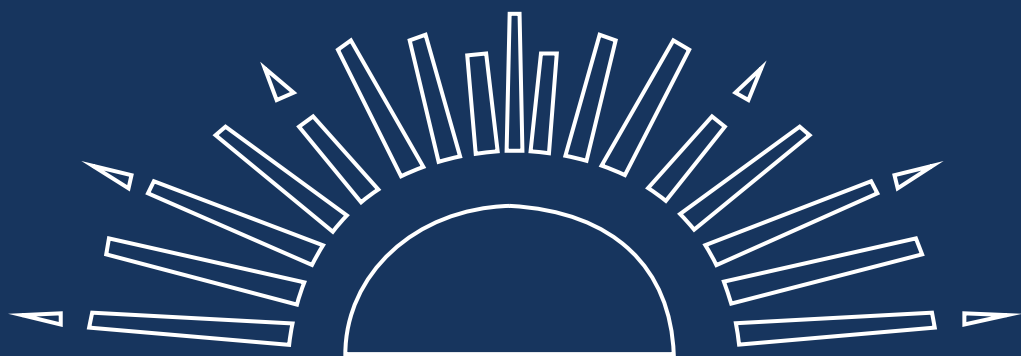
Interession, formerly known as “J-term,” is an intensive course that Blair students complete in a condensed period of time. In 2025-2026, the program will take place during the eight days immediately preceding the March break, but it is subject to change on an annual basis.

Courses during Interession are usually team taught, offering topics intended to spark students’ intellectual curiosity and not otherwise covered in the standard curriculum, and they are graded on a pass/fail basis. Students share their insights and educate the campus community with a required final project that is presented on the last day of the course. Interession courses do appear on a student’s transcript.

On an annual basis, Blair faculty review Interession offerings to update and design courses to meet the program’s goals. When designing courses, teachers seek to generate high engagement by providing student choice and emphasizing problems that are relevant to students in the real world. Course experiences often include spirited class discussion and hands-on projects, and collaborative problem-solving frequently occurs across grade levels. Travel related to the coursework is common in Interession, as is the opportunity to engage with an expert in the field being studied. The theme of each Interession course is the starting point for students to explore the topic and complete work that reflects all that they have learned during the experience.

Students sign up for Interession courses each November, after the course catalog has been finalized by the faculty. Here is a sampling of the course themes offered in prior years:

- Juneteenth in Mexico: Border Stories—Past, Present & Future
- Food, Culture & Community
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
- Modeling Global Changes through Coding
- History Has Its Eyes on You
- Yoga & Mindfulness: Change Your Mindset, Change Your World
- Majority Rules? A Choose-Your-Own Civic Adventure
- Design for the Other 90%
- In Praise of Older Buildings: Adaptive Reuse for Cultural, Economic and Environmental Regrowth



CLASS BLOCK SCHEDULE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8:30-9:30 A	8:30-9:30 E	8:30-9:30 H	8:30-9:30 <i>Faculty Professional Time/Student Sleep In</i>	8:30-9:30 D	8:30-9:30 B
9:40-10:40 B	9:40-10:40 F	9:40-10:40 D	9:40-10:40 G	9:40-10:40 C	9:40-10:40 F
10:45-11:25 <i>School Meeting & Advising</i>	10:45-11:10 <i>Conference Block & AP Lab Extension</i>	10:50-11:50 E	10:45-11:10 <i>Student Clubs & AP Lab Extension</i>	10:45-11:20 <i>Conference Block</i>	10:50-11:50 G
	11:15-12:15 G1		11:15-12:15 F1	11:25-12:25 H1	
11:30-12:30 C1		12:00-1:00 A1			
	11:55-12:55 G2		11:55-12:55 F2	12:30-1:30 H2	
12:30-1:30 C2		12:30-1:30 A2			
	1:05-2:05 H		1:05-2:05 B		
1:35-2:10 <i>Conference Block</i>		1:35-2:00 <i>Chapel</i>		1:40-2:40 E	
2:15-3:15 D	2:15-3:15 C		2:15-3:15 A	2:45-3:15 <i>School Meeting</i>	

ADVANCED SEMINAR: AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

This is a typical path to take while at Blair to get to Advanced Seminar: American Constitutional Law. Other paths are possible. For more information, [click here](#).

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graph TD; A[GLOBAL ISSUES] --> B[MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY]; B --> C[ADVANCED SURVEY: U.S. HISTORY]; C --> D[ADVANCED SEMINAR: AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW];
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GLOBAL ISSUES

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MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

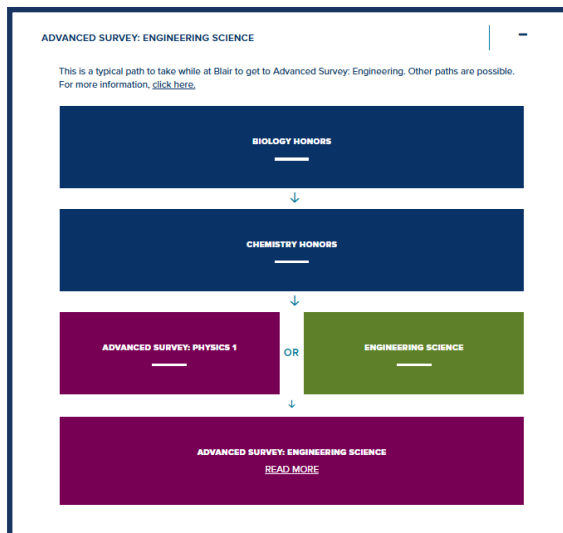
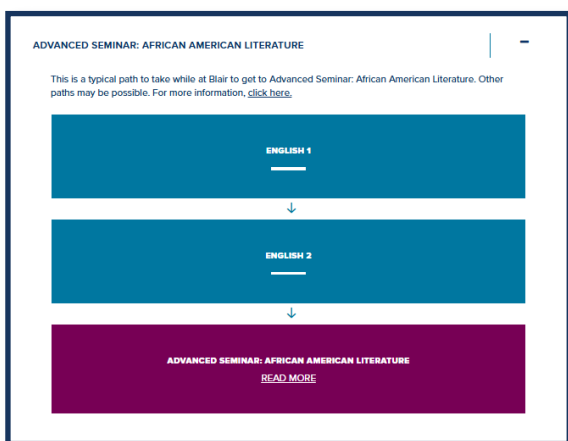
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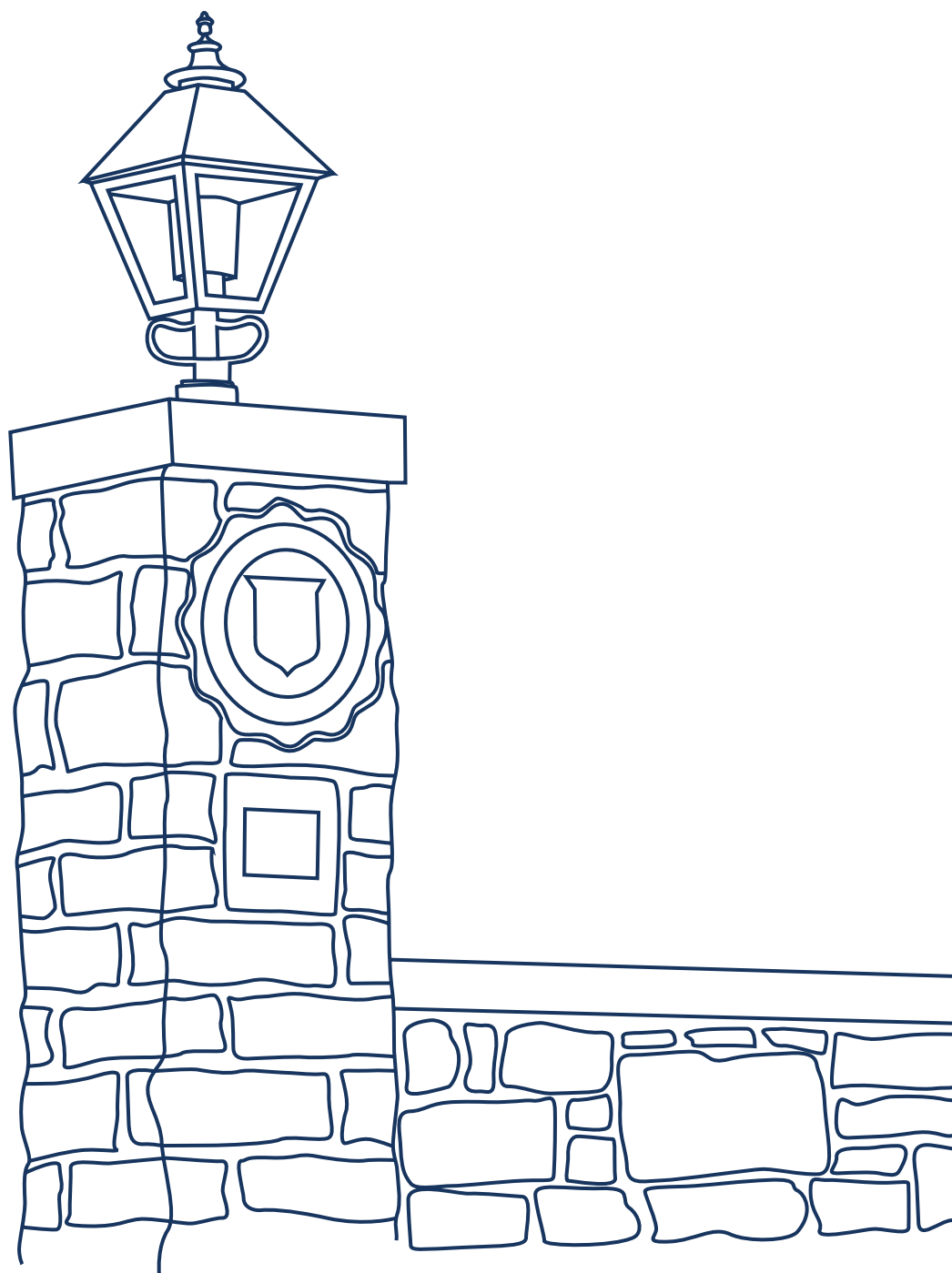
ADVANCED SURVEY: U.S. HISTORY

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ADVANCED SEMINAR: AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

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