



# THADEN SCHOOL

## Upper School Course Offerings

Academic Year 2025-26

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# Letter From the Head of School

Thaden Families,

It is with great excitement that I introduce the 2025-26 course offerings guide, a testament to the creativity, collaboration, and dedication of our faculty and academic leadership team. Over the past year, they have worked tirelessly to craft a curriculum that challenges and inspires our students, paving the way for a transformative educational journey.

At Thaden, we believe that education is not just about acquiring knowledge but about discovering and nurturing the independence that comes from learning how to think, speak, and act for oneself. Whether students are diving into the timeless themes of *Macbeth*, exploring the rich food systems of Northwest Arkansas, testing the boundaries of physics, or bringing their own one-act plays to life, they are engaging in experiences that foster critical thinking, empathy, and curiosity. Our curriculum encourages students to approach complex questions from multiple perspectives, balancing conviction with humility and embracing civil discourse and free inquiry. Above all, a Thaden education seeks to instill in every student a profound joy in learning and a confidence that propels them toward a future of boundless possibilities.

This spring, students will embark on the exciting process of shaping their academic pathways for the coming year. In partnership with their families, teachers, and academic advisors, they will explore the diverse opportunities that our curriculum offers. We warmly invite parents to join us in this journey, fostering a shared commitment to our students' growth and success.

I encourage you to dive into the course offerings and discover the remarkable opportunities awaiting your student. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jessica Bonnem, Head of Upper School.

Together we fly!

Michael Maloy  
Head of School

# Mission and Guiding Principles

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

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

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

## Overview

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

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

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

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

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

## Graduation Requirements

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

Program	Credits	Notes
English	4.5	The required sequence in Grades 9-12 (English I, II, III, IV, and Professional Communication) fulfills this four-and-a-half-credit requirement.
Mathematics and Computer Science	4	The required sequence in Grades 9-11 (Algebra I-II and Geometry) fulfills three credits of this four-credit requirement. Algebra I taken in Middle School counts as one Upper School math credit.
History and Social Sciences	3	The required sequence in Grades 9-11 (Modern World History, US Government and Economics, US History) fulfills this three-credit requirement.
Science	3	The required sequence in Grades 9-10 (Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences, Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences) and one additional year-long course fulfills this three-credit requirement.
World Languages and Cultures	3	Students must study the same language for at least two consecutive years in the Upper School. World language study in Middle School may count for up to one credit.
Signature Programs	2	Students may choose elective courses in three areas: Meals, Reels, and Wheels.
Visual and Performing Arts	2	Students may choose elective courses in three areas: music, theater, and visual arts.
Wellness and Physical Education	2	Students in Grades 9 and 11 are required to take a one-trimester Wellness course. Students must earn one Physical Education (PE) credit each year in the Upper School by taking a one-trimester PE elective or by participating on a Thaden athletics team.
Additional Courses	3	This requirement may be fulfilled by taking elective courses in any field of study at Thaden School.
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.5</b>	As a general matter, students are expected to take seven courses per trimester.

While fulfilling these requirements, students must also take at least three courses that carry the Community-Based Learning (CBL) designation.

In most cases, one credit equals three trimesters of study. The number of credits required represent the minimum that a student must earn to fulfill that requirement. Thaden School's graduation requirements exceed Arkansas state standards.

# Academic Policies

## Course Selection

Thaden School's Upper School course selection process will begin on February 24, 2025. Students start the process by referring to this guide and setting their long-range academic goals as well as their specific selections for the upcoming year. During this planning phase, students are encouraged to consult with their parents, advisor, college counselor, teachers, and assistant head of school.

When students have identified their desired course of study for the upcoming year, they should complete the course selection form through the school portal. Course selections are due on March 14, 2025.

## Advanced Coursework

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

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

## Independent Study

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

## Senior Thesis

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

Further, a student who begins a thesis project but receives a grade of no credit (NC) at the end of the first trimester will not continue in the thesis program and no grade will be recorded. A student who receives a grade of NC at the end of the second trimester will not continue in the thesis program and the NC grade will be recorded on their transcript. It is very important, therefore, that a

student take careful stock of their readiness to pursue the thesis before embarking on this intensive, self-directed project.

### **Course Add/Drop Policies**

Thaden School conducts its course registration process prior to scheduling course meeting times for the following academic year with the goal of accommodating students' preferences to the fullest extent possible. Once the schedule has been constructed, changes may be difficult or even impossible, and students may be precluded from altering their schedule due to conflicts, class sizes, or other factors.

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

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

### **Grading and Assessment**

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

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

The specific learning goals are divided into two categories:

#### Skills

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

- Creativity and Originality: generates and advances novel ideas, products, or points of view

#### Habits

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

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

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

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

# Course Offerings

## English

The required sequences in Grades 9-12 (English I, II, III, IV, and Professional Communication) fulfills the four-and-a-half credit graduation requirement.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
Required Courses		
<a href="#">English I: Journeys and Transformations</a>	9	1
<a href="#">English II: Individuals and Communities</a>	10	1
<a href="#">English III-A: Money and Power</a>	11	1
<a href="#">English III-A: Love and Loyalty</a>	11	1
<a href="#">English IV-A: Tragedy</a>	12	1
<a href="#">English IV-B: Comedy</a>	12	1
<a href="#">Professional Communication</a>	12	1/2
Elective Courses		
<a href="#">Creative Writing: Children's Literature</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Creative Writing: Community Stories (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Creative Writing: Speculative Fiction</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Film Theory</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Hardboiled Literature and Film</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Myth in Music</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Post-War Literature and Film</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Yearbook: <i>The Screech</i></a>	9-12	2/3

### Required Courses

#### English I: Journeys and Transformations

This year-long course introduces students to the study of literature as an academic discipline. As students read texts in many forms and from many periods and places, such as Homer's *The Odyssey*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, and Portis' *True Grit*, they investigate the importance of storytelling in the human experience through the lenses of journeys and transformations. Using annotation and other close-reading strategies, students deepen their understanding of the course texts. In addition, they

write numerous analytical paragraphs and three extended essays, while also exploring their own journeys and transformations through autobiographical and creative writing assignments. Seminar-style discussions develop students' oral presentation skills and their ability to listen actively and contribute, one of the hallmarks of a Thaden education.

*Required for Grade 9*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **English II: Individuals and Communities**

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

*Required for Grade 10*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **English III-A: Money and Power**

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

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

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## English III-B: Love and Loyalty

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

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

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## English IV-A: Tragedy

Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle once defined tragedy as “an imitation of life.” Indeed, we use the term “tragedy” to refer to works of literature (such as *Antigone* or *Romeo and Juliet*) and to characterize life events. Curiously, the first definition – tragedy as literature – predates the second by centuries. This year-long senior English course is dedicated to tragedy both as a form of drama and as a mode that spans literary genres. The course studies the evolution of tragedy, considering famous tragic works such as Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, as well as novels like Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, along with selected poems and short stories. As students study these works, they continue to hone their analytical reading and writing skills in preparation for college. They also explore tragedy’s role in the human experience. This course probes questions such as: How can we understand tragedy if we have not experienced it? To what extent does tragedy shape society? And, perhaps most importantly, how do human flaws inform and inspire tragedy?

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

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## English IV-B: Comedy

Erma Bombeck, a 20th century American humorist, once said, “When comedy goes, there goes civilization.” This year-long senior English course is dedicated to the history and development of comedy as a vessel of commentary and critique. The course studies the evolution of comedy, considering famous comedic works such as Aristophanes’ 5th century BCE political lampoon *Lysistrata*, Vonnegut’s commentary on war in his novel *Slaughterhouse 5*, and Stoppard’s Shakespearean parody *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. As students study these works, they continue to hone their analytical reading and writing skills in preparation for college. This course – ironically enough – takes Bombeck’s quote seriously and emphasizes how comedy addresses social and cultural ills as well as historical trauma by asking questions such as: Why is comedy used as escapism in the face of

tragedy? To what extent does comedy shape and critique society? And, perhaps most importantly, what does comedy offer that tragedy cannot? Can one exist without the other?

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

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Professional Communication**

This course equips students in Grade 12 with the skills needed for effective professional communication. Through interactive lessons and practical exercises, students hone the toolbox of skills they have acquired at Thaden to craft clear and concise messages, engage in active listening, and strengthen interpersonal skills. Students compose a resume, rehearse interview skills, and practice giving and receiving feedback. Through collaborative activities mirroring modern workplaces, students practice engaging in various informal talks and addresses relevant to professional environments. Other lessons include ethical communication, responsible social media usage, communication barriers, conflict resolution, leadership styles, professional etiquette, and presentation skills.

*Students in Grade 12 are automatically enrolled in this required course*

*1/2 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Elective Courses**

### **Creative Writing: Children's Literature**

Everyone can remember their favorite books from childhood. This trimester-long elective takes an analytical approach to the reading of great children's literature and invites students to produce their own works of prose and poetry, in combination with visual illustration, for an audience of young readers. Analyzing work from Maurice Sendak, Margaret Wise Brown, Shel Silverstein, and others, students assess how literary elements such as plot, pacing, character development, symbolism, and word choice apply to children's literature. Students then draft and revise their own creative work for young readers, eventually producing a portfolio of this work. Creative collaboration is an important part of this course. Regular writing workshops provide a forum for students to present their ideas, share progress, and exchange constructive feedback. Collaboration is also possible in the production of portfolio work.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### **Creative Writing: Community Stories (CBL)**

The stories we tell about our communities can shape our collective memory; they can also bring to light new truths. This trimester-long elective invites students to practice long-form nonfiction storytelling focused on members, groups, and structures within their communities. While the

landscape of narrative journalism has drastically changed in recent years, students research, draft, revise, and “report” pieces of creative nonfiction in the tradition of Joseph Mitchell, Joan Didion, Gay Talese, and others. This course includes collaboration with professionals from local publications such as the *Arkansas Advocate* and *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. Student work culminates in a portfolio of written work. While students work independently to build these portfolios, creative collaboration is an important part of this course as well. Regular writing workshops provide a forum for students to present their research, share progress, and exchange constructive feedback. Students may collaborate to research and write broader or more complex pieces. Writing may ultimately be featured in Thaden’s literary journal or published elsewhere.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Creative Writing: Speculative Fiction**

Speculative fiction can be defined as any fiction that takes the rules of our world and asks, “What if...?” This trimester-long elective centers on that speculative question, and invites students to produce creative writing in the genres of sci-fi, fantasy, horror, historical fiction, and more. Starting with readings from masters such as Ray Bradbury, Margaret Atwood, Stephen King, and N.K. Jemisin, students assess what makes a piece of speculative fiction engaging and relevant. Focusing on concepts such as world-building and character development, students draft and revise their own short stories, eventually producing a portfolio of speculative work. While students work independently to build these portfolios, creative collaboration is an important part of this course as well. Regular writing workshops provide a forum for students to present their ideas, share progress, and exchange constructive feedback. Writing may ultimately be featured in Thaden’s literary journal or published elsewhere.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Film Theory**

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs*

*Prerequisites: None*

## Hardboiled Literature and Film

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Myth in Music

The ancient Greco-Roman myths were meant to be sung and listened to. Nowadays, our exposure to these myths comes mostly through reading texts. Nevertheless, themes and stories from ancient myths still find their way into several genres of music, including classical, rock, and metal. This trimester-long elective explores the afterlife of Greco-Roman myths as they manifest in modern-day music. Why are these myths still relevant? How do modern artists and composers challenge, interpret, and present ancient myths? In what ways does rhythm capture the spirit of poetic meter?

This course utilizes listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities with a significant discussion and peer review component. Students read and familiarize themselves with myth in literature, then regularly engage in comparative exercises with myth and its modern musical counterpart. The recurrent themes of wrath of the gods, war, the hero's journey, monsters, adventure, and the fickle nature of the sea are explored. This class also includes cross-cultural comparisons with Norse mythology and American folklore. Throughout the course, students have the opportunity to practice their own hand at producing a modern musical rendition of a classical myth.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit English, World Languages and Cultures, or Visual and Performing Arts*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Post-War Literature and Film

This course studies the cultural milieu surrounding the aftermaths of World War I (The Great War) and World War II. Students read a novel and study a film from each post-war era, as well as selected poetry and art, to examine how society collectively and artistically processes the trauma of war (and trauma in general). Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1927) and the film "The Cabinet of Dr. Mabius" (1932) are included.

Doctor Caligari” (Weine 1920) provide insights into the aftermath of The Great War as students examine how society and individuals processed the trauma of war and the accelerated changes of the 1920’s both psychologically and artistically. This unit focuses on the themes of disillusionment and liberation that accompanied the massive societal realignment following the war. For World War II, students read Albert Camus’ *The Stranger* (1942) and watch “The Third Man” (Reed 1950). This unit focuses on post-war existentialism as a means through which individuals and society processed two world wars and the Holocaust. For each war, students also examine the concepts of progress and culture that led to the elimination of entire generations on the battlefield.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit English or Signature Programs*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### **Yearbook: *The Screech***

Among the traditions that signal the end of another academic year, the yearbook is the most enduring. It is a full-color, hardback time capsule preserving the events, people, and memories of the most formative years of a student’s life. It’s an exercise in story-telling and writing, graphic design and photography. This two-trimester elective is dedicated to the creation of *The Screech*, Thaden’s annual yearbook. Join the Yearbook staff in telling the story of the community, creating an enduring keepsake, and learning valuable skills that translate into the workforce. Community partners may include the Bentonville Public Library and the *Northwest Arkansas Gazette*. Digital media will come and go, but the yearbook is forever.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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# Mathematics and Computer Science

The required sequence in Grades 9-11 (Algebra I-II and Geometry)  
fulfills three credits of the four-credit graduation requirement.  
Algebra I taken in Middle School counts as one Upper School math credit.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
Required Courses		
<a href="#">Algebra I</a>	8, 9	1
<a href="#">Geometry</a>	9, 10	1
<a href="#">Algebra II</a>	10, 11	1
<a href="#">Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus</a>	10, 11	1
Elective Courses		
<a href="#">Small Business Management (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Programming I</a>	9-12	1
<a href="#">Programming II*</a>	10-12	1
<a href="#">Robotics</a>	9-12	1
<a href="#">Precalculus</a>	11, 12	1
<a href="#">Calculus I*</a>	11, 12	1
<a href="#">Multivariable Calculus*</a>	11, 12	1
<a href="#">Quantitative Reasoning</a>	11, 12	1
<a href="#">Statistics</a>	11, 12	1

## Required Courses

### Algebra I

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

*Required in math sequence (Grade 8 or 9)*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

## Geometry

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

*Required in math sequence (Grade 9 or 10)*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Algebra I*

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## Algebra II

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

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

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Algebra I and Geometry*

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## Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus

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

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

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Algebra I and Geometry*

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## Elective Courses

### Small Business Management (CBL)

With a focus on data and analytics, this trimester-long elective offers real-world experience operating a small business. Through managing The Hangar, Thaden's school store, students explore key concepts in marketing, merchandising, operations, and finance. They conduct product research, design marketing campaigns, and handle daily store operations. Additionally, students gain experience preparing and presenting financial statements and customer analytics reports. Students engage with Thaden families to deliver customer service and gather feedback. They also collaborate with local business owners, who serve as mentors, guiding them through practical projects and negotiating new opportunities. This course may occasionally require students to be available to run The Hangar outside of school hours.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL (cannot be used to fulfill the 4 Math credits required for graduation; may be retaken for up to four years and a maximum of 4 credits)*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Programming I

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Programming II\*

Building on the foundational Python skills acquired in Programming I, this intermediate year-long course in programming equips students with the basic experience necessary for designing, implementing, and maintaining larger coding projects. As students gain familiarity with new modules and acquire new coding skills by exploring collaboratively a range of intermediate programming topics (*e.g.*, GUI-development, natural language processing, machine learning, data analysis), they also work individually on independent projects that require careful planning and sustained development and that invite creative problem-solving and self-reflection. Students work closely with

the instructor to identify, design, and execute projects they find interesting and meaningful, and they are expected to study other technologies (e.g., web development, databases, XML) that fit their projects' needs. After completing this course, students are well-equipped for more independent study of programming at Thaden and for coursework in computer science at the college level.

*Open to Grades 10-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Programming I*

---

## **Robotics**

Throughout this year-long elective, students develop STEM skills and practice engineering principles while realizing the value of innovation, teamwork, and discovery learning. With a strong focus on problem-solving and critical thinking, students are encouraged to bring any skills they already have, such as coding, electronics, public speaking, and videography. Students learn to think like engineers as they design, build, and code robots to tackle real-world challenges through hands-on discovery learning. They construct robots using a reusable platform and explore coding through Scratch, a block-based coding language for an accessible introduction to programming concepts. In addition to hands-on robotics work, students investigate artificial intelligence and its role in modern technology. Throughout the course, students engage in open-ended challenges that encourage exploration and creative problem-solving. They give regular presentations, create videos to document their progress, and refine their ideas through iteration and collaboration. Throughout the course, students demonstrate their projects, share their learning, and reflect on the impact of robotics, AI, and engineering in today's world.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1 Credit Math or Science (cannot be used to fulfill the 4 Math credits required for graduation)*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Precalculus**

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Geometry and Algebra II*

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## Calculus I\*

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Precalculus or Accelerated Algebra II with Precalculus*

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## Multivariable Calculus\*

This year-long course continues students' studies in calculus, extending fundamental concepts such as limits, continuity, differentiation, and integration to functions with multiple inputs and/or outputs. Students develop conceptual understanding of abstract material throughout the course, and this conceptual understanding is accompanied by real-world applications related to physics, computer science and engineering, economics, and more. This course not only furthers students' preparation for college calculus courses, but also allows for challenging and enriching exploration of higher-level mathematics topics.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Calculus I*

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## Quantitative Reasoning

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Algebra II*

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## Statistics

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Algebra II*

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# History and Social Sciences

The required sequence in Grades 9-11 (Modern World History, US Government and Economics, US History) fulfills the three-credit graduation requirement.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
Required Courses		
<a href="#">Modern World History</a>	9	1
<a href="#">United States Government and Economics</a>	10	1
<a href="#">United States History</a>	11	1
Elective Courses		
<a href="#">Agora: Discourse and Debate</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Ancient Rome</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Climate Advocacy (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">The Rule of Law</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Agents of Change (CBL)</a>	9-12	2/3
<a href="#">Peacebuilding: Theory and Action (CBL)</a>	9-12	2/3
<a href="#">Ethics*</a>	11-12	1/3
<a href="#">Eilm History</a>	11-12	1/3
<a href="#">Philosophy*</a>	11-12	1/3
<a href="#">Religious Studies*</a>	11-12	1/3
<a href="#">Psychology</a>	11-12	1

## Required Courses

### Modern World History

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

globally, critically, and ethically, students gain an appreciation for history as shaped by the voices that tell it.

*Required for Grade 9*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **United States Government and Economics**

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

*Required for Grade 10*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **United States History**

In this year-long course, students investigate key themes and pivotal events in the history of the United States from the 19th to the 21st century. Readings include classic works of American political life, contemporary social and cultural critiques, and foundational primary and secondary historical sources. While developing the research methods and writing skills needed to produce substantial works of historical analysis, students are challenged to think critically and creatively about what it means to be an American citizen, whose voices may be misrepresented or missing, and how the complexities of the past continue to shape the course of events and the construction of historical accounts.

*Required for Grade 11*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Elective Courses**

### **Agora: Discourse and Debate**

Ancient Greek cities were organized around the agora, a marketplace of things and ideas, a common space where for centuries people gathered to debate and discuss politics, religion, and other matters of importance to the polis, or the people. In this one-trimester elective, students learn techniques for effectively participating in civil discourse and debate around today's most pressing topics, such as climate change, immigration, abortion, capitalism, wealth inequality, and other issues identified by students. Special attention is paid to careful research, rhetorically persuasive public speaking (a skill that will become increasingly valuable as more writing is outsourced to AI), and an embrace of

irresolution. At the end of this course, students hone their skills as public speakers and are more informed, engaged citizens ready to bring about positive change at home and beyond.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit History and Social Sciences or Signature Programs*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Ancient Rome**

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit History and Social Sciences or World Languages and Cultures*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Climate Advocacy (CBL)**

Climate change is not an amorphous future, but a condition of our present. As the EPA reports, "In the coming decades, Arkansas will become warmer, and the state will probably experience more severe floods and drought." This situation can seem overwhelming, but there are steps we can take to build a better future. Students in this course sharpen their global citizenship skills by using them in service of building that future. How can we use critical thinking and communication skills to advocate effectively? How can we encourage carbon neutrality? How do we build resilience in our human and physical systems at the local, national, and international levels? Student projects drive this course, and students split their time between work in the classroom and work in the community.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **The Rule of Law**

For centuries, the amorphous yet critical concept of "the rule of law" has profoundly impacted the earth and its residents – working to establish order in communities and maintain public health and safety while also protecting what we consider innate individual freedoms, like posting to social media and enjoying a family vacation. But beware if you take that vacation in Florida, as it is illegal to sing in public while wearing your swimsuit. And, if you travel to Florida by car, remember the law requires you to remove your blindfold while driving through Alabama and to use your hands to eat

your chicken if you stop for a bite in Georgia. The absurdity of these laws – and many other similar laws across the country – highlights the question posed by this trimester-long course that legal scholars have struggled to answer since the time of Aristotle: What makes an effective and just rule of law? In this course, students explore texts spanning thousands of years describing the rule of law and discuss and debate the role and importance of this concept in a class forum. Ultimately, students develop a deeper understanding of the principles that are foundational to the successful application of the rule of law as they work to hone their analytical reasoning, persuasive writing, and public speaking skills.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Agents of Change (CBL)**

The word “advocate” denotes an identity and an action: it refers to someone who cares deeply about their community and to the work that person puts in to improve their community. One cannot claim the mantle of “advocate” without taking action. In this two-trimester elective, students explore theories of social change, practice techniques used by effective advocates, and research successful (and not yet successful) advocacy movements. Significant attention is paid to research, writing, public speaking, and marketing. Equipped with this knowledge and these skills, students then identify – independently or in small groups – a topic or issue to devote their advocacy efforts to for the remainder of the class. Working with elected officials, community leaders, nonprofits, and business leaders, students develop and advocate for realistic changes and, if possible, bring about those changes. Ultimately, students understand that the success of an advocate is determined not by whether they achieve their aims, but by their perseverance in pursuit of those aims.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Peacebuilding: Theory and Action (CBL)**

This two-trimester elective provides an overview of the main concepts and challenges that shape the work in the peacebuilding field. Students learn to identify the roots of violent conflict, describe how context and perspective influence the peacebuilding process, and employ the different tools, types of interventions, and strategies for building peace. Learning opportunities and assessments take the form of direct practice with real case studies from historical and ongoing conflicts around conflict analysis; dialogue and mediation; non-violent action; and reconciliation. Students also explore the intersections of peacebuilding efforts with art, media, sports, and faith practices. Along the way, students reflect on their own potential to be peacebuilders in local, regional, and global communities and design and implement a peacebuilding project around a conflict of their own choosing as part of the course’s community-based learning component.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*2/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Ethics\***

This trimester-long elective offers students an overview of the study of ethics and ethical decision-making. Students investigate different theoretical approaches to morality, such as virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism, and apply those frameworks to a variety of contexts and contemporary issues like inequality, environmental responsibility, and medical ethics. By the end of this course, students will be able to evaluate how individuals and societies make ethical decisions, apply these perspectives and approaches to better understand and explain contemporary and historical events, and articulate their own ethical perspectives. Designed for students eager to think critically about the challenges facing our society, this class equips them to navigate moral questions in their personal and civic lives.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Film History**

This trimester-long elective traces the development of the moving image from early scientific experiments through the invention of narrative films to the present. Using a social history approach, we explore why a given film is aesthetically significant and ask questions such as: Who made it? Who saw it? How was it received? The course is structured around weekly screenings, in-class analysis of scenes, and selected readings. While films introduced each week progress chronologically, we continually introduce new factors such as religion, politics, technology, and cultural trends in discussions and written assignments.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1/3 Credit History and Social Sciences or Signature Programs*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Philosophy\***

This trimester-long elective introduces students to philosophical questions, discussion, reading, and writing. It surveys topics and questions in metaphysics (the nature of reality), epistemology (the theory of knowledge), ethics (right and wrong behavior), and political philosophy (the philosophical study of government). Some examples of questions we consider include: What is the relationship between the mind and the body? Does free will exist? What makes an action morally right or wrong? What is a fair or just distribution of resources? Through the study of philosophical issues and methods, students are able to further develop their critical thinking skills; understanding of philosophical questions, positions, and debates; defend their philosophical positions against criticism; read and comprehend challenging philosophical works; and appreciate and respect different points of view.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Religious Studies\*

This trimester-long elective offers an engaging exploration of the world's major religions, their beliefs, practices, histories, and cultural significance. Students examine major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as lesser-known religions such as the Bahá'í Faith, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, and Indigenous traditions. This exploration fosters a deeper understanding of the diverse ways people seek meaning and connection. Through guided readings, class discussions, and projects, students further develop their critical thinking and empathetic skills, learning to appreciate and respect diverse points of view. This course encourages inquiry, research, and reflection to help students form thoughtful views about the role of religion in the world, as well as in their own lives. Students gain a stronger understanding of various world religions and practice their ability to think deeply about their role in our multicultural society, both locally and globally, with respect and curiosity.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Psychology

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Science

The required sequence in Grades 9-10 (Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences and Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences) and one additional year-long course fulfills the three-credit graduation requirement.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
Required Courses		
<a href="#">Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences</a>	9	1
<a href="#">Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences</a>	10	1
Elective Courses		
<a href="#">Robotics</a>	9-12	1
<a href="#">Advanced Chemistry*</a>	11-12	1
<a href="#">Advanced Physics*</a>	11-12	1
<a href="#">Anatomy and Physiology*</a>	11-12	1
<a href="#">Ecology and Environmental Science (CBL)</a>	11-12	1

### Required Courses

#### Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences

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

*Required for Grade 9*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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#### Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences

This year-long laboratory course investigates the behavior, properties, and composition of matter. Students study the interactions of matter and energy, the way atoms combine to form compounds, and the fundamental structure of atoms. This course focuses on core conceptual understanding of the phenomena that shape the world around us and building a framework to interrogate and appreciate these phenomena. In their laboratory work students train on a range of tools for tabulation, graphical representation, visualization, and statistical analysis. In addition, they continue

to hone their ability to ask scientific questions, design relevant experiments, develop models, engage in argument, and determine possible solutions using empirical evidence. The ability to read, interpret, and produce scientific and technical text are fundamental foci of this course, as is the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.

*Required for Grade 10*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Elective Courses

### Robotics

Throughout this year-long elective, students develop STEM skills and practice engineering principles while realizing the value of innovation, teamwork, and discovery learning. With a strong focus on problem-solving and critical thinking, students are encouraged to bring any skills they already have, such as coding, electronics, public speaking, and videography. Students learn to think like engineers as they design, build, and code robots to tackle real-world challenges through hands-on discovery learning. They construct robots using a reusable platform and explore coding through Scratch, a block-based coding language for an accessible introduction to programming concepts. In addition to hands-on robotics work, students investigate artificial intelligence and its role in modern technology. Throughout the course, students engage in open-ended challenges that encourage exploration and creative problem-solving. They give regular presentations, create videos to document their progress, and refine their ideas through iteration and collaboration. Throughout the course, students demonstrate their projects, share their learning, and reflect on the impact of robotics, AI, and engineering in today's world.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Advanced Chemistry\*

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

*Prerequisites: Inquiries in Chemical and Physical Sciences*

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## Advanced Physics\*

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

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

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## Anatomy and Physiology\*

This year-long course teaches students about how the parts of the human body are arranged (anatomy) and interact physically and chemically with one another to perform the daily functions required for survival (physiology). Students become well versed in form dictating function and the maintenance and failure of homeostatic mechanisms in each body system. This lab-based course utilizes techniques including but not limited to micro- and macro-dissection, microscopy, and measuring vital signs using various medical instruments. Students also use case studies to investigate how these concepts and techniques are connected to and applied in real medical situations.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit*

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

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## Ecology and Environmental Science (CBL)

Ecology examines the highest level of biological organization, the ecosystem, looking for patterns and relationships among and between the living community and the physical environment. Environmental science focuses more specifically on the effects of humans – both positive and negative – on the planet, with an emphasis on enacting change through science-based practices and policies that promote sustainability for both ecosystems and human systems. This year-long elective is highly interdisciplinary, drawing from chemistry, biology, geology, and the social sciences. Culture, economics, and politics are driving forces affecting interactions with the natural world. Through field work, lab studies, readings, research projects, and community engagement, the course fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexities and immeasurable value of natural systems that ultimately sustain all life.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## World Languages and Cultures

Students must study the same language for at least two consecutive years. World language study in Middle School (Latin B or AB, Mandarin B or AB, Spanish B or AB) may count for up to one credit of the three-credit graduation requirement.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
Required Courses		
<a href="#"><u>Latin II, III, IV*, and V*</u></a>	9-12	1 (each)
<a href="#"><u>Mandarin II, III, IV*, and V*</u></a>	9-12	1 (each)
<a href="#"><u>Spanish I, II, III, IV*, and V*</u></a>	9-12	1 (each)
Elective Courses		
<a href="#"><u>Ancient Rome</u></a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#"><u>Myth in Music</u></a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#"><u>Latin American Literature*</u></a>	11-12	1/3

### Options for Required Courses

#### **Latin II, III, IV\*, and V\***

The sequence of year-long courses in Latin enables students to achieve a degree of mastery sufficient to read and understand various Latin texts spanning over 2000 years. Students gradually build proficiency in their linguistic skills and find their voice through repeated use of the language both in and outside of class. Further down the line, students may participate in regionally and nationally recognized exams such as the AFLTA competition, the National Mythology Exam, and the National Latin Exam. Field trips to relevant museum exhibits, Classics and archaeology departments at universities, and historical/sacred sites present further chances to enhance student learning.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*Up to 4 Credits (one for each year)*

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#### **Mandarin II, III, IV\*, and V\***

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*Up to 4 Credits (one for each year)*

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

This sequence of five year-long courses in Spanish enables students new to the language to achieve a degree of mastery sufficient for meaningful engagement with the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Students develop the four core skills of language learning: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. From the beginning, students are expected to participate actively in class using the target language. They also read and write about selected topics that give them opportunities to explore popular culture, customs, and traditions from the Spanish-speaking world. Spanish literature (poetry, drama, and short stories) and other cultural materials, including film and video, complement the lessons in the textbook. Students also have opportunities to develop their skills in conversation with guests and community members from Spanish-speaking countries.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*Up to 5 Credits (one for each year)*

*Prerequisites: None for Spanish I*

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### Elective Courses

#### Ancient Rome

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit World Languages or History and Social Sciences*

*Prerequisites: None*

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#### Myth in Music

The ancient Greco-Roman myths were meant to be sung and listened to. Nowadays, our exposure to these myths comes mostly through reading texts. Nevertheless, themes and stories from ancient myths still find their way into several genres of music, including classical, rock, and metal. This trimester-long elective explores the afterlife of Greco-Roman myths as they manifest in modern-day music. Why are these myths still relevant? How do modern artists and composers challenge, interpret, and present ancient myths? In what ways does rhythm capture the spirit of poetic meter?

This course utilizes listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities with a significant discussion and peer review component. Students read and familiarize themselves with myth in literature then regularly engage in comparative exercises with myth and its modern musical counterpart. The recurrent themes of wrath of the gods, war, the hero's journey, monsters, adventure, and the fickle nature of the sea are explored. This class also includes cross-cultural comparisons with Norse

mythology and American folklore. Throughout the course, students have the opportunity to practice their own hand at producing a modern musical rendition of a classical myth.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit World Languages, English, or Visual and Performing Arts*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Latin American Literature: Political Journeys\* and Latin American Literature: Social Examinations\***

These one-trimester electives delve into Latin American literature from the twentieth century, featuring translated works by iconic authors like Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Jorge Luis Borges, and Julio Cortázar. Students explore narratives that blend reality with the fantastic and address themes of history, identity, and political critique. Through close readings, discussions, and explorations of literary criticism, students examine how these writers reflect on Latin American experiences, from colonial legacies to personal and societal freedom, ultimately gaining insights into the region's unique contributions to global literature.

No experience with Spanish is required. Each trimester-long course explores different topics; Students may take one or both courses.

*Open to Grades 11-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Signature Programs

Students may choose elective courses in three areas: [Meals](#), [Reels](#), and [Wheels](#), to meet the two-credit graduation requirement.

### Signature Programs – Meals

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<a href="#">Cooking for the Community (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Cooking Methods</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">European Roots of Arkansas Cuisine (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Food Advocacy (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Food and Community: Harvest Festival (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Food Entrepreneurship (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">The Hidden World of Seeds</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Preserving the Harvest</a>	9-12	1/3

### Cooking for the Community (CBL)

This one-trimester elective offers students the opportunity to engage directly with the Northwest Arkansas community while developing valuable culinary skills. Students collaborate with local nonprofits, such as the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, and Compassion Coalition to address food insecurity and support vulnerable populations. Through hands-on activities including meal preparation, sourcing fresh produce from the Thaden gardens, and coordinating with community partners, students experience the transformative power of food as a tool for connection and support. In addition to refining cooking techniques, students gain insight into the food system, community service, and the importance of social responsibility. This course fosters civic engagement and challenges students to explore how they can create positive change through their skills and passions.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit Signature Programs; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Cooking Methods

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

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

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## **European Roots of Arkansas Cuisine (CBL)**

This one-trimester course dives into how French, German, and Italian influences shaped Arkansas' cuisine and culture. From learning about the Italian legacy of Tontitown to exploring German-Swiss traditions in Altus, students connect with local history while exploring European cooking techniques. This hands-on course takes students from the kitchen to the community, with visits to historic towns, partnerships with local organizations, and opportunities to explore how food connects us to our roots. By the end, students will have created amazing dishes and developed an understanding of how Arkansas' rich history is tied to global flavors.

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

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## **Food Advocacy (CBL)**

In this one-trimester elective, students embark on a journey to explore how food impacts our community and discover ways to make a difference in the local food system. Through collaboration with farms, schools, nonprofits, and corporations, the class works together to identify challenges and opportunities for positive change. This is a community-based learning course that invites students to dive deep into food advocacy, engaging in real-world projects that range from addressing food insecurity to supporting sustainable practices. As a team, students brainstorm, plan, and execute initiatives that contribute to a healthier, more equitable food system in Northwest Arkansas. Whether you're passionate about fighting hunger, reducing food waste, or creating better access to fresh ingredients, this course empowers students to turn ideas into action and become advocates for change in the community.

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

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## **Food and Community: Harvest Festival (CBL)**

This one-trimester elective explores how growing, harvesting, cooking, and enjoying food together benefits our community. The course consists of two components: hosting the annual Harvest Festival and designing garden-based experiences for community members. The Thaden School Harvest Festival is a much-anticipated annual event that brings the school community together through a celebration of food and community. Students explore how foodways can be a vehicle to cultivate community. Additionally, students engage with farmers, business owners, and food producers from the broader community as they help to plan the event. After the Harvest Festival, the course focuses on how gardens can have a positive impact in the world. Students design experiences that welcome community members into the gardens. This could include offering set times for people to pick their own farm-fresh produce, hosting a pickling workshop series, or

inviting people to harvest every ingredient needed for a simple recipe. Ultimately, students have the agency to brainstorm and implement their own ideas for engaging the community in celebrating and connecting with food.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Food Entrepreneurship (CBL)**

In this trimester-long elective, students learn how to test recipes and create marketable food products. This course helps students understand the key components of food entrepreneurship from brainstorming, growing and harvesting crops, food safety regulations, product development, marketing, and sales. The Thaden gardens are a source of seasonal inspiration and fresh ingredients as we work to develop delicious and healthy foods to share with our community. Product development is focused on items that optimize the use of produce from the gardens and that could be offered for sale at a café, such as baked goods, muffins, smoothies, and more. Students engage with local food entrepreneurs, business owners, and organizations such as the Arkansas Food Innovation Center at the Market Center of the Ozarks (AFIC@MCO). As a culminating project, the class will host a pop-up event that offers the products for sale.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **The Hidden World of Seeds**

A tiny seed holds the potential to grow into a towering tomato plant or a crisp head of lettuce – but where do these seeds come from? Seeds are the foundation of the food system, yet their production and biology remain a mystery to many. This trimester-long elective explores the fascinating world of seeds, uncovering the biology, genetics, and life cycles that drive plant reproduction. Students gain hands-on experience in the gardens and greenhouse, learning how vegetable, herb, and flower seeds are cultivated on both small and large scales. Through the perspectives of scientists, gardeners, and farmers, they examine innovations in plant breeding and the role of seeds in a resilient food system. As a culminating project, the class plants an entire section of the garden specifically to grow seeds for the Thaden School Seed Library.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Preserving the Harvest**

This one-trimester elective explores the art and science of food preservation. Drawing from the Thaden garden's seasonal bounty, students learn techniques to extend the life and utility of fresh ingredients, such as pickling, fermenting, dehydrating, freezing, and canning. Through this

exploration, students gain a deeper understanding of the role preservation plays in reducing food waste, improving sustainability, and maintaining nutritional value. The course combines practical skills with scientific inquiry, encouraging students to reflect on how preservation techniques are used globally and historically to address food security and resource management. By the end of the trimester, students not only master key preservation methods but also learn how to thoughtfully plan, store, and utilize preserved foods, creating a direct connection between the garden and the table.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Signature Programs – Reels

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<a href="#">Directing and Acting for Camera</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Director's Journey</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Documentary Filmmaking (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Film Theory</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Hardboiled Literature and Film</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Photography</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Podcasting</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Post-War Literature and Film</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Screenplay Adaptation</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Narrative Filmmaking</a>	9-12	2/3
<a href="#">Film History</a>	11-12	1/3
<a href="#">International Cinema</a>	11-12	1/3
<a href="#">Short-Form Video Production II*</a>	11-12	1

### Directing and Acting for Camera

This one-trimester elective gives students the opportunity to work together as directors and actors to produce a screenplay adapted from literature by their peers in Screenplay Adaptation. Through this process, students learn how to direct actors for the camera and, in turn, bolster their acting skills by employing methods drawn from the Sanford Meisner acting technique, which is rooted in a commitment to making your scene partner shine brighter than you through “the reality of doing.” Students learn how to achieve this by participating in various exercises that utilize repetition, questions, and cooperation. The element of directing also includes dedicated listening which provides a balanced and harmonious partnership with the actors. This course explores what can happen when we take on the responsibility to truly listen before taking action. We then fuse this new understanding with intentional camera choices to enhance the cinematic effect.

*Note: This class follows and builds upon Screenplay Adaptation. Students are encouraged but not required to take both courses in sequence.*

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

## Director's Journey

This one-trimester elective explores three diverse commercial filmmakers to help students better understand the direction, style, influences, and career path that directors can take. Students learn to identify the director based on the signature style and directorial elements they can identify from work viewed in the class. The course combines weekly viewings with lectures, advanced group discussions, written assignments, and group presentations.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Documentary Filmmaking (CBL)

This trimester-long elective provides students with foundational storytelling and technical skills to become skilled documentary filmmakers. Students learn visual analysis, directing, cinematography, lighting, production, sound, and editing through a combination of lectures and hands-on workshops. Production generally takes place at Thaden, though some may choose to explore stories from the broader community. Creating a documentary film is more than a technical exercise – it's a journey of discovery. As students dive into true stories, they not only uncover meaningful narratives about the world around them but also gain insight into their own perspectives and values. This process builds empathy, sharpens critical thinking, and fosters a deeper understanding of human experiences. In addition to creating their own projects, students are expected to collaborate with their peers, provide constructive feedback, and learn from one another to gain fluency with Thaden's camera equipment and Adobe Premiere Pro. By the end of the trimester, students hone their ability to tell compelling stories through film, creating impactful projects that reflect both personal and community narratives.

*Note: This class takes the place of Short-Form Video Production I and is one of two possible prerequisites (the other being Narrative Storytelling) for Short-Form Video Production II\*. Students who have previously taken Short-Form Video Production I may not take this course.*

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Film Theory

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

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

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## **Hardboiled Literature and Film**

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

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

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## **Post-War Literature and Film**

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

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

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## Photography

This one-trimester elective delves into the fundamental concepts of digital photography as a means of creative expression through a blend of readings, lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on shooting assignments followed by constructive critiques. With a strong focus on fostering each student's individual creative practice, this course investigates the profound impact of the recent acceleration in the creation and dissemination of photography. This transformative shift significantly alters how photographs function in contemporary society. Covering technical, aesthetic, and conceptual dimensions, the course explores the intricate process of creating meaning within digital photographs. Students acquire skills in digital editing, and master camera controls. They also understand file formats and develop efficient workflows. Assignments are designed to tackle relevant topics, including the abundance of images, the appropriation of images, and the themes of manipulation/truth and surveillance/voyeurism. Throughout the course, there is a strong emphasis on fostering interaction with classmates' work and cultivating a receptive approach to constructive critique.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Podcasting

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Screenplay Adaptation

Have you ever been quietly reading a story and seen the images play out in your imagination? Do you think you could bring those ideas from your mind to a drawing board? Are your favorite characters in literature about to have a dialogue that you invent? The art of adaptation is a delicate endeavor, one that requires thorough examination and analysis of the text followed by a ruthless deconstruction of powerful sentences and finished with a scattering of visual sequences. Some might say that the film versions of books never adequately embody the original text, whereas others may claim that they soar above and beyond their expectations. Filmmakers have the power to bring lost worlds to life, creatures to surface, and friendships to epic montages. This one-trimester elective guides students from a favorite text to an original screenplay. We look closely at character development through the eye of the camera and apply that vision to a professionally formatted

screenplay. Students conclude the course with a presentation showcasing their ideal cast, location, budget, timeline, and of course, the final draft of their screenplay.

*Note: This class precedes and leads into Directing and Acting for Camera. Students are encouraged but not required to take both courses in sequence.*

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Narrative Filmmaking**

This two-trimester elective provides students with foundational storytelling and technical skills to become skilled narrative storytellers. Students learn visual analysis, directing, cinematography, lighting, production, sound, and editing through a combination of class lectures and hands-on workshops. The course consists of one major project per trimester: writing a narrative screenplay and producing a narrative film based on that screenplay. Each project hones different aspects of the storytelling and filmmaking processes, allowing students to progressively build their technical expertise and foster confidence. Production generally takes place at Thaden, with class time dedicated to collaborative group exercises that develop on-set skills. In addition to creating their own projects, students are expected to assist their peers and provide constructive feedback in an environment that mirrors real-world filmmaking. Particular emphasis is placed on mastering Thaden's camera equipment and Adobe Premiere Pro. Narrative storytelling encourages students to think critically and empathetically, inhabit different perspectives, express themselves creatively, and communicate ideas effectively. By learning to convey emotions, experiences, and themes through narrative storytelling, students develop their ability to connect with audiences in meaningful ways. By the end of the year, students develop both the technical skills and the narrative techniques needed to tell compelling, cinematic stories.

*Note: This class takes the place of Short-Form Video Production I and is one of two possible prerequisites (the other being Documentary Storytelling) for Short-Form Video Production II\*. Students who have previously taken Short-Form Video Production I may not take this course.*

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*2/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Film History**

This one-trimester elective traces the development of the moving image from early scientific experiments through the invention of narrative films to the present. Using a social history approach, we explore why a given film is aesthetically significant and ask questions such as: Who made it? Who saw it? How was it received? The course is structured around weekly screenings, in-class analysis of scenes, and selected readings. While films introduced each week progress chronologically, we continually introduce new factors such as religion, politics, technology, and cultural trends in discussions and written assignments.

*Open to Grades 11-12*  
*1/3 Credit Signature Programs or History and Social Sciences*  
*Prerequisites: None*

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## **International Cinema**

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

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

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## **Short-Form Video Production II\***

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

*Open to Grades 11-12*  
*1 Credit*  
*Prerequisites: Short-Form Video Production I*

*Note: Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, Documentary Storytelling or Narrative Storytelling will be prerequisites for Short-Form Video Production II\*.*

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## Signature Programs – Wheels

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<a href="#"><u>Agora: Discourse and Debate</u></a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#"><u>Bike Co-Op (CBL)</u></a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#"><u>Mountain Biking in NWA (CBL)</u></a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#"><u>Trailbuilding as Conservation (CBL)</u></a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#"><u>Agents of Change (CBL)</u></a>	9-12	2/3

### Agora: Discourse and Debate

Ancient Greek cities were organized around the agora, a marketplace of things and ideas, a common space where for centuries people gathered to debate and discuss politics, religion, and other matters of importance to the polis, or the people. In this one-trimester elective, students learn techniques for effectively participating in civil discourse and debate around today’s most pressing topics, such as climate change, immigration, abortion, capitalism, wealth inequality, and other issues identified by students. Special attention is paid to careful research, rhetorically persuasive public speaking (a skill that will become increasingly valuable as more writing is outsourced to AI), and an embrace of irresolution. At the end of this course – which is built on the foundational Wheels value of “agency” – students hone their skills as public speakers and are more informed, engaged citizens ready to bring about positive change at home and beyond.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit Signature Programs or History and Social Sciences*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Bike Co-Op (CBL)

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Mountain Biking in NWA (CBL)

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Trail Building as Conservation (CBL)

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Agents of Change (CBL)

The word “advocate” denotes an identity and an action: it refers to someone who cares deeply about their community and to the work that person puts in to improve their community. One cannot claim the mantle of “advocate” without taking action. In this two-trimester elective, students explore theories of social change, practice techniques used by effective advocates, and research successful (and not yet successful) advocacy movements. Significant attention is paid to research, writing, public speaking, and marketing. Equipped with this knowledge and these skills, students then identify – independently or in small groups – a topic or issue to devote their advocacy efforts to for the remainder of the class. Working with elected officials, community leaders, nonprofits, and business leaders, students develop and advocate for realistic changes and, if possible, bring about those changes. Ultimately, students understand that the success of an advocate is determined not by whether they achieve their aims, but by their perseverance in pursuit of those aims. Through this

pursuit, students cultivate a deep and abiding understanding of their own agency, the foundational value of the Wheels program.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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# Visual and Performing Arts

Students may choose elective courses in three areas: [music](#), [theater](#), and [visual art](#), to meet the two-credit graduation requirement.

## Visual and Performing Arts – Music

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<a href="#">Beat Making: Explorations in Sound Production</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Beginning Drum Set and Percussion</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Beginning Guitar and Bass</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Beginning Piano</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Introduction to Songwriting</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Modern Band</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Myth in Music</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Survey of Pop Music</a>	9-12	1/3

### Beat Making: Explorations in Sound Production

In this one-trimester elective, students utilize the music software GarageBand to create beats and other musical works. Students learn about loops, basic drum sounds and patterns, and how to sample and manipulate sounds. Throughout the class, students have access to digital interfaces and audio recording equipment, allowing them to build their base of knowledge through a series of projects as well as original compositions. Students' projects are added to the "Thaden Sound" SoundCloud music streaming account. No prior musical experience is necessary.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Beginning Drum Set and Percussion

This one-trimester elective offers an introduction to the essential skills and techniques to play the drum set and other percussion instruments. From keeping time to creating dynamic fills, students build a solid foundation in drumming while developing confidence behind the kit. This course emphasizes proper technique, rhythm reading, and coordination, progressing from basic beats to more complex patterns across a variety of genres from rock, jazz, and Latin to world music styles. By the end of the trimester, students perform in a group setting, demonstrating their ability to lay down grooves and add creative flair to any song.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

## Beginning Guitar and Bass

This one-trimester elective offers an introduction to the foundational skills, techniques, and music theory needed to play guitar or bass. Students learn how to play basic chords, scales, and riffs and read chord charts, tabs, and sheet music. This course emphasizes developing strong rhythmic skills and the ability to play in time with others. By the end of the trimester, students will perform a song in a group setting, showcasing their progress.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Beginning Piano

This one-trimester elective offers an introduction to the fundamentals of piano and keyboard playing. This course focuses on essential techniques, music theory, and practical skills, giving students the confidence to play melodies, chords, and songs across various styles. Students learn proper hand posture, basic scales and chords, and how to read music and chord charts. By the end of the trimesters, students will perform a simple piece in a group or solo setting, showcasing their progress.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Introduction to Songwriting

This one-trimester elective guides students through the process of creating a complete, original song. Using Jeff Tweedy's *How to Write One Song* as the primary text, students explore songwriting as a creative, accessible, and enjoyable process. This course breaks down songwriting into manageable steps, focusing on generating ideas, developing lyrics and melodies, creating chords and structure, and refining the final product. By the end of the course, each student writes, arranges, and performs an original song.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Modern Band

This one-trimester elective provides instrumentalists and vocalists an opportunity to focus on small ensemble instrumental skills within the context of contemporary music. This course encompasses a full spectrum of popular music genres, from pop and rock to folk, country, and jazz. Students learn musicianship skills, theoretical concepts, and stylistic methods. Students have the opportunity to perform concerts at Thaden and in the community. Some experience playing a musical instrument or vocal performance is required.

*Note: Students may take this course for one trimester but are encouraged to enroll for all three. Students interested in participating in All-Region Band or Orchestra must enroll in all three trimesters to be eligible to audition.*

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: Minimum of one year of experience in playing a musical instrument or vocal performance*

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## **Myth in Music**

The ancient Greco-Roman myths were meant to be sung and listened to. Nowadays, our exposure to these myths comes mostly through reading texts. Nevertheless, themes and stories from ancient myths still find their way into several genres of music, including classical, rock, and metal. This trimester-long elective explores the afterlife of Greco-Roman myths as they manifest in modern-day music. Why are these myths still relevant? How do modern artists and composers challenge, interpret, and present ancient myths? In what ways does rhythm capture the spirit of poetic meter?

This course utilizes listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities with a significant discussion and peer review component. Students read and familiarize themselves with myth in literature then regularly engage in comparative exercises with myth and its modern musical counterpart. The recurrent themes of wrath of the gods, war, the hero's journey, monsters, adventure, and the fickle nature of the sea are explored. This class also includes cross-cultural comparisons with Norse mythology and American folklore. Throughout the course, students have the opportunity to practice their own hand at producing a modern musical rendition of a classical myth.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit Visual and Performing Arts, World Languages, or English*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Survey of Pop Music**

This one-trimester elective takes students on an analytical and creative journey through the world of popular music. Nate Sloan's and Charlie Harding's *Switched on Pop* book and podcast serve as foundational resources. Students explore how popular songs by artists such as Taylor Swift, Kendrick Lamar, Beyoncé, and others are constructed, the cultural and historical forces that shape them, and the ways they influence our lives. This course blends music analysis, historical context, and creative expression to foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of pop music.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Visual and Performing Arts – Theater

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<a href="#">Black Box Theater</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Stagecraft</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">One-Act Play*</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Performance Workshop*</a>	9-12	2/3

### Black Box Theater

This one-trimester elective offers students the opportunity to step into a dynamic performance space and collaborate on ensemble-driven theatrical work. Students gain theater experience by working on a project that allows them to explore multiple facets of theater, including acting and directing. Through this hands-on approach, students gain a deeper understanding of how different roles and responsibilities come together to create a cohesive performance. The course culminates in a staged performance in Thaden's Black Box Theater.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Stagecraft

Participants in this course learn shop, theater, materials, and tools safety; explore the fundamentals of metal, wood, and non-traditional materials fabrication; design construction and painting of scenery and props; and craft the lighting, audio, and video for productions. Students gain proficiency in using shop tools, stage equipment, and the lighting and sound systems in the Performing Art Center. Other activities include stage management, event staffing, and preparation for Thaden events, concerts, and theatrical productions.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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### One-Act Play\*

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: audition or instructor approval*

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## **Performance Workshop\***

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: audition or instructor approval*

## Visual and Performing Arts – Visual Art

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<a href="#">Community Murals (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Drawing</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Empty Bowls (CBL)</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Relief Printmaking</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Watercolor Painting</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Sculptural and Functional Ceramics</a>	9-12	2/3
<a href="#">Advanced Studio Art*</a>	10-12	2/3

### Community Murals (CBL)

Artistic murals can help share a message and build community and culture. In this one-trimester elective, students are introduced to the visual arts as a medium for social purpose, artistic expression, and critical thinking. Students research, design, develop, and collaborate to create a mural for the school campus or the local community. Students are responsible for many aspects of creating a public work of art, including identifying community partners, interviewing stakeholders, developing a proposal, creating a budget, and executing the mural. In addition to learning about the formal qualities of a successful work of public art, the class also contemplates the role visual art plays in different communities and the school community. The course culminates in the presentation of a community mural.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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### Drawing

In this one-trimester elective, students explore a variety of drawing tools and materials, emphasizing procedures and techniques in Betty Edwards' *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. This course exposes students to various historical artists, drawing styles, and art vocabulary. Students break down the process of drawing into its multiple foundations, such as line, volume, shading, and composition. Drawing focuses on direct observation, from quick sketches to longer, developed studies. Projects may include perspective drawings, still life, portraits, and non-objective work that explore the qualities of drawing tools. Sketchbook activities and peer and instructor feedback are also critical components of the course. By the end of the trimester, students develop drawing skills and a critical eye, building foundations that encourage individual and creative work success. Students with advanced drawing skills also explore using the medium for personal expression.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Empty Bowls (CBL)

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Relief Printmaking

Printmaking is a process that allows artists to transfer an image from one surface to another, most often paper or fabric. Often the image is carved onto wood or linoleum in a master design and used to make replicas. It can also consist of objects placed onto a gelli plate and painted over. Printmaking is a way that artists make iterations of the same design. This trimester-long elective introduces students to the production of multiple images from a single design utilizing several relief printmaking techniques. The course emphasizes design thinking and creative problem-solving techniques in woodcut, linocut, and gelli plate printing. Students are also introduced to the history of printmaking, historical and contemporary printmaking artists, and an exploration of iterations and production work that artists undertake in order to develop a product for sale.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Watercolor Painting

This trimester-long elective introduces students to the procedures and techniques needed to develop a work of art in the transparent media of watercolor painting. Students experiment with different watercolor techniques to develop a personal approach to their painting style. In the spirit of creating original work, students learn about framing a reference photo for use in a landscape or cityscape painting. Students are also exposed to historical and contemporary watercolor artists as well as the vocabulary associated with the medium.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*1/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Sculptural and Functional Ceramics

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*2/3 Credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## Advanced Studio Art\*

In this two-trimester elective, students use the skills learned in prior art electives to undertake a concentration: a series of works of their choosing that communicate a connecting theme, concept or medium. Media may include, but is not limited to: acrylic painting, color pencil, pastel, experimental media, printmaking, drawing, clay, multi-media sculpture, and fiber arts. Students in this course are expected to have an existing knowledge and skill set in the medium that they choose. This course provides the opportunity to independently (within the guidelines and expectations of deadlines) explore their chosen area in more depth. Students are required to develop an artistic habit of weekly sketchbook assignments, follow through on check-ins with accountability partners, develop timelines, and exhibit time management.

*Open to Grades 10-12*

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

*Prerequisites: Minimum of 2/3 credit in Upper School Visual Arts or instructor approval*

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# Wellness and Physical Education

Students in Grades 9 and 11 are required to take a one-trimester Wellness course.  
 All Upper School students must earn 1/3 credit in Physical Education (PE) each year. The PE credit may be earned by taking a one-trimester PE elective or by participating on a Thaden athletics team.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Credit
<b>Required Courses</b>		
<a href="#">Wellness I</a>	9	1/3
<a href="#">Wellness II</a>	11	1/3
<b>Elective Courses</b>		
<a href="#">Wellness: Special Topics</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Physical Education: Lifetime Sports</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Physical Education: Mindful Movement</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Physical Education: Strength and Conditioning</a>	9-12	1/3
<a href="#">Peer Leadership Seminar (CBL)</a>	12	1

## Required Courses

### Wellness I and II

These one-trimester courses inspire and enable students to practice healthy living with an emphasis on interpersonal communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, nutrition, anatomy, and physiology. Both courses address identity development and forming a clear and unique sense of self, including values, beliefs, and goals. Wellness courses enhance academic performance and encourage positive lifestyle habits among students.

*Wellness I required for Grade 9*  
*Wellness II or Wellness: Special Topics required for Grade 11*  
*1/3 Credit each*  
*Prerequisites: None*

## Elective Courses

### Wellness: Special Topics

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

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

*Wellness II or Wellness: Special Topics required in Grade 11*

*1/3 credit*

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Physical Education: Lifetime Sports**

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Physical Education: Mindful Movement**

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

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Physical Education: Strength and Conditioning**

This dynamic course is designed to elevate students' physical fitness. This comprehensive one-trimester course integrates weightlifting, plyometrics, and cardiovascular exercises to optimize

strength, endurance, and agility. This course is designed for students of all skill and experience levels, and all students can benefit from a structured approach to developing their physical fitness. Throughout the course, students gain knowledge and practical skills to enhance athletic performance, build lean muscle, and improve overall fitness.

*Open to Grades 9-12*

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

*Prerequisites: None*

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## **Peer Leadership Seminar (CBL)**

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

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

*Open to Grade 12*

*1 Credit; CBL*

*Prerequisites: instructor approval*

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# Intensives

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

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

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

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## Representative Intensives Courses

### **Big Cat Conservation: Protecting the Majestic Apex Predators**

This two-week Intensive introduces students to the ecology, behavior, and conservation efforts of big cats – including lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, and jaguars. Explore the ecological significance of these majestic species, the myriad threats they face, and global conservation initiatives dedicated to their survival. Develop an understanding of the role these animals play in ecosystems and the ethical implications of conservation efforts. In-person visits to organizations such as the Tulsa Zoo, the National Tiger Sanctuary, the Promised Land Zoo, and the Wild Animal Safari give students hands-on learning experiences with the guidance of conservation professionals. An overnight stay at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge in Eureka Springs gives students the experience of observing big cat behavior through a guided nocturnal tour and discussion about the organization's ongoing conservation efforts. Develop a collaborative conservation project and conduct a research project on big cat species and the specific challenges they face.

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### **The Great Thaden Bake Off**

Inspired by “The Great British Bake Off,” this week-long Intensive invites students into the art and science of baking. Through hands-on experience, students explore the essentials of pastry, bread, cakes, and decorating techniques. Signature challenges and technical bakes inspired by the show allow students to experiment with flavor combinations, learn foundational baking techniques, and practice time management skills. Perfect for both aspiring and seasoned bakers, this Intensive offers a supportive environment to don an apron and hone your skills. “On your marks, get set, bake!”

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## Louise Thaden Interactive Museum Exhibit (CBL)

Soar into the remarkable life, achievements, and legacy of Louise McPhetridge Thaden and other courageous, trailblazing aviators who defied gravity and shattered gender barriers while also leaving an indelible mark on the skies. In this two-week Intensive, students work closely with local historians and museum curators to embark on a concept design that transforms the first floor of the McPhetridge House into a walk-through exhibit capturing the essence of Louise Thaden and other extraordinary female pilots. *New York Times* bestselling author Keith O'Brien (*Fly Girls*) shares his expertise on storytelling and capturing an audience's attention. A visit to the 99s Museum of Women Pilots in Oklahoma City and a virtual meeting with the National Air and Space Museum's Explainers Team help students identify key goals, objectives, and content deliverables for the McPhetridge House exhibit. Draw upon chosen artifacts, narratives, and interactive media elements to curate an educational exhibit that embodies the spirit of adventure, empowerment, and resilience that Louise Thaden and her contemporaries exemplified. Celebrate the indomitable spirit of the women who reached for the skies and paved the way for future generations.

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## Walkways: Out in the World and Into Ourselves

Evolutionary biologists pinpoint bipedal motion – *i.e.*, walking on two feet – as a key differentiator between early humans and our primate ancestors. Nutritionists espouse the metabolic benefits of postprandial peregrination (walking after eating). Mystics from myriad religions esteem pilgrimages as crucial for spiritual insights, philosophers of every ilk credit long walks as the source of enduring epiphanies, and psychologists laud the neurological boon of promenading through city and country alike. And yet despite the profound and broad significance of walking, many people eschew this earliest form of human locomotion in favor of more convenient, modern methods of movement. But what do we lose when we strap ourselves into a car or hop on a bike? And what might we gain by slowing down, walking outside, and looking inward? In this one-week Intensive, students explore these questions and more through literary texts and scientific studies, journaling, and, of course, long walks. The week culminates in an overnight walking and camping trip, as well as the production of a creative deliverable that encapsulates each individual student's unique experience of moving through the world and their mind, one step at a time.

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