



SHADY SIDE ACADEMY

Immersives Course Catalog

2025–2026 School Year

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MISSION: Shady Side Academy's mission is to challenge students to think expansively, act ethically and lead responsibly.



REQUIREMENTS

Term Duration: May 13–June 4, 2026

Philosophy of the Immersive Program: At Shady Side Academy, we develop fundamental study skills and scholarship at the same time that we aspire for education to be more than covering chapters in a textbook. The Senior School's Immersives program creates dynamic, real-world learning experiences for students, taking them into Pittsburgh and beyond to explore a single topic through an interdisciplinary, community-based lens. Such real-world learning experiences allow students to apply knowledge in relevant contexts and pursue passions to support their developing sense of purpose. In an ever-changing landscape, this distinctive program will set Shady Side Academy students apart and give them an advantage as they compete for opportunities in college and beyond.

Duration of the school day: The typical school day will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Please note that select courses may extend beyond 3:00 p.m. or require weekend attendance (for which release time during the week will be granted). In 2026, three courses will include overnight trips:

- *A River Runs Through Pitt: Biology, Literature, and Fly-Fishing*
- *Pedal Power: The Science, Culture, and Adventure of Cycling*
- *Preserving Pennsylvania: The History, Culture, and Ecology of Public Lands*

Homework: We recognize the rigor, intensity, and energy required during the school day during Immersives. Homework will be limited to no more than 45 minutes each night. This allows for thoughtful engagement without extending the demands of the day beyond what is sustainable.

Attendance: As the classroom experience during the Immersives is paramount, missing immersive term days for reasons other than Shady Side athletics and activities, AP exams, illness, or death in the family will preclude a High Pass grade for the course. An accumulation of tardies may also preclude a High Pass grade. Barring extenuating circumstances, a student who misses three or more days for any reason will receive a failing grade. Students who fail an Immersives course will go on Academic Warning; a second failure will jeopardize their Shady Side diploma.

Varsity Athletes: Students who anticipate participating in Spring Varsity Athletic teams or have other obligations that include night and weekend commitments, should note travel requirements of any Immersive for which they sign up. The following courses include overnight trips and *likely* preclude the participation of most Varsity Athletes, dependent upon the schedule of the Immersive course and the athletic schedule.

- *A River Runs Through Pitt: Biology, Literature, and Fly-Fishing*
- *Pedal Power: The Science, Culture, and Adventure of Cycling*
- *Preserving Pennsylvania: The History, Culture, and Ecology of Public Lands*

Drop/Add Philosophy: After course registration concludes and students find out their Immersives course enrollment, students will have ten days to request a course change to the Dean of Studies. This request should include information on why the change is requested. Course changes will be considered on a case-by-case basis, pending available space in the newly requested course. After the two-week drop/add period, Immersives course enrollments are final.



COURSE OFFERINGS

A River Runs Through Pitt: Biology, Literature, and Fly-Fishing

Teaching Team: Dr. Renock, Mr. Janosko, and Ms. Powers

Western Pennsylvania has undergone an extraordinary environmental renaissance over the past half-century, transforming once-polluted rivers and streams into vibrant ecosystems. Explore the region's environmental history, focusing on the ecological recovery from coal mining and industry, and how these changes have impacted water quality and biodiversity. Using fly fishing as both a symbol and practice of reconnecting with nature, the course blends biology and literature to examine the delicate balance between humans and the natural world. Students will learn the art of fly-tying, explore literary works that celebrate fly fishing as a metaphor for harmony with nature, and engage with the biology of trout—fish that thrive in pristine waters. The course culminates in an overnight fly-fishing trip to the renowned Little Juniata River, offering students a chance to apply their skills and deepen their connection to the environment. NOTE: This course includes an overnight travel commitment.

Aerobatic Robotics: Engineering Autonomous Aerial Vehicles

Teaching Team: Mr. Haytock and Ms. Cespedes

Take to the skies in this dynamic course, where you will dive into the world of autonomous aerial robotics. Combining hands-on drone piloting with cutting-edge programming, you will learn to navigate drones through obstacle courses while mastering the technical skills needed to enable autonomous flight. Through connections with robotics researchers in Pittsburgh, students will explore the latest advancements in autonomous robotic behavior and apply these insights to their own projects. Programming in either C or Python, students will develop algorithms to control drone behavior, culminating in a field project where drones will be used to gather and analyze environmental data. Throughout the course, students will document their programming iterations and reflections, and the term will conclude with a final video presentation showcasing their team's project journey and achievements.

AI Revolution: Shaping the Future of Society

Teaching Team: Mr. MacDougall and Ms. Kokladas

Uncover how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming our world. From its fascinating origins to the cutting-edge technologies driving today's innovations, students will uncover the history and rapid evolution of AI. Through real-world case studies and interactive projects, you'll dive deep into AI's game-changing impact on industries like healthcare, finance, and entertainment, while tackling the big questions—how will AI reshape economies, challenge ethics, and redefine what it means to be human? This course isn't just about understanding AI—it's about preparing to lead in a world where AI is rewriting the rules. Get ready to explore, question, and engage with the technology that's revolutionizing the future.



Antigone in the Echo Chamber: Media, Myth, and Perception

Teaching Team: Mr. Ingraham and Ms. Escobar

In this course, students will bring a modern adaptation of Sophocles's *Antigone* to life on stage and on the (small) screen. Through a hybrid live/digital performance, students will explore how media bubbles and algorithmic bias shape our perception of truth and justice. With a pre-written adaptation as their foundation, students will rehearse and perform the play while simultaneously designing curated digital content for the audience to receive during the show. Each audience member will experience a version of the truth shaped by their specific media stream. Drawing from media literacy, classical literature, and theatre production, students will collaborate on all aspects of performance and media design. They will also reflect on how social media reinforces belief systems, distorts shared events, and influences civic discourse. The course culminates in a public performance and a study of audience response, challenging both performers and viewers to confront how we construct meaning in the digital age.

Art as a Catalyst for Change

Teaching Team: Ms. Salazar and Mr. Goodwin

Through arts and cultural initiatives, communities of all sorts strengthen their identities, bring opportunities to their constituents, and foster a shared vision of collective development. This course opens a study field for students who want to learn how arts organizations have contributed to building stronger and more equitable communities in the Pittsburgh area. Through interactive lectures, guest speakers, volunteer work at multiple arts institutions, and art workshops, students will be exposed to different opportunities in the arts field, engage with some communities through service learning, and explore future career goals. As the culmination of the course, students will reflect on their learning experiences, collaborating with other peers in the creation of a photo journal and an artwork that will be shared with the partner organizations and displayed in a school art show.

Backstage Pass: The Art and Practice of Technical Theatre

Teaching Team: Mr. Davidheiser and Ms. Trent

What happens when the curtain rises depends entirely on the work that happens before it. In this hands-on course, students will step into the essential world of technical theatre, learning the skills that make live performance possible. Students will work as a collaborative team to determine the design and or technical needs for three productions: the Middle School Spring Musical, the Country Day All School Musical, and the high school performance of *Antigone*. Whether their unique production duties include operating a light board, managing backstage traffic, overseeing audio needs, or building a set from blueprints, students will learn how design choices made by the group shape the audience experience and how collaboration drives success. Workshops will be combined with live production work and mentorship from theatre professionals. No prior experience is required—just curiosity, precision, and the willingness to take on a challenge. Students will leave with a tech binder or digital portfolio documenting their work and a lasting sense of what it means to make something real, together.



City of Champions: Sports, Economics, and Culture

Teaching Team: Mr. Miller and Mr. Coyne

Dive into the history and business of Pittsburgh's major sports franchises, exploring their significant role in shaping the city's economic landscape and professional sports as a whole. Students will analyze the financial impact of teams on the local economy, including game-day revenues, playoffs, and special events, and will investigate how franchises have influenced urban development. The course will highlight the effect a team has had on a city and a league—for example, the Rooney Rule for the NFL. Students will also explore how outreach programs led by teams and individual athletes enhance the franchises' community presence and corporate responsibility. Additionally, the course examines how teams manage cultural integration for players from diverse backgrounds and international regions, helping them assimilate into the Pittsburgh community. With a focus on economic strategy, students will evaluate how successful sports management translates into broader citywide economic growth and community engagement.

Community Real Estate Development

Teaching Team: Mr. Ambrose '05, Mr. Griffith, and Ms. Whitney

This course offers an immersive exploration into the dynamic world of real estate development, demystifying its complexities and providing a comprehensive understanding of the process. Through a hands-on partnership with a live development project in the Pittsburgh region, students will work alongside industry professionals or local community development agencies. The course emphasizes the intersection of innovation and ethical practice in urban transformation, examining how real estate can unlock a neighborhood's potential while fostering community engagement. Students will gain real-world insights into the stages of development, from planning and financing to design and construction, while exploring the social and economic impact of sustainable, community-centered development.

Creativity and Connection in a Disconnected World

Teaching Team: Ms. Potts and Mr. Hughes

The world is constantly making demands on our time and attention, and this course aims to help students find their center amidst these demands. Our course invites students to slow down and critically examine how the choices they make impact their daily lives, relationships, and sense of self. With artists, writers, musicians, and nature as our guides, students will explore ways to stay grounded and make intentional choices about where they invest their minds, hearts, and spirits. Assessments, in the form of visual artworks and personal projects, will challenge students to think expansively about the ways that they interact with the world, online and off. NOTE: This course includes a required Saturday commitment (students will be given release time during the week).

Data Stories: The Surprising Intersection of Art & Data

Teaching Team: Mr. Hallab and Ms. Yam

In this course, students will explore "small data"—the creative, human side of data that captures our experiences and emotions—while learning to communicate stories that numbers alone can't tell. Through journaling, reflection, and hands-on creation, students will analyze personal and aesthetic data and turn it into meaningful art. Daily exercises will showcase artists' interpretations of small



data, leading to the development of symbols and artwork that connect authentically with audiences. The course includes workshops with renowned data artist Stefanie Posavec and field trips to urban and rural environments to collect and interpret data in new, creative ways.

Economics of Gentrification

Teaching Team: Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Boehm

The course will examine current, historical, and economic problems encountered in developing and gentrifying communities in Pittsburgh using an interdisciplinary approach to the study of history, economics, and social change. It will incorporate history, economics, sociology, anthropology, and ethnology, and use the quantitative tools of economics to explore specific social questions. We will dive into our exploration of these themes with the “There Goes the Neighborhood” Teach the Class assignments and a Northside Case Study. Then, we will conduct a case study and application of the theoretical framework to the case of gentrification in two Pittsburgh neighborhoods, Garfield and Sharpsburg.

Engineering Thrills: The Physics of Amusement Park Rides

Teaching Team: Dr. Burke and Mr. Mills

Step into the world of amusement park ride design, where creativity meets engineering and physics. In this hands-on course, you will explore the intricate design process behind some of the most thrilling rides, from concept to execution. Through discussions with industry experts in design and engineering, as well as real-world tests of motion and forces on rides at Kennywood and Cedar Point, students will gain a deep understanding of the dynamics that make rides both exhilarating and safe. In the lab and Glimcher Tech and Design Hub, students will apply these principles as they design, build, and test 3D models of a portion of a ride. Along the way, students will document their experiences in a design journal and present their final projects, showcasing their creative and technical achievements.

Everyone's a Critic: The Craft of Criticism

Teaching Team: Mr. Hogan, Mr. Gross, and Ms. Garvey

Students will explore the craft of criticism across multiple fields, including culinary, narrative, and visual arts, learning how to develop and express informed opinions in rigorous and engaging ways. By studying iconic reviews from renowned critics like Pauline Kael, Peter Schjeldahl, and Pete Wells, students will examine the history and evolution of criticism, gaining tools to evaluate art with precision. Guest speakers from the food and music industries will provide professional insights, while visits to restaurants, museums, and film screenings offer hands-on practice in critiquing real-world experiences. Students will build a portfolio of written and video reviews that reflect their growing expertise, blending personal perspective with critical rigor.

Exploring Culture through Culinary Crossroads

Teaching Team: Ms. Lopez, Ms. Xu, and Mr. Sageder

"民以食为天," "Buen Provecho!"—This course delves into the rich culinary traditions of Chinese and Hispanic cultures, using food as a lens to explore cultural identity, history, and migration. Students



will critically examine these cuisines' historical and geographical contexts and their evolution through immigration. Through a blend of theoretical study and hands-on experiences—including research projects, interviews, and culinary explorations of Pittsburgh's Chinese and Latin American influences—students will gain a nuanced understanding of how food shapes and reflects cultural identity. Practical activities include visits to local markets, dining at authentic restaurants, and cooking workshops.

Financial Foundations: Make, Protect, and Give Away

Teaching Team: Mr. Aroesty P'30,'33 and Mr. Finch

Building financial literacy now sets you up for a more secure and successful financial future, giving you the confidence to handle money responsibly and achieve your personal goals. This course equips students with essential financial skills by integrating concepts from economics, mathematics, psychology, sociology, law, and ethics. Students will learn practical tools for budgeting, saving, investing, and managing credit while exploring the emotional and social influences on financial behavior. The course also covers key legal aspects like estate planning, taxes, and insurance, ensuring students understand how to protect their wealth. Additionally, students will examine the societal impact of financial inequality and explore charitable giving strategies.

Food and Society

Teaching Team: Ms. Binnie and Mrs. Myers

Have you ever considered where your next meal comes from or how others struggle to access healthy food? Delve into the complex issues of food insecurity and access in both local and global contexts. Students will connect with organizations such as the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and 412 Food Rescue to explore innovative solutions to food waste and learn about the economics of food access. Through hands-on experiences, including visits to food pantries and "blessing boxes," students will gain insight into the daily challenges many face in securing nutritious meals. Students will then apply their knowledge by learning basic cooking skills and participating in a service project to prepare and cook a meal for local families at the Family House or Ronald McDonald House of Pittsburgh. This course uniquely combines social impact, economics, and culinary skill development.

From Borders to Bridges: The Immigrant Experience in Pittsburgh

Teaching Team: Ms. McCool and Ms. Lynch

What drives immigrants to settle in a city far from America's borders? Explore the rich, diverse experiences of the immigrant groups that have shaped Pittsburgh's physical and cultural landscape. From the waves of immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries to the post-industrial arrivals of today, students will examine the opportunities and challenges that come with supporting sustainable immigration. Through visits to key sites such as the Heinz History Center and the City of Asylum, students will delve into personal immigration narratives and the policies that influenced them. Using multimedia storytelling, students will creatively document these stories through writing, presentations, or film while also investigating historic and modern immigration policies. The course will culminate in a service project with a local organization that supports Pittsburgh's current immigrants and asylum seekers, allowing students to connect their learning with real-world impact and community engagement.



From Troy to Troy Hill: Mythology From Ancient Greece to Local Legends

Teaching Team: Ms. Belles and Mr. Ejzak

What role do myths play in shaping our identities and societies today? This course takes students on a journey through personal, national, and cosmic mythology, tracing the enduring influence of ancient stories on contemporary culture. Beginning with the study of classical Greek myths, students will explore how these narratives continue to shape modern worldviews, from local Pittsburgh legends to cosmic tales in the stars. Visits to the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History, Buhl Planetarium, Heinz History Center, and the Moonshot Museum will highlight the representation of myth in art, literature, architecture, and astronomy. Through reflection, discussion, and creative projects, students will uncover the archetypal power of myths and how these timeless stories continue to inform our personal journeys and societal norms today.

Healing the Steel City: Pittsburgh's Legacy of Medical Innovation

Teaching Team: Mr. G. Weiss and Dr. Bowen

Why did medicine rise to prominence in Pittsburgh, surpassing the city's historic steel industry? This course will engage with the history of medicine from several vantage points, with a specific lens on Pittsburgh-based innovations and dynamics. Students will learn about the history of the hospital as an institution and research the population dynamics and geographies of Allegheny County to build a profile of the region's hospitals and the demographics they serve. Students will then engage with the technological innovations that have propelled medicine and Pittsburgh into the 21st century, such as organ transplantation, vaccine development, emergency medicine, and sports medicine. Students will engage in lab experiences and hospital observations to enhance their understanding and appreciation of these respective innovations.

Introduction to Entrepreneurship

While entrepreneurship may not be everyone's path, the entrepreneurial mindset—characterized by creativity, resilience, innovation, and proactive problem-solving—is invaluable across careers. Rooted in the principles of the entrepreneurial mindset and inspired by Simon Sinek's "Start With Why," this course will empower you to explore your core motivations, discover your unique strengths, and develop the entrepreneurial mindset essential for success in any field. Additionally, students will learn the value of adopting this mindset as an intrapreneur—someone who applies entrepreneurial skills and approaches within a company to drive innovation, improve processes, and contribute to the organization's success. Through readings, reflections, discussions, and interactions with entrepreneurial professionals, students will embark on a journey of self-discovery and focus on the "why" behind their ambitions.

Nature's Blueprint: Biomimicry in Sustainable Design

Teaching Team: Mr. Grant, Ms. Parlour, and Dr. Tang

What do bullet trains and birds have in common? Explore the fascinating field of biomimicry, where nature's designs inspire innovative solutions to human challenges. From the kingfisher's silent dive shaping bullet train design to other examples of engineering mimicking the natural world, students will investigate how sustainable design emerges from studying ecosystems and organisms.



Combining engineering with art, the course includes field trips to local trails, Fallingwater, and Phipps Conservatory, where students will observe, sketch, and draw inspiration from nature's forms. Students will apply their observations and skills to create a glass-based sculpture that represents a natural or ecological concept, bridging the gap between design and creativity.

Peak Performance: Applying Performance Psychology to Everyday Life

Teaching Team: Ms. Patterson, Ms. Fani, and Mr. Prince

Explore how the proven strategies of performance psychology can be applied to help optimize self-improvement, resilience, and mindset in your everyday life. Drawing from techniques such as goal setting, mental toughness, visualization, and stress management, students will practice building mental resilience, enhancing motivation, and developing a growth mindset. Guest speakers from the fields of performance psychology, medicine, and wellness will offer insights into the psychological tactics used to overcome challenges and reach peak performance, while students will apply these lessons to their own lives in areas such as academics, personal relationships, and extracurricular activities. Through exposure to these experts and hands-on experiences, students will leave with a personalized toolkit of mental strategies for improving self-discipline, handling pressure, and achieving their personal goals.

Pedal Power: The Science, Culture, and Adventure of Cycling

Teaching Team: Dr. Barndollar, Dr. Peterson, Mr. Smith, and Mr. M. Weiss

From humble beginnings as a 19th-century invention to its role as a catalyst for social, environmental, and economic change, the bicycle is more than just a mode of transport—it's a symbol of innovation and freedom. This course explores the history, culture, and science of cycling while offering hands-on bike maintenance and repair skills. Through collaboration with local cycling initiatives, students will engage in advocacy efforts and experience the challenges and opportunities of promoting bike-friendly policies. The course culminates in a multi-day adventure cycling the 335-mile Great Allegheny Passage and Chesapeake & Ohio Canal trails from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC, offering a unique blend of physical challenge, historic exploration, and personal achievement. This course is open to all fitness levels, with available bike access assistance. NOTE: This course includes a multi-overnight travel commitment.

Preserving Pennsylvania: The History, Culture, and Ecology of Public Lands

Teaching Team: Ms. Boyer and Mr. Fularz

This course delves into the history of Pennsylvania's state parks and public lands, with a focus on current conservation efforts to protect nature and wildlife for future generations. Students will explore these protected spaces' historical, natural, and cultural significance through day and overnight visits to parks like Cook Forest, McConnells Mill, Ricketts Glen, and more. Alongside park rangers and conservation experts, students will engage in hands-on preservation activities and nature walks to identify local flora and fauna. The course culminates in the creation of a comprehensive PA State Park Field Guide featuring safety tips, conservation advice, historical insights, and student-taken photographs. NOTE: This course includes multiple overnight travel commitments.



Roots and Reflections: Exploring Nature Through Creative Writing

Teaching Team: Ms. McDonald and Ms. Pease-Kerr

Connect with the natural world with personal expression, guiding you to explore Pennsylvania's landscapes while developing your voice as a writer. Through daily writing, students will transform observations of local plants, birds, and wildlife into vivid metaphors and imagery that reflect their inner selves. Each day begins with meditation from Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* and yoga, grounding students before they immerse themselves in nature. Field trips to City of Asylum and workshops with naturalists will deepen understanding of local ecosystems and foster a sense of community among writers. Students will also engage in hands-on projects like making paper for their nature writing and shaping bonsai trees, paralleling the process of editing their work. The course culminates in a class anthology, showcasing each student's polished writing.

Science Research Seminar Internship Extension

Dr. Martens

Welcome to the Science Research Extended Internship! This course is exclusively available to students enrolled in the year-long Science Research seminar, but it is not a requirement. This program offers a unique opportunity to extend your summer internship in an assigned lab from 5 weeks to 8 weeks. Dive deeper into scientific research within Pittsburgh's academic, industrial, or commercial facilities, fostering additional experience and opportunities. Engage in collaborative research with your assigned mentor and fellow lab members, enhancing your understanding of real-world scientific practices. Document your journey through daily journal entries, which will catalyze insightful discussions on maximizing your research experience. Join weekly round table discussions to share experiences, overcome obstacles, and strategize for success. Ultimately, produce a tangible body of work that significantly contributes to the research efforts of your assigned lab. Elevate your scientific prowess with this immersive extension of the Science Research seminar.

Sustainable Cities: Urban Planning and Ecology

Teaching Team: Ms. Cornibe, Dr. Znosko, and Mr. Palmer

How can cities coexist with nature in ways that benefit both the environment and their inhabitants? Investigate the intersection of urban development and ecological sustainability, focusing on topics such as water management, solar energy, heat islands, and the role of native plants in urban ecosystems. Through visits to key sites and organizations in Pittsburgh, students will examine the benefits and challenges of creating sustainable urban spaces. The course will emphasize the science behind sustainable energy and green infrastructure while engaging students in hands-on learning about urban ecology. For the culminating project, students will assess the sustainability of Shady Side Academy campuses, developing practical recommendations to optimize the health, sustainability, and environmental impact of the built and green spaces within their own community.



Your Move: How Game Design Brings History to Life

Teaching Team: Ms. Wang, Mr. Roland, and Mr. Solomon

Discover the world of board game design, where creativity meets history. In this innovative course, students will dive into the world of board game design, where creativity, strategy, and history intersect. By transforming historical events and narratives into engaging, educational games, students will transition from players to designers, crafting experiences that resonate with diverse communities. Through hands-on design challenges and collaborative problem-solving, the course emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and real-world application. Students will develop essential skills in game mechanics, storytelling, and design, all while deepening their understanding and appreciation of history as they create interactive games that bring the past to life.



SENIOR PROJECTS

Students can choose between taking an Immersive course and completing a Senior Project in their senior year. Senior Projects will appear on the transcript, earn 0.5 credits, and be graded as High Pass, Pass, or Fail with a 1-5 effort rating.

The Senior Project covers a wide range of educational activities. The project, designed by the student, provides an opportunity to pursue special activities and may be completed on or away from the campus. The student will prepare a formal written proposal for presentation to the Senior Project Committee.

The Senior Project should support one of the following general themes or categories:

- Social Impact and the Intersection of Tech, Science, and the Humanities
- Multi-disciplinary and Problem-based inquiry in Pittsburgh or local environs
- Philanthropy and The Intricacies of Achieving the Greater Good
- Service Learning, Leadership Studies, and Community Responsibility
- Emerging Industries in Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Seniors who wish to engage in a Senior Project will create their written proposals in September.



GRADING

Participation in one immersive course each year is required for graduation, and each immersive course will earn 0.5 credits.

Immersive courses will appear on the transcript and will be graded as High Pass, Pass, or Fail with a 1-5 effort rating. Each course will include at least three significant assessments (to measure understanding, reflection, and student engagement in the course), as well as a culminating final project. Assessments could include (but are not limited to) writing assignments, a portfolio of student work, projects, oral presentations, videos, lab reports, debates, performances, recitals, critiques, journals, oral interviews, and quizzes.

Grade	Description	Characteristics of Student Behavior
High Pass	Exceptional	The student's work is characterized by a mastery of the course content, goals, and skills. The student is able to relate knowledge to new situations and other disciplines and articulately, clearly, and concisely express understanding. The student is able to use creative and unique approaches in solving problems or analyzing data and takes the initiative in cooperative learning situations.
Pass	Qualified	The student's work is characterized by an understanding of the essential course goals and skills. The student clearly expresses ideas in both written and oral work and works cooperatively with peers. This category will also include students who are making progress, but need to make better connections between the course content and/or goals and need to



engage in deeper group discourse.

Fail

Lacks Understanding

The student has not yet demonstrated an understanding of the course's factual content and essential skills, or the student accrues three or more absences over the course of the term.

Effort Ratings

Rating	Descriptor	Characteristics of Student Behavior will include one or more of the following:
5	Exemplary	The student takes initiative in class discussions and in assisting peers, reflects in group discussions and leadership roles, listens actively, plans well for long-term assignments and projects, embraces notable personal challenges, sets and works to achieve high personal goals, pursues independent study and enrichment and works to resolve notable personal challenges.
4	Commendable	The student takes intellectual risks, listens well, reflects before making comments, helps peers, accepts personal challenges, seeks help for enrichment, makes contributions that benefit the class and works to improve academic weakness.
3	Expected	The student completes work on time and as assigned, arrives on time and prepared for class, participates and pays attention in class, works cooperatively with teacher and peers, informs teacher of impending absences, abides by agreed upon makeup work schedules, seeks out teachers for extra help and clarification, faithfully attends class and has a positive attitude.
2	Inconsistent	The student is frequently absent from class or is tardy, course work is often inadequate, late or incomplete, classroom behavior is occasionally disruptive, meetings with the teacher are done reluctantly, preparation for class is sporadic or inadequate, group work is resisted, teacher comments or suggestions are sometimes ignored and is often inattentive in the classroom.
1	Unacceptable	The student's absence from class or tardiness is excessive, course work is missing, incomplete and/or submitted late, does not participate in group activities, does not meet with the teacher, notably disruptive in class, teacher recommendations or suggestions are ignored, will not participate, unprepared for class, fails to keep scheduled appointments and has a negative and uncooperative attitude.

