



# BLAIR ACADEMY

— INTERSESSION COURSE CATALOG —

2025-2026



# HELLO, BUCS!

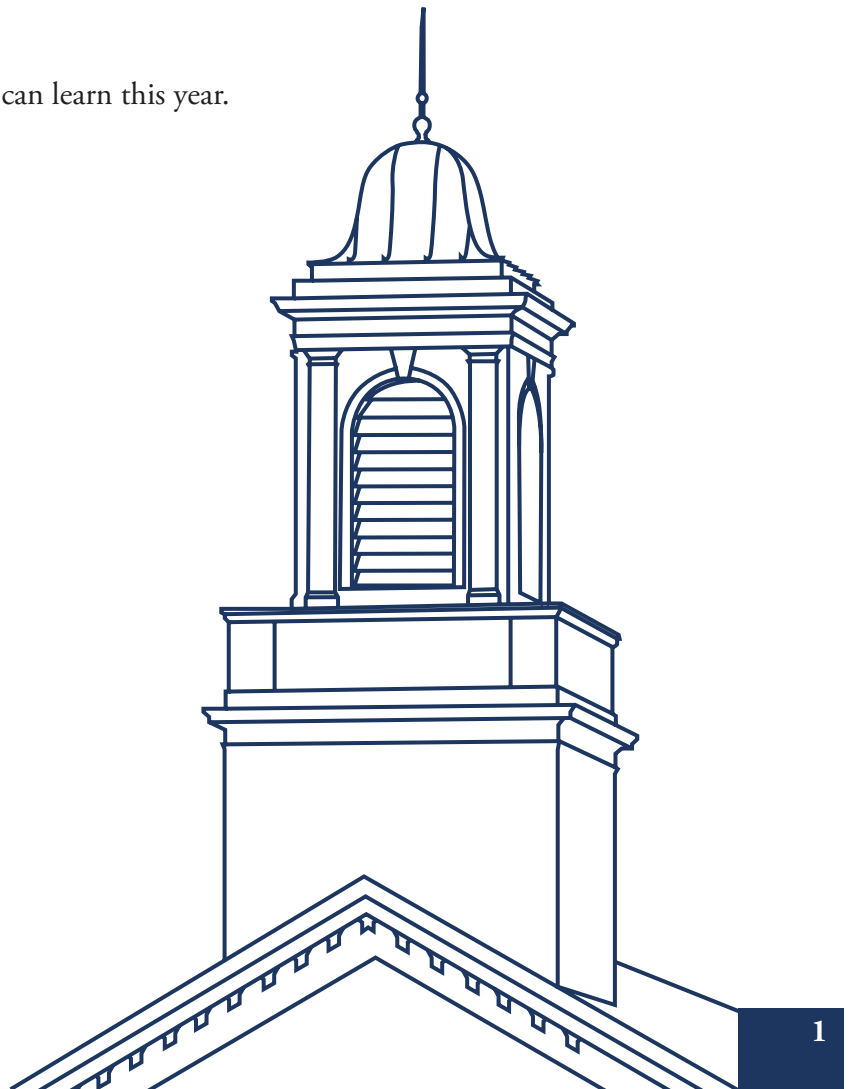
We are pleased to present this year's Intersession Course Catalog. Your teachers have worked diligently for the past several months to invent, redesign and curate the following three dozen unique courses for *you!*

You will soon have the opportunity to fill out a Google Form to indicate your top several choices. The form is distributed based on seniority, so 12th graders will have the option to choose first—along with last year's Intersession winners—then the subsequent grades. **BEFORE** you choose your options, please take the time to read through all of the courses and their descriptions, and ask the instructors questions if you have any.

Please keep in mind that you may not get your first or second choice, but all of the courses being offered are fantastic opportunities to learn something new and make new connections. These courses could lead you to discover new interests, develop new ways of thinking and see the world through different perspectives.

Challenge yourself to see the good in what you can learn this year.

—Mr. Manni-Brennan





# COURSES WITH ASSOCIATED FEES

*Each of the following courses involves some kind of regional, overnight travel or a certification. Therefore, any student who chooses to enroll in one of these courses will be charged the fee listed with the course description. Financial aid is available and will be prorated to match the percentage of financial aid received for tuition.*

## CHASING WATERFALLS

Imagine the sound of rushing water, a cool mist on your face and sunlight breaking through the trees—this is where your creativity will flow. Over the course of a week, we'll visit iconic waterfall sites including the Great Falls in Paterson, the Delaware Water Gap and the world-famous Niagara Falls. The trip culminates with a two-night stay off-campus in Niagara Falls, giving us extended time to explore and create. Along the way, you'll sketch, photograph, journal and experiment with mixed media, connecting art making to both natural beauty and cultural history. More than just sightseeing, this is your chance to disconnect from daily distractions, reconnect with your creativity, and share your journey through a final group exhibition of art and reflections.

**Instructors:** Mrs. & Mr. Trish  
**Cost:** \$350.00

## FINDING CENTER: YOGA & MEDITATION RETREAT

An authentic yoga and meditation retreat at the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, Pennsylvania! We'll spend a few days on campus preparing for the retreat, and then we will spend three days/nights (March 2-5) at the institute, participating in a rich schedule of activities—including yoga and meditation classes, workshops with a world-class staff, walking meditation and hiking, a chai party with cookies, touring a chocolate factory and a campfire with s'mores! This is not a silent retreat, but it will be tech-free; downtime will be spent playing board games in the common space of our rented cottage, reading, journaling and otherwise relaxing. Come reduce stress, do a deep dive into mindfulness practice and find your center!

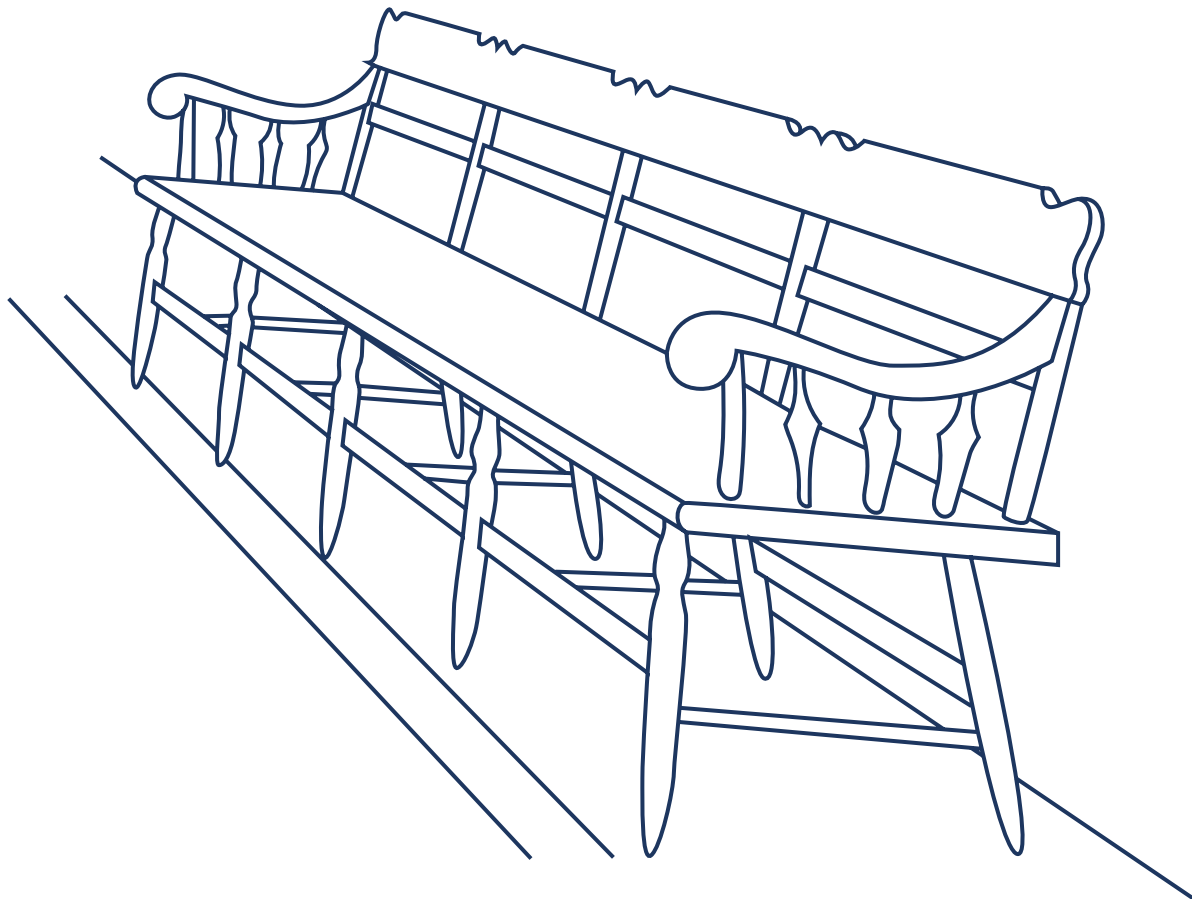
**Instructors:** Ms. Gardner & Ms. O'Neil  
**Cost:** \$350.00

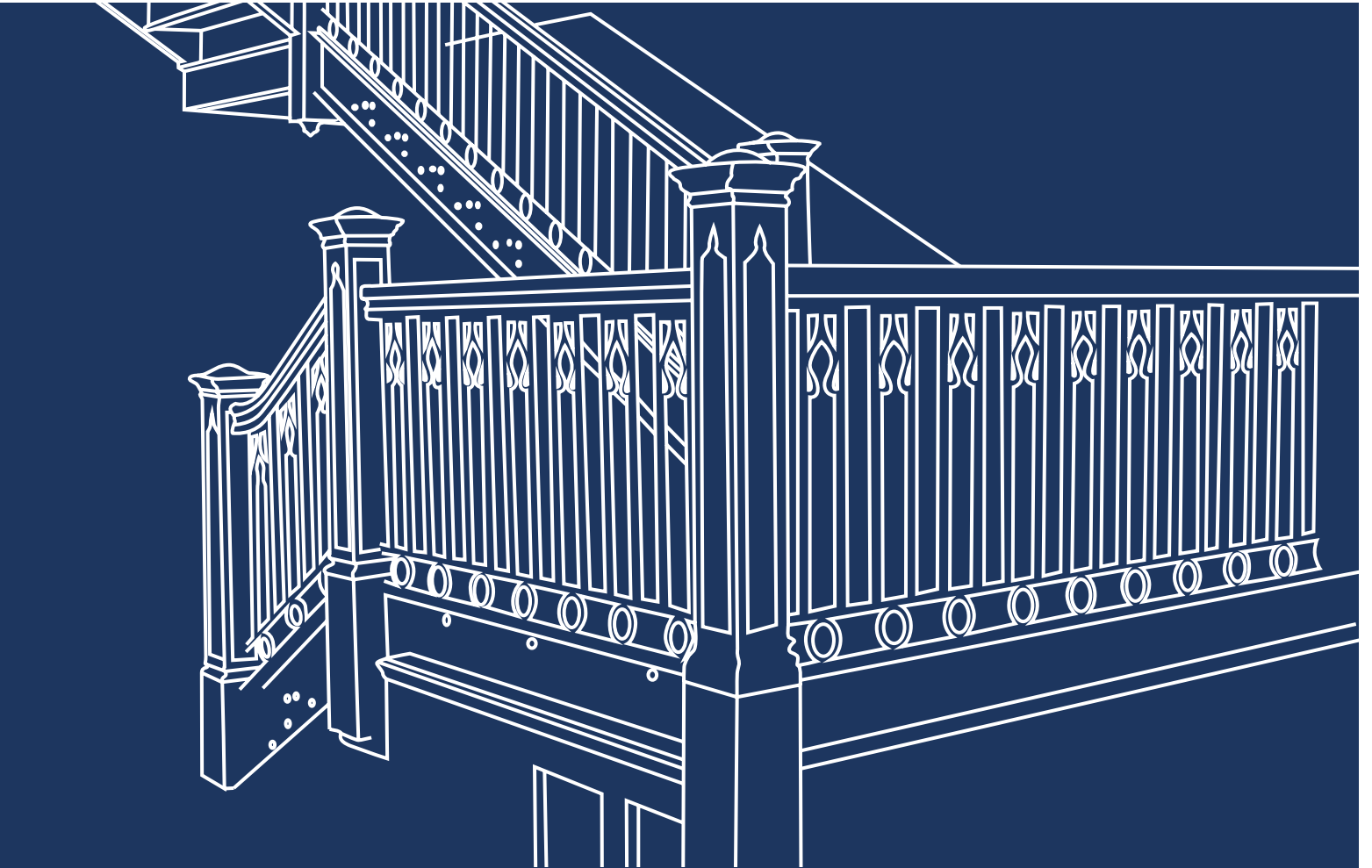
## LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION & OTHER FIRST RESPONDER PRACTICES

Join this course to gain a better understanding of fire, water and EMT safety techniques. You will get your lifeguarding certification over the first three days of the course (a swim test will be administered in January). After, we will go on a day trip to a museum where you will learn about other types of first responders and the responsibilities that people in these professions carry. The final days of the course will consist of practicing other practical skills that you might not encounter in a normal lifeguarding course and the creation of a final project, where you will create your own safety videos to share your knowledge with the entire Blair community. Have you ever thought “We’re never gonna use this in the real world” while sitting in math class? Do you feel the strong pull of the fresh air and running water but fear the elements? Are you looking for an amazing and relevant Intersession course that will teach you life-long skills? If so, this is the course for you!

**Instructors:** Ms. Rice & Mr. Dollhopf

**Cost:** \$400.00





# AVAILABLE COURSES

## A COMMON THREAD

In “A Common Thread,” we will explore the intersection of both fashion and performance. A runway often must speak for itself; students will be asked to challenge the silent runway by creating a piece and developing a live performance that communicates some social, political or personal meaning. Working with Ms. G, you’ll create a garment that speaks true to your vision, and working with Mrs. Carter, you’ll give the piece a voice. The week will culminate in a gallery walk in which students will converge their creative visions of art and performance!

*Instructors: Mrs. Carter & Ms. Glosenger*

## AFROLATINIDAD: ROOTS, RHYTHMS & RESISTANCE ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

This course explores the rich and diverse experiences of African-descended populations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Through documentaries, guided research and experiential learning—including field trips, food, music and dance—students will uncover the cultural, historical and artistic legacies of Afro-Latin communities. From the Garifuna of Central America to the Afro-Ecuadorians of the Chota Valley and the Bomba and Plena traditions of Puerto Rico, just to name a few, students will analyze how African heritage continues to shape Latin American identity. The course culminates in a student-designed multimedia project celebrating Afrolatinidad.

*Instructor: Mr. Ince*

## AI: FOUNDATIONS & FRONTIERS

In a world of PhD-level AI in your pocket, how and where do human judgment and creativity impact society? How can we continue to live purposeful lives while co-existing with generative AI? Through investigation and discussion, we will consider the impacts and opportunities of AI. From our deliberation, we will attempt to forecast and decide what role we want generative AI to play in shaping our lives at Blair and beyond. The final product of the course could include developing potential curricular materials for learning about AI, policy recommendations for Blair or developing a forecast for AI in the style of AI-2027.

*Instructors: Mr. Wagner & Mr. Grady*

## AMERICAN SLAVERY THROUGH FILM

This course critically examines the cinematic history of American slavery. We will pair influential feature films (including *12 Years a Slave* and *Glory*) with essential historical documentaries (*13th*, *Slavery by Another Name*) to create a dynamic, discussion-based learning experience. The course is designed to analyze the gap between Hollywood's narrative and rigorous historical reality, focusing on themes of representation, resistance, and the psychological and cultural legacy of bondage. By contrasting dramatic retellings with historical analysis, participants will develop a deeper understanding of how film shapes our collective memory of this defining period in American history.

*Instructors: Mr. Beck & Mr. Cholnoky*

## BAKE THE WORLD

Are you an adventurous eater? Do you love baked goods and want to explore how they can connect us to cultures around the world? In this hands-on baking course, you'll dive into the rich traditions of international cuisine while developing your culinary skills. Over eight days, we'll take a flavorful journey across the globe, discovering unique breads, cookies, cakes and more. From kitchen safety, recipe planning and baking workshops, this course is designed to engage your taste buds and expand your understanding of food as a universal language. You'll choose regions (not your own!) to explore and dig into recipes that will inspire your baking and give critiques to one another's efforts. Your final project will be an International Bakery Business Plan where you show an understanding of budgeting and what it takes to build a business in the modern world as well as opportunities to reflect on your baking journey. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced baker, this course offers something for everyone. Come hungry to learn, and leave with new skills, recipes and a deeper appreciation for building a baking business with an international focus.

*Instructors: Ms. Dunne, Mr. Coronado & Mrs. Shaw*

## BEYOND THE DICTIONARY: REAL-WORLD SPANISH TRANSLATION

Ever wondered how language can save lives or build justice? In this course, you'll step into the world of professional translators working in medicine, law and nonprofits. Translate real-world materials—like newsletters or outreach forms—and learn how accuracy and empathy shape every word. Hear from guest translators, tackle authentic challenges and build a portfolio that makes your Spanish skills shine in global health, social justice and beyond.

Please note: Spanish proficiency is required for this course. Students must have been enrolled in or have already completed Spanish 4, a higher-level Spanish course or be a heritage speaker.

*Instructor: Dr. Mundo*

## CAREERS IN SPORTS

Discover Your Future in Sports: Career Seminar. This is your fast track to understanding the dynamic world of the sports industry. Go beyond the game and explore the vast career landscape, from on-field performance to off-field operations. You won't just hear about it—you'll meet the pros! We'll host virtual sessions with experts across various sports occupations and take exclusive field trips to experience real working environments firsthand. The seminar culminates with you taking the lead on a final career project, where you'll research and present on the sports role that ignites your passion.

*Instructors: Mr. Clavel & Mr. Gitomer*

## CHESS: THE GAME OF KINGS

Let's play chess! This course introduces students to the game of chess as a tool for developing critical thinking, concentration and problem-solving skills. Students will learn the rules of play, the movement and value of each piece, and the key principles of opening, middlegame and endgame strategy. They will record and analyze their own games, study famous master games, and practice sportsmanship and decision-making under time pressure. At the end of the class, we'll have an open challenge to the School!

*Instructors: Ms. Williams & Mr. Facciani*

## CULINARY CREATIONS: DEVELOPING, MARKETING & BRANDING YOUR OWN FOOD

In this course, students will take on the challenge of producing, developing and marketing their own food product. Using a combination of Adobe creative tools and their culinary talents, students will compete to create the most marketable product. Through hands-on testing, collaboration and real-

world research, students will refine their ideas, analyze their competition and build a strong brand.

They will also design packaging that aligns with their brand and appeals to consumers. On presentation day, we'll invite participants from other Intersession courses to sample the food and evaluate the overall branding. These participants will vote for their favorite product, crowning the top culinary creation!

**Instructors:** Ms. Ehrenwerth & Ms. James

## DESIGNING OF CLASSIC VIDEO GAMES

Have you ever wondered about the origins and ancestors of the video games you play? Have you ever wanted to learn how to code those games? This Intersession course will explore four classic video games (Pong, Missile Command, Tron and Mario) and the coding skills necessary to create them today. We'll take a trip to an arcade that specializes in classic games, play emulations of classic games and dissect the games we play today to understand their design choices. Ultimately, each student will contribute their own game to a class arcade as a final product. (\*Note, no previous programming skills are required.)

**Instructors:** Ms. Chen & Mr. Gould

## ENGINEERING WITH PAPER

Ever wonder how a tall house of cards stays up or why a paper airplane flies? In this course, we'll explore the art and engineering of paper through miniprojects that combine creativity and design. Starting with basic folds like the mountain, valley and crimp, we'll progress from simple creations to complex builds—floating boats, pop-up books, bridges and architectural models. Using the engineering cycle of research, design, build, test and redesign, we'll finish with a final challenge: designing and building a paper roller coaster with loops, jumps and funnels. Who can make the tallest and longest (time) coaster?

**Instructors:** Mr. Anthony & Mr. Thatcher

## ESCAPE FROM REALITY: A TABLETOP ROLE-PLAYING HISTORY IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

Play, experience and learn all about tabletop role-playing games, starting with the grandfather of them all, Dungeons and Dragons. D&D has defined an era in gaming and the broader culture, through its impacts and influences. In the process, it and other games like it have reflected the times in which they were played and developed, both in the stories they tell and in the mechanics that let us tell them. In this course, we will examine that history and look at how different games have been used to tell stories around the table since the rise of this new medium in the 1970s through to the modern era.

**Instructors:** Mr. Link, Ms. Patzelt & Mr. Uhlig

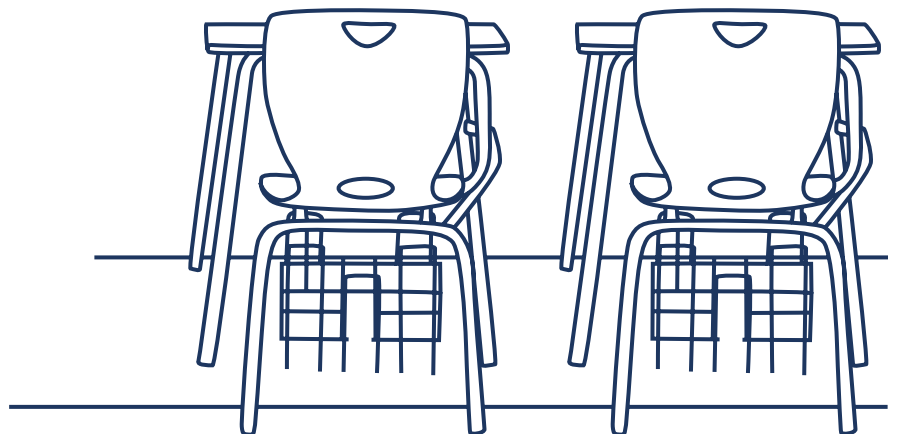
## GAME CHANGERS: WOMEN IN SPORTS

This course explores the history, challenges and triumphs of women in sports. Students will examine the impact of Title IX, media representation, intersectionality and global perspectives while learning about pioneering athletes and current changemakers. Through interactive discussions, media analysis and creative projects, students will develop a deeper understanding of gender equity in athletics. The course encourages critical thinking, empathy and advocacy, empowering students to recognize and challenge inequality in sports and beyond. The final project allows students to creatively express what they've learned and propose meaningful change.

**Instructors:** Ms. Doldoorian, Mrs. Donlon & Ms. Raley

## GAMING FOR LIFE

We play games for lots of reasons: to try on roles outside our usual experience, to socialize, to compete, to coordinate and cooperate with teammates and—mostly, to have fun. In this course, we will bypass the immense popularity of digital games and instead take on the rapidly growing world of board games. The critical thinking, design principles, and face-to-face socializing of gaming provide an intellectual and emotional



antidote to the overstimulation of our modern world. Why not exercise your mind and have fun in the process by learning a dozen or more critically acclaimed games that will hook you for life?

*Instructors: Mr. Parauda & Mr. Devaney*

## GLASS BREAKERS

This hands-on course introduces students to the art and craft of stained glass. Participants will learn the complete process from start to finish, including selecting patterns, cutting and shaping glass, applying copper foil and soldering pieces into a finished design. Along the way, students will explore color, texture and light as they gain confidence with both the artistic and technical aspects of the medium. By the end of the course, each student will complete a unique stained glass project to take home, while gaining the foundational skills needed for future glasswork.

*Instructors: Ms. Chamberlain & Mrs. Link*

## GOSSIP & GILMORE GIRLS: HOW TV & FILM PORTRAYS THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

From *Saved by the Bell* to *Clueless*, *Gilmore Girls* and *Gossip Girl*, television and film have long shaped how audiences imagine the high school experience. This course invites students to analyze how different eras represent adolescence, privilege, friendship and identity, and to consider how these portrayals both reflect and influence real-life culture. Through guided discussion, media analysis and creative production, students will craft their own responses in formats such as podcasts or YouTube video essays. The course will culminate in a trip to Manhattan to visit iconic *Gossip Girl* filming locations.

*Instructors: Mr. Smith & Ms. Smith*

## INTRODUCTION TO QUILTING

Make a quilt! After discussing the history and traditions of quilt-making, we will introduce the basics of sewing to students, from material selection to cutting, block-making, quilt sandwich assembly and binding. Students will finish the course with a completed lap quilt in a log cabin pattern and a basic understanding of the history of quilting. Don't be afraid—no experience necessary!

*Instructors: Ms. Schrope & Mrs. Conforti-Browse*

## PASSION + EMPATHY + DESIGN = A BETTER WORLD

Use your passions, creativity and interests to design a better world! We will take a tour of innovative designs from around the world. We will work through a model for design focused on personal interests and motivation, empathy and inquiry, and then we will create design plans for an art piece, object, product, event or system that can benefit others in our own communities, possibly for Day of Service.

*Instructors: Mrs. Sykes & Mrs. Patterson*

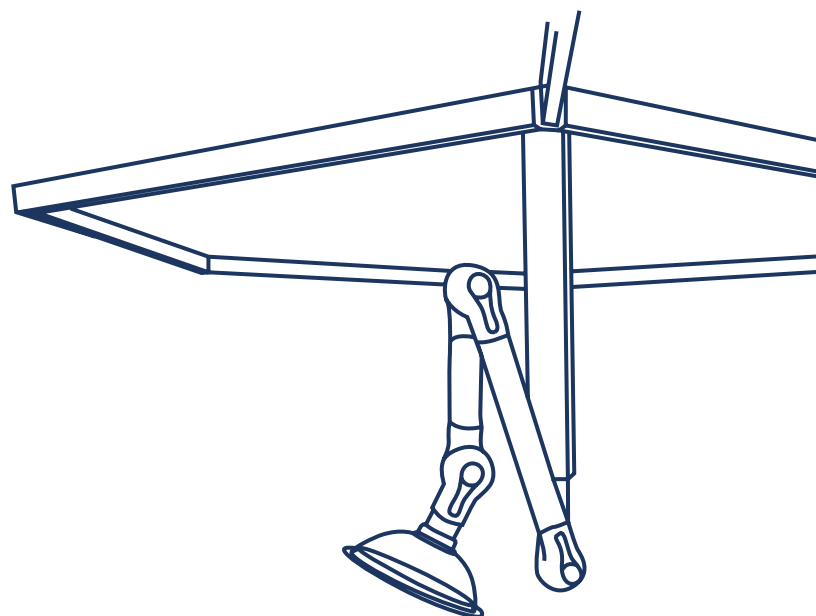
## PIRATES

Want to be a pirate? Catch us exploring these legendary sea robbers as we look at their history and legacy throughout the ages. We will watch on-screen adaptations of their lore and find meaning in their myriad travels across seas. This course seeks to gain knowledge on how these marauders became so culturally significant and how their realities and livelihoods have evolved from their inception until now. Together, we will build hands-on projects as well as create stories and backgrounds for inventive pirate characters.

*Instructors: Mrs. Gould & Ms. Shokr*

## PROFIT & PUNISHMENT: EXPLORING FOR-PROFIT PRISONS THROUGH THE LENS OF MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Join us as we examine the for-profit prison system in the United States and its intersections with mental health and community well-being. Students will explore how



privatization, inequity and social stigma can shape the experiences of incarcerated individuals and their families. Through media, discussions, guest speakers and creative projects, students will analyze the moral, psychological and civic implications of incarceration and consider community-based alternatives to the carceral state.

*Instructors: Mrs. & Mr. Thomas*

## **RACE & SOCIOLOGY OF ‘THE WIRE’**

Students in this course will have the chance to examine themes of race, urban decay, educational inequalities, the war on drugs and urban policing through the lens of HBO’s *The Wire*. *The Wire* portrays life in Baltimore’s inner city, with a special focus on the corner drug trade and its impact on everything from politics to education. Running on HBO from 2002 to 2008, *The Wire* is widely considered to be among the best and most important television shows in the history of the medium. In addition to the aforementioned themes, students will examine the show from a literary, storytelling and cinematic perspective. Finally, students will be required to participate in daily discussions, including a final public discussion as our final project.

*Instructors: Mr. Johnson & Mr. Sykes*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & YOU: LEARNING TO MAKE THE APPS WORK FOR YOU**

Social media is often painted as a blight on our society, but are there ways we can use it to serve us? Can you become literate enough in the messaging of TikTok and Instagram that it can actually work for you? If we are smart about how we use social media, is there a chance that it can actually enhance aspects of our lives rather than diminish relationships? We aim to examine the apps and common modes of communication to be smarter about how we make and consume content on social media.

*Instructors: Dr. Abascal & Mrs. Leddy*

## **STORMS & STRUGGLES: HOW NATURAL DISASTERS SHAPED THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**

From Hurricane Katrina to Hurricane Harvey, from the devastation of Hurricane Helene to the wildfires and tornado outbreaks reshaping America, natural disasters have tested

the nation’s strength and exposed deep social and economic divides. This course examines how such events reveal the connections between environment, policy, race and class—showing who is most vulnerable and why. Students will explore how the media, government and communities respond to crises and how these responses shape recovery. Through research, discussion and case studies, students will consider how modern disasters continue to define justice, inequality and the American experience.

*Instructors: Mr. Redos & Mr. Thornton*

## **THE ART OF LETTERING**

From illuminated manuscripts of medieval times to graffitied murals of today, learn how to create beautiful calligraphy letters as well as graffitied art to create stunning messages of art through a combination of pictures and words. We will study and look at what comprised illuminated manuscripts of the past and why their lettering and ornate beauty was so powerful and necessary in conveying knowledge and beauty. We will then fast-forward a few hundred years and look at the impact that street graffiti has garnered in terms of its powerful messaging and art.

*Instructors: Mr. Harvard, Mrs. Lohr & Mr. Browse*

## **THE FOOD ISSUE**

Whose breakfast sandwich reigns supreme, Dale’s or the Dog House’s? Is the pizza in the dining room the best in town? Where do you go in Blairstown for a first date? Are some Blair alumni so obsessed with good food that they go into the business of feeding people? And is there really a secret menu at Ho Hos, and must you speak Mandarin to gain access to it? If you like to write or do art, you’re intrigued by the prospect of exploring the food scene on and around our hilltop, or you’re intrigued by the prospect of publishing a high-quality hard-copy magazine, join Doc Sayers, Mr. Moore and our talented team as we produce *The Food Issue*.

*Instructors: Mr. Moore & Dr. Sayers*

## **THE SHOW MUST GO ON: BEHIND THE SCENES OF THEATRICAL PRODUCTION**

The stage is set, the lights come up, the costumes dazzle the audience. Each of these elements is critical in creating the

immersive experience that is live theatre. But how much work really goes into designing a set, lightplot, costumes and more? Join the Ryersons as we explore the backstage world of dramatic production! We will see multiple shows and, for our final product, students will design their own original set or costumes for a production of their choosing.

*Instructors: Mrs. & Mr. Ryerson*

## **YOU ARE WHERE YOU EAT**

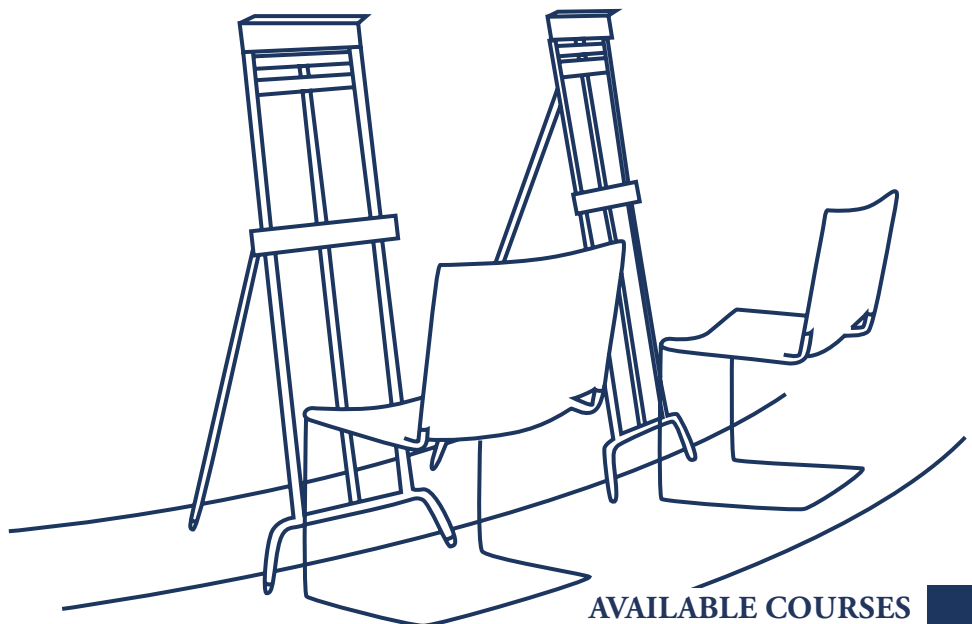
Love fusion food? What if it's just a natural consequence of immigration, availability, necessity and interculturality? Come explore food from different cultures and think about how foods have changed over time. We will go on a food tour, take a cooking class, eat food from a fusion restaurant, and as a final project, you and a partner will create your own unique recipe with roots from two different cultures.

*Instructors: Ms. Castillo & Ms. Wang*

## **X MARKS THE SPOT: FINDING YOUR WAY & HUNTING TREASURE WITH MAP & COMPASS**

Could you find your way through the woods if you didn't have a working cellphone with you? How did people navigate before GPS? This course will introduce you to the basic skills of map reading and using a compass to find your way through a marked course on Blair's campus. You'll use those skills in groups to trace a predetermined path and arrive at a goal. After that, you will design a new course (treasure hunt) for your fellow classmates to navigate. You will film your progress through your classmates' courses and report on the skills learned and utilized, as well as describe the treasures found throughout each course.

*Instructors: Mr. Ridgeway & Mr. Watson*



# NOTES

