Upper School Curriculum Guide

PRINCETON DAY SCHOOL

2026 - 2027

Mission, Vision, Values

Our Mission: Princeton Day School cultivates intellectual vitality and strength of character within a community of compassion, shared responsibility, and play.

Our Vision: To empower each student to act with wisdom and purpose.

Our Core Values: Humanity, Creativity, Intellect, Joy, Stewardship

Motto: *Semper Luceat*

Philosophy of the Program

At Princeton Day School, our mission to cultivate intellectual vitality and strength of character within a community of compassion, shared responsibility, and play is reflected in our curriculum. We believe that deep learning happens when the conditions are set with high expectations and support. As such, we offer an academic program that challenges learners to cultivate the habits of mind and heart both individually and within and from a community of learners. Guided by our core values of humanity, creativity, intellect, joy, and stewardship, students experience a course of study across multiple disciplines and co-curriculars that provides the foundational knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for higher education and lifelong learning.

Academic Guidelines and Procedures

Diploma Requirements

To earn a diploma, a student must successfully complete the equivalent of 18 full-year academic courses during the upper school years. Each year-long Major is worth one credit; each year-long Minor is worth one half of a credit. These credits must include:

- 4 credits of English
- 3 credits of mathematics
- 3 credits of history, including American History in 10th grade and one credit of religion
- 2 credits of core (laboratory) science
- 2 credits of one modern or classical language
- 1 credit (1 year-long Major or 2 year-long Minors) in fine or performing arts
- 3 credits of electives (3 years of Major courses or 2 Majors and 2 Minors)

Also required for all students are:

- 1 credit (6 terms) of physical education/athletics, including 1 trimester of Health (usually taken in 10th grade)
- 50 hours of service learning, which should be completed by September of the senior year
- successful completion of a senior independent project

Student Course Load

These requirements define a minimum upper school program and are designed to allow flexibility for students with special interests. Students generally take five Majors and one or two Minors; a student must be enrolled in at least four Majors. Taking six Majors is an exception and requires the permission of the advisor, college guidance, and the head of upper school.

Diploma/Credit Exceptions

With prior approval of the Committee of Department Chairs, the head of upper school, the student's advisor, parents and the department when applicable, a student may:

- Receive a waiver of a diploma requirement if the department involved rules that the student has achieved a level of proficiency commensurate with the credit requirements.
- Complete the diploma requirements and graduate at the end of three years in the upper school. Such a student should submit plans to the Committee of Department Chairs by December of the sophomore year. A student who leaves PDS at the end of the junior year without having completed graduation requirements may later petition for a diploma on completion of the equivalent of those requirements.
- Receive recognition (but not credit) for academic work at other schools, colleges or summer schools. No outside work may be substituted for a graduation requirement.
- Receive credit for independent work and, in rare cases, substitute such an accredited independent program for some portion of the course requirements defined above.
- Residency requirement. A student, who is accepted for tenth or eleventh grade, must stay for two years to receive a PDS diploma. A student accepted for the twelfth grade, who has completed all PDS requirements, may be eligible to receive a PDS diploma.

Course Withdrawal

The school reserves the right to withdraw any course for which there is insufficient enrollment.

Pass/Fail Options

Any eleventh or twelfth grade student who is taking a fifth course that is not a requirement for graduation has the option of taking this course on a pass/fail basis. In addition, any student may opt to take an art Minor pass/fail once the graduation requirement is fulfilled. The decision to exercise this option must be made before the end of the fourth week of classes.

Advanced Placement Course Guidelines

Many of the departments offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which have curriculum guidelines set by the College Board, entailing a level of commitment and rigor appropriate to a college level course and culminating in a three-hour national exam. Each department has determined the criteria by which a student may qualify to enroll in a given AP course. The school makes sure that this challenge is a correct match by consulting the teacher, department chairs, and advisors, who verify that the student meets the criteria for entering the course. Not all students are eligible or appropriate for AP classes, and the school reserves the right to make that decision. In order to honor the integrity of the AP program, a student who enrolls in an AP course must sit for the AP exam. Following the AP exam, a senior will be excused from the class to focus on his/her senior project, while underclassmen must continue in the course until the end of the year. Students are required to attend all of their classes on the day of their AP exams, but they are allowed to be unprepared for those classes without penalty. A student who has a morning exam and leaves early or who has an afternoon exam and arrives late will be treated as having an unexcused absence.

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English

Upper School English is a four-year, integrated program based on the principle that reading and writing are complementary disciplines. Ninth and tenth grade students take year-long English courses shaped around the core curricula described below; juniors and seniors choose their courses from a rich and varied list of English electives.

Public Speaking & Civil Discourse (Minor)

Open to students in all grades, this course develops students' rhetorical skills to ensure their ability to communicate thoughtfully and effectively verbally and in their writing. Blending competencies associated with research, public speaking, critical writing, and media literacy, students will hone their skills in crafting persuasive arguments, analyzing information, and participating in respectful, constructive dialogue. Emphasis is placed on developing strong thesis statements, evaluating sources for credibility, and navigating the complexities of modern media. Students will leave the course with the tools to engage critically with the world around them, communicate persuasively, and foster civil conversations across diverse perspectives.

English IX—Search for Self: Literature Across Cultures and Around the Globe (Major)

Students entering the ninth grade are just beginning to step back and question themselves and their surroundings, exploring in various ways their autonomy. This course is designed to help them discover and nurture their powers of self-reflection in thought, feeling, and expression. English IX examines the essential questions: Who am I? Who are they? Who are we? How do stories help us make sense of the world around us? This course explores the power of words and of storytelling to help us give shape and meaning to our experience and to our sense of self and community. Reading and discussing texts that span the globe, students will come to understand themselves, others, and the interconnectedness of all cultures.

In this course, students will grow as readers, writers, and thinkers, understanding the ways in which literature invites us to read more closely and more openly than other kinds of writing. English IX is discussion based, as students learn to unpack a text and co-construct meaning together. Students develop their own voices and increasing facility with writing through personal narratives, journaling, and creative and analytical responses to the texts.

Core texts may include Homer’s Odyssey (Emily Wilson translation), Adichie’s Purple Hibiscus, and Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet in addition to selected short stories and poems.

English X — American Literature: Journey, Conflict, and the American Dream (Major)

Tenth grade is a year when students come into their intellectual and analytical power. English X nurtures this developmental phase by focusing on close reading and analysis of text. The course

is designed to help students grow as readers and thinkers who can interpret beyond the literal and respond to a text in more nuanced and complex ways, both critically and creatively. Whereas English IX looked outward to examine literature from around the globe, English X will turn inward to examine American literature.

Ours is a rich literature of trials and tribulations, successes and failures, hopes and dreams. It is a literature of journey and self-discovery, a literature of grappling with and articulating the American dream, a literature of assimilation and self-reliance, of subjugation and betrayal. English X will trace the competing narrative threads that define American literature and the American sense of self. Essential questions of the course include: What does it mean to be an American? What are the distinguishing features of American culture and of the American story?

Students will engage in close reading of novels, plays, short stories, and poems. Novels may include *The Namesake*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu*, *Song of Solomon*. They will be encouraged to ask open-ended questions in writing and discussion and to connect one piece of literature to another, to the U. S. history they are studying, and to their own experiences. Students will write both critical and creative responses to the texts they read. They will also assemble a poetry portfolio and draft several short pieces of fiction. The course will culminate in a research project that will allow students to draw explicitly on materials, information, and knowledge they have gathered in both English X and American History.

Grades Eleven and Twelve - Electives

Juniors and seniors choose from a rich selection of semester-long electives. During the fall semester, juniors and seniors enroll in electives designed to strengthen their skills as readers, writers, and critical thinkers. In late January, juniors will begin a second semester English course with a focus on writing and a deeper dive into a particular theme, genre, or writer; seniors will participate in our signature Senior Reading Intensive seminar.

Fall Semester Electives for Juniors and Seniors

Asian American Literature (Major)

"Asian American literature is not a genre, it is an act of survival. It is a way to make sense of a world that does not make sense, a way to reclaim the stories that have been told about us and to rewrite the narrative." —Cathy Park Hong

The reception and interpretation of Asian American Literature has been shaped by several assumptions: that authentic Asian American literature is overtly Asian, an ethnic genre shaped exclusively by the ethnic heritage of its authors; that its characters will embody the "positive," stereotypically Asian tropes of the model Minority myth; and that its sole narrative is the story of the immigrant experience, demonstrating the real possibility of achieving the American Dream, or the neurotic struggle of the "perpetual foreigner" to negotiate two conflicting cultures. This course will challenge those assumptions. Students will be introduced to the diverse and evolving landscape of Asian American literature and a variety of literary genres, ranging from

realism to speculative fiction. We will examine how contemporary Asian American literature redefines and moves beyond the narrative of the immigrant experience, how it challenges the idea that we can talk about the Asian American experience, and how it engages with universal themes such as alienation, love, and memory.

The following questions will guide our inquiry: What is the role of family, memory, and cultural heritage in constructing the individual's sense of self? What does it mean to be "authentically" Asian American, and how do writers push back against or embrace societal definitions of race and heritage? How do storytelling and representation shape our understanding of identity and belonging? And in what ways do Asian American authors use different literary forms and genres to explore the complexities of identity and experience?

Required reading may include *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng; *Y/N* by Esther Yi; *Monstress,* Vol. 1, by Marjorie Liu; short stories by Alice Sola Kim, Ted Chiang, and Ken Liu; poetry by Li-Young Lee, Tao Lin, and Franny Choi; and essays by Frank Chin and Cathy Park Hong.

Coming of Age (Major)

In this course, we will study the "bildungsroman," a German word that can mean "a novel of education" or "novel of formation"—in other words, stories about "coming of age," the journey from childhood to adulthood. Our class texts will invite us to reflect upon ourselves and our relationship with the world. Who do we understand ourselves to be, and who do we want to become? We will explore questions of identity, belonging, sexuality, and growth, as well as how our personal stories interweave into larger historical and cultural flows such as immigration, capitalism, and social inequities. This course will put literature in conversation with history, psychology, cultural anthropology, and film. In addition to the summer reading, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, course texts will include *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro and *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer, as well as a selection of poetry. Our goal will be to challenge ourselves and each other to think and grow together.

Creative Writing (Major)

This course is for students with strong writing skills, a particular interest in creative writing, and the desire to explore writing in a range of forms—including personal essays, critical essays, poetry, short stories, plays, and screenplays. Significant class time will be devoted to a shared exploration of the writer's craft through individual conferencing, critiquing in small groups, free-writing, and presenting works in progress. For the final project students will assemble a portfolio containing their best revised creations, as well as an artist's statement concerning how and why their writing and their approach to writing have changed. To thrive in the atmosphere of freedom and experimentation that this course encourages, students should possess a self-motivated commitment to the craft of writing and a genuine eagerness to explore (and help others explore) the range and depth of their voices as writers. Models will be drawn from such longer works as *The Things They Carried* (O'Brien), *Jesus' Son* (Johnson), *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (Egan), *Woman Hollering Creek* (Cisneros), as well as a number of selected short

stories, poems, and essays. Reading will also include reflections on the life of a writer from the journals and essays of various writers.

Give My Regards to Broadway: American Plays and Musicals (Major)

"The word theater comes from the Greeks. It means "the seeing place." It is the place people come to see the truth about life…The theater is a spiritual and social x-ray of its time." —Stella Adler, Actress and Acting Teacher

This elective provides an introduction into the exploration of plays and musicals from the 20th century through today. We will read and discuss plays as literature intended for theatrical performance, often dealing with the translation of the written page onto the stage and/or screen. The plays featured in this course will be (re)examined from the perspectives of history, cultural context, and form. Topics will include the relationship between theater and society, narrative structure, theatrical representation, and the crafts of theater artists such as directors, designers, playwrights, and actors. We will engage with video archives of past performances and hopefully attend a live performance.

A musical tells a story with words and music. Beyond those basic elements, any limitations around what a musical can or cannot be is up for debate. In addition to looking at the past, present, and future of American musical theater, we will engage in a broad exploration of musical storytelling across many aesthetic sensibilities and time periods. In this course we will get to know the history of the film musical and discuss the social, aesthetic, and philosophical issues created and represented by it. During the course we will view and discuss classical Hollywood films alongside other films which attempt to push the boundaries of the form.

Harlem Renaissance: Soul of a City (Major)

This course offers an immersive exploration of the cultural, social, and intellectual explosion that defined African American life during the early 20th century. Centered primarily on the 1920s and 1930s, "Soul of a City" examines how a specific geographic epicenter became the heartbeat of a global movement, fostering a new sense of identity and artistic freedom. Students will delve into the historical forces—including the Great Migration and the aftermath of World War I—that drew creators to urban centers, transforming the American landscape and challenging existing racial paradigms through literature, philosophy, and visual art.

The curriculum features a diverse selection of seminal texts that showcase the remarkable breadth of topics addressed by writers of the era. Rather than adhering to a single narrative, these works grapple with complex themes of colorism, class mobility, and the internal struggle for self-actualization within a segregated society. From biting social satires that interrogate the absurdity of the racial divide to lyrical explorations of gender and Southern heritage, the course highlights the multifaceted nature of the Black experience. By analyzing these varied perspectives, students will gain a deeper understanding of how the Harlem Renaissance writers paved the way for future generations and redefined what it meant to be modern and American.

Texts may include *Plum Bun* by Jessie Redmon Fauset , *Quicksand* by Nella Larsen, *The Blacker the Berry* by Wallace Thurman, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson , *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, and *Black No More* by George Schuyle

(Hi)story in Film and Literature (Major)

Every picture tells a story and every story is made up of words spun together to form vivid images on the page. "(Hi)Story in Film and Literature" will explore the ways in which both film and literature work to preserve, critique, and even reinterpret the past. Working with the assumption that history books, historical documents, artifacts, and public records are not the only way to learn about the past, this course will look to film and literature as valid forms of a collective, "cultural memory." Whether we are examining the French Revolution, WWII, the Native American experience, Vietnam, or the post 9/11 world, we will seek to understand significant moments in history through stories that have been crafted in words or in moving pictures. We will explore how artistic works of various eras celebrate, criticize, or reconstruct the past. Alongside our study of what story is being told, we will question the different perspectives from which all histories can be told (victor, victim, male, female, the upper class, the masses, the young, and the old). Works read may include David Benioff's *City of Thieves*, Marcus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, and Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. Films may include *Au revoir les enfants*, *Nuit et brouillard*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Vietnam War*, *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Marie Antoinette*, and *American Sniper*.

Students will do historical research on each period studied, present "History blips" to the class, and keep a journal of the discoveries they make while reading and viewing works from different moments in history. They will craft several close analysis essays, a film review, a creative story retelling an important historical event from an "untraditional" perspective, and a Vietnam Veteran memoir.

Humanity & Belonging: Exploring a Speculative Ethics of Exclusion and Embrace (Major)

Humans have an innate desire to belong. But what happens when they don't? In this course we will explore themes of exclusion and belonging through a range of speculative fiction texts that capture the experience of individuals struggling to fit while remaining true to themselves. We will examine how these characters grapple with exclusion, isolation, and the search for meaning and how authors use these outsider characters to challenge and redefine societal norms. Our inquiry will be guided by the essential questions: Who shapes an individual's sense of belonging? Can a group maintain a sense of belonging without excluding others? What emotional and psychological impacts arise from isolation? How do outsiders challenge and redefine societal norms? In preparation for the course, students will be expected to read *Prime Meridian* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia over the summer. During the course of the semester, we will read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick, *Lagoon* by Nnedi Okorafor, selected short stories from *The Story of Your Life and Others* by Ted Chiang, chapters 1-11 of

The Three Body Problem by Cixin Liu, and *The Ballad of Beta 2* by Samuel R. Delany. Supplemental readings may include excerpts from Soren Kierkegaard's "The Crowd is Untruth," Gabriel Marcel's *On Ontological Mystery*, Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Édouard Glissant's "For Opacity," Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and Jeffry Jerome Cohen's "Monster Theory (Seven Theses)."

Mentors in Literature (Major)

If you can see a path in front of you, laid out step by step, it's not your path. —Joseph Campbell

The hero, whether residing in an ancient text or a modern story, sets out on a journey that defies conventions and expectations and challenges well-accepted truths about the world. Although they may begin in familiar territory, heroes must ultimately uncover a new way forward, discovering and creating a path that is unique to them. Fortunately, they have help: gods and goddesses, sages, wizards, wise old hermits, spirit animals, alchemists, and fairy godmothers all serve as guides and mentors, helping the hero find a new way forward. They take the hero as far as they are able, and then, they step aside.

This course will explore the broad strokes of the hero's journey, first introduced by Professor Joseph Campbell and later co-opted by Hollywood. More specifically, the course will consider the role of the mentor and the mentor's interactions with the hero. What lessons does the mentor have for the hero? What are the consequences of ignoring the mentor? How far can the mentor take the hero? How does the hero recognize a true mentor from a false one? We will consider ancient and medieval stories as well as contemporary fiction, memoir, and film, exploring the various guises the mentor can assume and the way the mentor figure has evolved over time. Texts may include *The Odyssey*, Emily Wilson translator, *A Room with a View* by E.M. Forster, *The Fifth Mountain* by Paulo Coelho, *The Forty Rules of Love* by Elif Shafak, and *Bless Me Ultima* by Rudolfo A. Anaya. There will be a range of writing, including analytic writing as well as more reflective and creative pieces. There will also be opportunities to incorporate research on the hero's journey and for presentations.

Red Herrings and (Little) Grey Cells: The Detective in Literature (Major)

There is something immensely satisfying about curling up with a good mystery novel, whiling away the time reading about secrets, lies, murder, and mayhem from the safety of our own living rooms. But why? What is it about the genre that has made it so enduringly appealing? Throughout this course we will strive to articulate an answer to that question while we examine the evolution of the fictional detective, from the epitome of the "formal" detective, Sherlock Holmes, to the ultimate "hard-boiled" detective, Sam Spade. We will consider the ways in which these detectives reflect the time and place of their creation and what their moral codes tell us about our own society. We will also hone our own detective skills as we analyze dialogue for means, motive, and opportunity, dissect plots to distinguish between red herrings and genuine clues, and, of course, try to figure out "whodunnit."

Possible texts include A Study in Scarlet by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie, John Huston's film adaptation of *The Maltese Falcon*, *In a Lonely*

Place by Dorothy B. Hughes, and Rian Johnson's twists on the genre: *Brick* and *Knives Out*. In addition to writing analytical essays and informal responses to the literature, students will have the opportunity to create their own murder mystery games and write original short stories.

Across the Pond: Literature of Two Great Cities (Major)

Over the last two hundred years, one would be hard pressed to find two cities in the world with stronger gravitational pull or greater artistic reach than London and New York. The stories, music, film, and art inspired by each have etched themselves into the world's memory and imagination. From Charles Dickens to Zadie Smith, Robert Louis Stevenson to Mark Haddon, J.D. Salinger to Martin Espada, the Beatles to Lou Reed, the list of those who have been moved and indelibly marked by these two magical and problematic cities reads like a Who's Who of movers and shakers. In this course we will contemplate the role of place in the lives of writers and musicians; how gender, class, and race intersect; and even how artists from each side of the Atlantic have cross-pollinated and left their impressions on both shores. We will look, listen, and read widely. From the New York side of the pond, longer works may include J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* or Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, while shorter pieces will include James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" and an assortment of poems. From the London side, we will read Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and probably something from Oscar Wilde and from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, as well as from Zadie Smith or Monica Ali. We will write analytically and creatively and reflect upon how the place we inhabit helps define who we are.

The Lives of Others: Investigating the Graphic Novel (Major)

One look at hieroglyphics will provide a potent reminder that visual storytelling is a fundamental aspect of the human experience. Since the 1980s the graphic novel, or long-form comic, has become a popular and accomplished literary and artistic form. The contemporary graphic novel is a collaboration between text and image, which blends the shape and arc of the novel with the conventions of visual storytelling. Rigorously studying graphic novels means engaging in new scholarly inquiries that challenge students about how image and text work together to convey meanings that would not be conveyed separately. This course offers a survey of some of the most evocative graphic novels of the last forty years while concurrently providing the skills for reading comics critically in terms of what they say and how they say it.

Throughout the semester we will examine the evolution, subject matter, form, and future of the graphic novel genre. The focus of this course will be on how artists create stories and characters and how to interpret and contextualize such works. This is an interdisciplinary course that will investigate a multitude of media and topics such as racial constructions, stereotypes, assimilation, performativity, immigration, and identification. Ultimately, this is a course about humanity and how image and text can be utilized to shift one's understanding of another person's reality. The course's novels will include *Good Talk* by Mira Jacob, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Ngyuen, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, and *Anya's Ghost* by Vera Brosgol.

The Modern and the Postmodern: Deconstructing and Reconstructing Literature and Art (Major)

This course explores the dynamic worlds of Modernist and Postmodernist literature and art, focusing on how creators responded to the sweeping social, political, and economic upheavals of the 20th and early 21st centuries. From the disillusionment following World War I to the fragmentation of identity in a post-World War II world and the shattered sense of invincibility left in the wake of 9/11, students will examine how writers and artists challenged tradition, redefined meaning, and grappled with uncertainty in times of crisis and change. Through close reading, critical analysis, and creative projects, students will engage with key texts and artworks from both movements—analyzing how themes such as alienation, absurdity, identity, and truth reflect the anxieties and innovations of their times. This course encourages interdisciplinary thinking, connecting literature with painting, architecture, film, and philosophy to uncover the rich, often radical ways artists have sought to make sense of the modern world.

Literary works may include: James Joyce's *Dubliners* and excerpts from *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*; Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*; Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveller*; Julian Barnes' *History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters*; and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*.

Films may include, *Un chien andalou*, (Buñuel, 1929); *Bicycle Thief* (De Sica, 1949); *Blade Runner,* (Ridley Scott, 1982); *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, 1999); *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2001); and *Lost in Translation* (Sofia Coppola, 2003); *The Matrix* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999).

Making the Old New Again: Adaptation and Classic Literature (Major)

The writer John Gardner has been credited with saying that there are only two types of stories: a man goes on a journey, and a stranger comes to town. With such limited options, is it any wonder that writers continually revisit and remake familiar stories? And yet, critics frequently bemoan the fact that so many modern tales (especially movies) are simply remakes of older ones—is this proof, as these editorials claim, that there is no originality in these cynical, unimaginative times, or is this simply a continuation of what has been done for centuries? After all, Shakespeare freely stole his plots from other sources, and if The Bard did it, why shouldn't Hollywood?

This course will examine what happens when original texts are adapted: What is gained? What is lost? How does our understanding of the characters or themes shift as the story is put into a new setting or a new medium? How can modern writers tackle outdated ideas, make familiar stories feel new, or transform classic tales into something that is entirely their own?

Possible anchor texts include Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Adaptations may include film versions of *Jekyll and Hyde*, Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, Jo Baker's *Longbourn*, Ibi Zoboi's *Pride*, as well as excerpts from other adaptations on both page and screen. Writings will include analytical essays, personal responses, and (pardon the oxymoron) original adaptations.

Poetry: Making Meaning (Major)

"[...] Poetry comes out of life. What happened to you yesterday and last week and six years ago and ten minutes ago and what you surmise may happen tomorrow is poetry-in-the-rough. Strain it—distill—work the magic of carefully-chosen words upon it—and there's poetry." —Gwendolyn Brooks

This course is designed as an intensive introduction to the craft of poetry: reading, listening to, writing, responding to, workshopping, and revising poems. The title for this course, "Making Meaning," refers to the ways poetry can help us understand ourselves, each other, and the world amid the constant motion of our lives. Throughout the semester, you will explore what poetry means to you, and consider how poetry can enrich, complicate, affirm, challenge, and reshape elements of how you make sense.

Similar to other arts, such as painting and sculpting, poetry is a practice that requires skill, technique, and sustained effort. To effectively engage with poems and poetry, we must develop a common vocabulary for the "mechanics" or "tools" of the craft, practice identifying the presence of these "tools" in other poets' work, and, finally, experiment with these tools in our own work. Throughout this process, we will reflect on the challenges, successes, and questions we encounter, and share those insights with our classroom community through a writer's workshop. In short, this course is built around reading, writing, and conversation.

Shakespower (Major)

Shakespeare's plays encompass the range of human experience in ways as intriguing and provocative today as when they were written. For this reason, they continue to inspire new generations of writers, filmmakers, and musicians who recast Shakespeare's work in innovative and surprising interpretations.

At the heart of this course lies the open-endedness of Shakespeare's characters and plays. Shakespeare's creative imagination seems limitless, and yet he continually calls on us and our imaginations, inviting us to co-create alongside him. Shakespeare does not editorialize, moralize, or tip his hand. He shows us everything, but he tells us nothing. We must fill in the blanks for ourselves and form our own stories, stories that continue to unfold and evolve long after the plays have ended. When we approach Shakespeare through the questions, large and small, that his plays inspire in us, we engage in a conversation with the author and with ourselves. Moreover, we dissolve the artificial distinctions among author, reader, actor, director, scholar, and creative artist. We will approach Shakespeare's plays through reading aloud, informal class performances, class discussions, and small group presentations. Assessments will include creative, reflective, and analytic writing that is grounded in authentic, rather than purely literary, questions about the plays and characters. In addition, students will have the chance to share their interpretations through recitation, passage analysis, and presentations and to share their research on aspects of Shakespeare's plays, such as the source material, historical and fictional, that inspired them.

Spring Semester Electives for Juniors

CHEx: Creative Humanities Experience (Major)

What does it mean to create in an era defined by machines, code, and algorithms? In this advanced interdisciplinary English course, students will explore the power—and the responsibility—of human creativity in a rapidly changing world. Anchored by *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley's visionary novel about invention, ambition, and consequence, the course will trace the lives and works of diverse creators across disciplines: the painterly gestures and intentional abstraction of Cy Twombly, the lyrical storytelling of Bruce Springsteen, the cinematic dreams of Federico Fellini, and insights from visiting poets, novelists, and musicians.

Students will engage with literature, art, music, and film to examine how creativity shapes—and is shaped by—its cultural and technological moment. Through discussion, close analysis, and guided research, students will develop a deeper understanding of the creative process across forms. The course culminates in an independent or collaborative creative project, in which each student becomes a "creator" themselves—bringing a personal vision to life through poetry, music, narrative, visual art, or multimedia work.

This course is a celebration of imagination, an investigation into authorship and agency, and a challenge: What will *you* create?

Prerequisites: Students entering 11th grade are eligible for consideration upon completion of a course application and committee review. Upon acceptance, students must agree to the fulfillment of a one week summer workshop in June.

The American West (Major)

It should not be denied … that being footloose has always exhilarated us. It is associated in our minds with escape from history and oppression and law and irksome obligations, with absolute freedom, and the road has always led west. —Wallace Stegner, *The American West as Living Space*

This course will examine the myth of the American West through close reading of fiction, essays, and poetry, and through the viewing of classic Hollywood Westerns. The idea that there is open space, adventure, and opportunity out west has become a part of our national identity, while the idea of a "new frontier," and even of a "last frontier," has become the stuff of myth and legend. We will follow the lure of the west through early western literature, essays, and historical documents, focusing in particular on the narratives that have been written regarding our taming of the wild west and our (mis)treatment of Native Americans. We will track the changes that have occurred over time due to urban expansion, industrialization, and a burgeoning modern mentality. We will question what happens when "the west has been won" and this romantic stage of our nation's history is over. Readings will include essays by Wallace Stegner, John Muir, and Edward Abbey, short stories by Bret Harte, poems and short stories by Sherman Alexie, excerpts from Tommy Orange's *There, There*, and Cormac McCarthy's masterpiece, *All the Pretty Horses*. Films will include *Shane*, *The Searchers*, *High Noon*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, and *No Country for Old Men*. Students will explore, through a personal essay, the idea of landscape and a sense of place. They will do research on a topic of their choosing and write critical and imaginative responses to the texts and films we study.

Essays and Memoirs: The Art of Telling True Stories (Major)

When you write about something that you have experienced—even if you keep all of the names, and places, and dates unchanged—you are still creating a story. The art of telling true stories and writing essays lies in interpreting and bringing meaning to our experiences. The factual experience that you are writing about is simply a starting point: a place from which we can begin to explore the larger, and more profound, truth of who you are and what matters to you.

As readers, we will examine how different authors take ownership of their experiences through the act of writing. Where do they start? How do they take something small and seemingly inconsequential and translate it into something universal? Alternately, how do they take something impossibly vast and find a way to make it personal, life-sized, and human?

As writers, we will take inspiration and practical lessons from the authors we explore, expanding our narrative range and developing a greater sense of voice. Our core texts will be *Into Thin Air* by John Krakauer, which combines personal narrative, research, and reporting to chronicle Krakauer's trip up Mount Everest, and *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert, a memoir about her quest for meaning. We will also look at shorter pieces from a range of other authors. Writing will include reflections, memoirs, personal essays, and some analysis of mentor texts.

Words and Music (Major)

"If music be the food of love, play on."

From Duke Orsino's exhortation in this opening line of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, to the "yellow cocktail music" in *The Great Gatsby*, to the "drowsy, syncopated tune" of Langston Hughes' "The Weary Blues," the music of words has always grown from and paid homage to the music of music. In this course we will explore the relationship between music and the written word: how music has inspired poets and writers from the bards of ancient Greece to contemporary slam poets and how literature has given rise to symphonies, songs, and other musical works. Our readings will include such musical poets as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Emily Dickinson, the Beats, Etheridge Knight, Natasha Tretheway, and such writers of musical prose as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Baldwin, Rick Moody, Joyce Carol Oates, Juan Felipe Herrera, Haruki Murakami, Yusef Komunyaaka, and Anthony Burgess. Our aim is to examine not only how music and writing inspire one another, but also to explore the musical qualities of good writing. We will write reviews, liner notes, personal narratives, and essays exploring the musicality of literary texts as well as our own word-music in poetry and prose.

Essential Questions: Why do we create music? Why do we write? What is the connection between music and language? How and why does music inspire us to write? How and why does writing inspire music? Is it even possible for language to exist apart from music? What role does music play in our lives?

Hiding in Plain Sight: The Performance of Passing (Major)

"Wherever there is prejudice and preconception, there is passing, and of prejudice and preconception we as yet have no lack." —Brooke Kroeger, *Passing: When People Cannot Be Who They Are*

One of the more general definitions of passing is often oversimplified as a premeditated act of "deception" for personal gain, for example when a person portrays themself as something different from what they were "born as." When a person passes successfully, no one notices. When a person fails at passing, it becomes a problem worthy of investigation and oftentimes severe punishment for the person who dared to engage in this act.

Passing narratives form an important subgenre of American culture because they force our society to question some glaringly consistent inconsistencies, particularly in terms of how we define identity. Narratives about passing often illustrate a fundamental ambivalence about categories that are purported to be separate, but have the potential to overlap. Regardless of the time period or locale, a person will be inclined to pass if they feel persecuted for a particular trait that may be deemed undesirable.

This elective complicates the discussion of what it means to pass by analyzing (in)voluntary passing in relation to supporting structures (e.g., binaries, hierarchies) and processes (e.g., masquerade, identification, and imitation). By addressing different passing sites, this elective encourages students to grapple with how passers navigate trespassing, transgressing, and ambiguity. Through short stories, novels, films, and research into real-life and fictitious examples of passing, the students in this course will learn that the concept of passing is pervasive, endlessly complex, and ripe for discussion and analysis. The course's novels will include the following: *The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith; *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare; and *Passing* by Nella Larsen.

Journey in Literature (Major)

Could you be happier on your journey this spring at PDS? Even while negotiating the messiness of your "add-oh-less-sense" present and preparing simultaneously for the future of college and adulthood?

What if you made more lists? Studied the pitfalls of perfectionism and procrastination? Tried more "elbow grease" (my grandfather's wisdom)? Sacrificed the present for a pre-planned dream? Revised your expectations to be more "realistic"? Tried to keep childhood alive? Quieted the mind by meditating? Charted your work-out schedule?

Perhaps mentors and/or famous fictional writers will offer you answers which resonate: "It's silly to think you are anything more than a passenger on this planet; we find that after years of struggle we do not take a trip; a trip takes us." (Steinbeck); "Don't give in to your fears. If you do, you won't be able to talk to your heart." (Coelho). Or perhaps not: "So it goes." (Vonnegut)

To look for journey truths which might help you reimagine your approach to life—and be happier—you will visit kindergarten and the middle school, interview current peers and friends,

hear live advice from Journey-class alumni and alumnae (now in college), and discuss life choices and paths your parents or guardians or grandparents followed.

Cornerstone fictional and real-life texts focusing on the seven journey stages will shepherd you through chronological, racial, identity-based, socio-economic, and geographical boundaries: *At the Bottom of the River* (Jamaica Kincaid); *The Happiness Project* (Gretchen Rubin); *House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros); *The Alchemist* (Paolo Coelho); *The Road* (Cormac McCarthy); *Slaughterhouse Five* (Kurt Vonnegut); *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Mitch Albom); and *The Prophet* (Kahlil Gibran).

Psychological studies, poetry, plays, short stories, chapters from various memoirs, and films (*The Red Balloon*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *The Graduate*) will offer you supplemental worlds to visit and contemplate. Opportunities to reveal your "growth mindset" will include presentations to peers, creative and analytical writing, and the course-long challenge: writing and then speaking the results of how you improved your happiness over four months (based on Gretchen Rubin's *The Happiness Project*).

Make 'Em Laugh or Make 'Em Pay: Love and Hate in Literature and Film (Major)

Critics as far back as Aristotle have divided literature into two basic categories: tragedy and comedy. Naturally, each of these can be further broken down into myriad categories. In this class we will examine how two subgenres rooted in the 19th century, Gothic Horror and the Comedy of Manners (no relation), led to two subgenres that defined the first half of the 20th century: Film Noir and the Screwball Comedy.

We'll start on the unforgiving Yorkshire moors in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, examining the power of nature and the horror of the unnatural, and the dangers of madness and marriage. We'll then leap forward almost a century and, through our study of *Double Indemnity* and *Out of the Past*, will immerse ourselves in Film Noir, Hollywood's grim depiction of the American city: dangerous, corrupt, and cruel.

As the weather gets warmer and the days longer, we'll turn to happier topics: love and laughter. We'll read Oscar Wilde's Victorian satire, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and consider how the seeds of the Comedy of Manners take root in the screwball comedy. In that final unit, we will study two classics of the genre, *The Philadelphia Story* and *It Happened One Night*.

In addition to these anchor texts, we will read short stories and poems, and students will have another opportunity to further study the film genre of their choice. Writing will be largely analytical, but students will also write personal responses and craft original pieces in the style of the genres we study.

The New Yorker (Major)

Over the decades The New Yorker Magazine has published some of the best American writing and has served as a mirror for trends in art, fashion, political thought, and other forms of cultural expression. In this course, The New Yorker will be our primary text, and we will read

essays, reviews, stories, and poems by various authors, past and present. These readings will serve as models for our own writing in various genres, and each student will produce a portfolio that will include a personal essay, a research-based reporter-at-large article or profile, and some work of fiction, poetry, or creative non-fiction. Along the way, we may also try our hands at other forms that enliven the magazine's pages, such as cartoons, designing cover art, humor pieces, and short reviews. We will work as a team of editors cultivating one another's writing and exploring how our voices reflect the culture of our own community. While we will not produce our own magazine, we will look for opportunities for all members of the class to publish their work in the Spokesman, Cymbals, or publications outside the school. The goal is to strengthen our own skills as writers and editors while at the same time exploring the ways in which our writing reflects and gives voice to our own cultural values.

Wild Inside: Vampires, Society, and the Shadows Within (Major)

"The monsters we create are always mirrors of ourselves." —Douglas E. Winter

From its mythic origins to its modern re-appropriations, vampire lore has long captivated our imaginations, serving as a mirror for our deepest fears, hidden desires, and primal instincts. This course delves into the evolution of the vampire myth, examining how these tales illuminate the complexities of human nature and provide a lens for societal critique.

Vampires straddle the boundary between civilization and the untamed, embodying the tension between societal norms and natural impulses. Through literature, art, and film, we will explore how these creatures reveal our connections to nature, to one another, and to the darker facets of ourselves. By analyzing works from classic vampire texts to contemporary re-imaginings, students will uncover how this enduring archetype challenges cultural norms, exposes hidden truths, and critiques the forces that shape our world.

Texts may include excerpts from Varney the Vampire and Dracula, the short stories "Good Hunting" by Ken Liu and "After the Blood" by Marjorie Liu, and the contemporary novels *Fledgling* by Octavia Butler and *The Vampires of El Norte* by Isabel Cañas. Secondary reading may include excerpts from Paul Barber's "The Corpse as Vampire" in *Vampires, Burial, and Death*; Roland Barthes' "Myth Today" in *Mythologies*; W. Scott Poole's "Gothic Nation: Slavery and the American Frankenstein" in *Monsters in America*; and Sigmund Freud's *The Uncanny*.

Spring Semester Electives for Seniors – Senior Reading Intensive (Major)

The goal of the Senior Reading Intensive is to give seniors one last chance to dive into a great book before they leave the Great Road. The course culminates in the writing of a personal statement, the credo, that speaks to who they are and the journey they have taken to get there.

Each section of this course will use a different text as a focal point for close reading, engaged seminar discussion, personal responses, and both analytical and creative writing. While each book touches upon different themes, they are all pieces of literature that will prove to be both challenging and rewarding to the engaged reader. If you would like to learn more about any of

the texts, Goodreads is a good place to start. This is the last book you will read as a high school English student—let it be a text you're excited about!

***Deacon King Kong* by James McBride**

In September 1969, a fumbling, cranky old church deacon known in the neighborhood as Sportcoat shuffles into the courtyard of the Causeway Housing project in south Brooklyn, pulls a .38 from his pocket, and in front of everybody shoots the project's drug dealer at point-blank range.

The reasons for this desperate burst of violence and the consequences that spring from it lie at the heart of Deacon King Kong. As the story deepens, it becomes clear that the lives of the characters—caught in the tumultuous swirl of New York in the late 1960s—overlap in unexpected ways. When the truth finally emerges, McBride shows us that not all secrets can be hidden, that the best way to grow is to face change without fear, and that the seeds of love lie in compassion and hope.

***The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan**

Four mothers, four daughters, four families, whose histories shift with the four winds depending on which woman is telling her story. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, meet weekly to play mahjong and tell stories of what they left behind in China. United in loss and new hope for their daughters' futures, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Their daughters, who have never heard these stories, think their mothers' advice is irrelevant to their modern American lives – until their own existential crises reveal how much they have unknowingly inherited from their mothers' pasts.

***Persuasion* by Jane Austen**

At twenty-seven, Anne Elliot is no longer young and has few romantic prospects. Eight years earlier, she had been persuaded by her friend Lady Russell to break off her engagement to Frederick Wentworth, a handsome naval captain with neither fortune nor rank. What happens when they encounter each other again is movingly told in Jane Austen's last completed novel. Set in the fashionable societies of Lyme Regis and Bath, Persuasion is both a brilliant satire of vanity and pretension and a love story tinged with the heartache of missed opportunities.

***Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen**

For Elinor Dashwood, sensible and sensitive, and her romantic, impetuous younger sister Marianne, the prospect of marrying the men they love appears remote. In a world ruled by money and self-interest, the Dashwood sisters have neither fortune nor connections. Concerned for others and for social proprieties, Elinor is ill-equipped to compete with self-centred fortune-hunters like Lucy Steele, while Marianne's unswerving belief in the truth of her own feelings makes her more dangerously susceptible to the designs of unscrupulous men.

Through her heroines' parallel experiences of love, loss, and hope, Jane Austen offers both a delightful comedy of manners and a powerful analysis of the ways in which women's lives were shaped by the claustrophobic society in which they had to survive.

***Station Eleven by Emily* St. John Mandel**

Set in the days of civilization's collapse due to a deadly pandemic, Station Eleven tells the story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity. Moving back and forth in time—from the actor's early days as a film star to fifteen years in the future, when a theater troupe known as the Traveling Symphony roams the half-reborn wasteland of what remains—this suspenseful, elegiac, spellbinding novel charts the strange twists of fate that connect five people across space and time: an actor, the man who tried to save him, the actor's first wife, his oldest friend, and a young actress with the Traveling Symphony, caught in the crosshairs of a dangerous self-proclaimed prophet.

***Circe* by Madeline Miller**

In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child --- neither powerful like her father nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power: the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves.

Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts, and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology, including the Minotaur, Daedalus and his doomed son Icarus, the murderous Medea, and, of course, wily Odysseus.

But there is danger, too, for a woman who stands alone, and Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians. To protect what she loves most, Circe must summon all her strength and choose, once and for all, whether she belongs with the gods she is born from or with the mortals she has come to love.

***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare**

Hamlet, by William Shakespeare, is a tragedy about the Prince of Denmark seeking revenge for his father's murder by his uncle, Claudius, who has married Hamlet's mother, Gertrude. Haunted by his father's ghost, Hamlet feigns madness to investigate, leading to a plot filled with deception, madness, and revenge that culminates in the deaths of most Major characters, including Hamlet himself, in a final duel. It is Shakespeare's longest play and one of the most influential works in English literature, exploring themes of mortality, betrayal, and morality.

History

In studying history, we seek to understand humans' interactions with one another and with their environments. Consisting of the narratives people find meaningful at different times, the stories we tell about the past can both unsettle and inspire. Always complicated and often contested, the events and experiences we confront may generate emotional responses. As in all of our work with young learners, we provide students with context for understanding challenging ideas, and we cultivate compassionate spaces in which students engage openly. Across the curriculum, students develop essential historical skills by working with primary and secondary sources representing diverse perspectives, engaging in respectful discourse, and strengthening their analytical writing and research practices. For ninth graders, the frameworks of religious studies anchor our survey of world religions. Tenth-grade students trace the complex development of American history, society, identity, and culture. During the eleventh and twelfth grades, students choose electives that allow them to dive deeply into curricula that ignite their passions while further refining their critical thinking, communication, and research skills and cultivating a broad worldview. In addition to learning history, we seek to empower students to understand and thoughtfully participate in the production of history itself.

World Religions in History (Major)

World Religions in History explores how religion and belief systems have provided meaning to the human experience across time and cultures. We will focus on five Major world religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — examining their origins, spread, and core beliefs. Each unit will include a case study to deepen understanding and will conclude with an exploration of how that tradition engages with a contemporary social issue.

While these five traditions will be the primary focus of our in-class study, we recognize and respect the rich diversity of religious and spiritual traditions around the world. As part of the course, students will complete a year-end research project on a religion of their choice, investigating how it addresses one of the social issues explored during the year. This project is designed to foster personal reflection, interfaith understanding, and critical thinking about religion's role in modern life.

In addition to its religious studies content and frameworks, this course serves as a workshop for academic skill-building. Students will develop critical reading, academic writing, and verbal communication skills. A key goal of the course is to help ninth-grade students reflect on how they learn and build effective study habits for high school and beyond.

American History and Culture (Major)

The tenth-grade American History course surveys the complex development of the American Republic from its colonial origins to the present day. Students will engage in the practices of historians through close reading, discussion, and analytical writing using both primary and secondary sources. While the course follows a chronological framework, it emphasizes the

diverse interpretive lenses historians use to construct meaning from the past, including (but not limited to) politics, economics, diplomacy, race, gender, culture, and sexuality.

Throughout the year, students will develop and apply historical thinking skills—such as sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and argumentation—to deepen their understanding of America's past. The course culminates in an independent research project grounded in digitized archival sources. Ultimately, this course aims to foster student understanding of both American history and the processes through which historical knowledge is produced.

Public Speaking & Civil Discourse (Minor)

Open to students in all grades, this course develops students' rhetorical skills to ensure their ability to communicate thoughtfully and effectively verbally and in their writing. Blending competencies associated with research, public speaking, critical writing, and media literacy, students will hone their skills in crafting persuasive arguments, analyzing information, and participating in respectful, constructive dialogue. Emphasis is placed on developing strong thesis statements, evaluating sources for credibility, and navigating the complexities of modern media. Students will leave the course with the tools to engage critically with the world around them, communicate persuasively, and foster civil conversations across diverse perspectives.

Advanced-level Electives and AP Courses

AP Art History (Major)

This course examines art produced across the world from the earliest civilizations to the present (roughly 3000 BCE to 2015 CE), providing students with a global foundation in the history of art and architecture and focusing on a core of 250 works. We will deal with Major artistic monuments and movements, paying particular attention to how art shapes and is shaped by the social, historical, religious, and political circumstances of the period and culture. Following the redesign of the AP Art History exam, which students are required to take, are the three big ideas of this course. First, artists manipulate materials and ideas to create an aesthetic object, act, or event. Second, art making is shaped by tradition and change, and third, interpretations of art are variable. Our three essential questions for the year will be: What is art and how is it made? Why and how does art change? How do we describe our thinking about art? Our emphasis on culture, history, writing, and critical analysis fosters the kinds of skills crucial for success in any profession involving synthetic thinking. To extend their learning, students will have opportunities to explore local and regional art museums.

AP Comparative Government and Politics (Major)

AP Comparative Government and Politics is an introductory college-level course that uses a comparative approach to examine the political structures; policies; and political, economic, and social challenges of six selected countries: China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom. We begin by focusing on foundational political concepts and ideas before moving on to an examination of the history, structure, and policies of the six course countries. Employing the disciplinary practices of political scientists, students analyze data and text-based sources as

they explore topics like power and authority, legitimacy and stability, democratization, internal and external forces, and methods of political analysis. This course is designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Comparative Government and Politics Exam by making demands upon them equivalent to that of an introductory college course.

AP European History (Major)

Advanced Placement Modern European History is a full-year course focusing on European history from 1450 to the present, including the Renaissance and Reformation, the evolution of Constitutionalism, the Enlightenment and French Revolution, the rise of Nationalism, the World Wars and the Cold War, and Modern Europe. Coursework includes analysis of historical documents, student-centered activities and simulations, and rigorous development of the writing craft through document-based, long essay and short answer questions. This course is designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Modern European History Exam by making demands upon them equivalent to that of an introductory college course. This includes using an AP-level textbook and supplemental primary and secondary materials. Highly motivated, independent learners who have a strong interest in European history should take this course.

AP Seminar (Major)

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics by analyzing a variety of perspectives. AP Seminar uses an inquiry framework where students practice reading and analyzing news media, scholarly studies, foundational and philosophical texts, speeches, broadcasts, personal accounts, as well as artistic works and performances. Students will learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop original perspectives in written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations—both individually and as part of a team. By the conclusion of this course, students will have the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.

AP U.S. Government and Politics (Major)

This course focuses on power in the United States. Politics helps determine the distribution of power in a society. Together we will practice research, writing, critical thinking, and political engagement skills. We will prepare for the exam in AP U.S. Government and Politics by examining the American system of government from many angles. Students gain a familiarity with the various institutions, groups, and ideologies that shape U.S. politics with a focus on how varied interpretations of the United States Constitution affects our lives. Students will engage in textbook reading, supplemental material, and the analysis of Supreme Court cases. As the material in this class affects society deeply on a regular basis, students should expect to keep up with the news. Ultimately, this course will help students become more aware and involved members of American democracy.

AP African American Studies (Major)

AP African American Studies is an interdisciplinary, college-level course that explores the vital contributions, experiences, and intellectual traditions of African Americans. The course examines African American history and culture from the African continent through the present day, integrating perspectives from history, literature, the arts, political science, sociology, and geography.

Students engage with primary and secondary sources, scholarship from across the African diaspora, and contemporary research to develop a deep understanding of Black experiences in both national and global contexts. Through inquiry-based learning, students analyze the evolution of African civilizations, the impact of the transatlantic slave trade, the development of African American cultural, political, and social movements, and the ongoing pursuit of equity and justice in the United States.

The course emphasizes critical thinking, research skills, and academic writing. Students participate in discussions, evaluate multiple viewpoints, and complete analytical projects that reflect the complexity and richness of African American life.

AP African American Studies prepares students to both appreciate the breadth of African American scholarship and contribute thoughtfully to conversations about race, culture, and democracy.

Bioethics (Major)

Should humans use animals for food or other resources? Should a person be able to end their life when they have a terminal illness? Is it right to terminate a pregnancy? Always? Sometimes? Never? Most importantly, why?

If thinking about, discussing, researching, and grappling with questions like these excites you, Bioethics is the course for you! Bioethics is a broad field of study that pulls from different disciplines to explore and respond to moral and ethical dilemmas. For any dilemma we study, we'll explore it scientifically and ethically. Scientific conclusions can inform moral decisions. For example, when grappling with whether to use new vaccine technology (as we did with the COVID vaccines), scientists can gather empirical observations about safety and efficacy to inform decision making. We will learn not only to understand relevant scientific content, but to analyze those conclusions for power and limitations to help us decide how they inform a moral dilemma. To determine what we might consider a right action, we will learn to employ ethical frameworks – such as utilitarianism – to assist us in our decision making. Likewise, we will read ethical positions constructed by philosophers (who sometimes disagree with each other!) to see how they think about the dilemmas we discuss.

In this course students will be asked to do the following:

- Start any exploration by asking questions to direct their learning;
- Consume a variety of sources to learn pertinent scientific content;
- Evaluate scientific conclusions (pulled from primary literature) for power and limitations;

- Read philosophical positions to understand them (rather than critique them);
- Apply ethical frameworks to inform one's decision making;
- Fairmindedly articulate positions with which one may disagree;
- Listen to and learn from classmates; and
- Construct positions on dilemmas for which there is no one right answer.

Ethics – Views of Human Nature (Major)

In his poem "Romanesque Arches," the Swedish Nobel laureate Tomas Tranströmer writes, "Don't be ashamed to be a human being, be proud! / Inside you one vault after another opens endlessly. / You'll never be complete, and that's as it should be." These lines will frame our course. What does it mean to be a human being? Why might we feel shame—and pride—at being human? What does it mean to "never be complete," given both our personal ambitions and our inevitable finitude? To explore these questions, we will engage in the interdisciplinary study of three related units. We will begin with an examination of the Holocaust. We will look at Jewish and non-Jewish victims of the Nazi regime and then will turn our attention to the other humans who were involved: perpetrators, rescuers, resisters, and bystanders. In our second unit, we will examine Existential philosophy. Philosophers connected to this school raise questions about human freedom, ethics, and what meaning (if any) life truly holds. We will conclude with an examination of Buddhist ethics, especially as put forward by the Dalai Lama. Throughout the course, we will engage carefully in questions connected to race, gender, religion, and identity.

In addition to engaging thoughtfully with the views of our authors and their classmates, students will be asked to refine their own thinking about these central human questions. Students will read works by authors including Plato, Viktor Frankl, Dostoyevsky, Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, bell hooks, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and the Dalai Lama. We will regularly engage with literature and film to deepen our understanding of our central questions.

Macroeconomics (Major)

Macroeconomics is an introductory college-level macroeconomics course where students cultivate their understanding of the principles that apply to an economic system as a whole through an exploration of (1) national income, prices, and measurements of economic performance; (2) the financial sector and the markets; and (3) monetary and fiscal policy. This is achieved by using principles and models to describe economic situations and predict and explain outcomes with graphs, charts, and data as they explore concepts like economic measurements, markets, macroeconomic models, and macroeconomic policies. During this class we will also examine ideas in finance including corporate finance, basic financial analysis, and the capital markets. In addition, the course provides students with a basic understanding of how markets value and trade financial assets. Course materials include Gregory Mankiw's Principles of Economics, articles from current sources such as The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and a variety of graduate business school case materials. Although basic mathematics is used to study many of the course's topics, there are no math prerequisites to enroll in the class; the course is intended to be equally appropriate for students with primary interests in either humanities or math/science.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Microeconomics

Microeconomics (Major)

Microeconomics is an introductory college-level course that gives students an understanding of how society allocates its resources, how individuals and producers make decisions, and how the government can become involved in those choices. Students cultivate their understanding of individual economic decision-makers by using principles and models to describe economic situations and predict and explain outcomes with graphs, charts, and data as they explore concepts like scarcity and markets; costs, benefits, and marginal analysis; production choices and behavior; and market inefficiency and public policy. Course materials include Gregory Mankiw's Principles of Economics, articles from current sources such as The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and a variety of graduate business school case materials. Although basic mathematics is used to study many of the course's topics, there are no math prerequisites to enroll in the class; the course is intended to be equally appropriate for students with primary interests in either humanities or math/science.

Comparative Global Philosophy (Major)

In Plato's Republic Socrates says, "It is no chance matter we are discussing, but how one should live." How, then, should we live? Questions that were central to Socrates's life in ancient Greece—Who am I? What are my responsibilities to others? What is the purpose and the nature of education?—still confront us today. This course aims to explore these questions in dialogue with classical and contemporary thinkers from across the globe. We will reflect on the nature of personal identity and selfhood, on what it means to live justly in community with others, and what the true ends of education really are. In addition to engaging thoughtfully with the views of our thinkers, students will be asked to refine their own thinking about these central human questions. Readings will vary each year but will include some of the following texts and thinkers: The Autobiography of Malcolm X, the Bhagavad Gita, the Analects, Karl Marx, Nagarjuna, C. Thi Nguyen, Audrey Watters, Danielle Allen, Martin Luther King, Jr., John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Rebecca Solnit, and Shih Chao-hwei.

Positive Psychology (Major)

Positive psychology is the scientific study of human strengths and virtues. It uses psychological theory, scientific research and evidence-based interventions to understand and improve human well-being. This course examines a variety of psychological concepts that fall under the broad umbrella of positive psychology: positive emotions, personal strengths and virtues, gratitude, mindfulness, growth mindset, and grit. Students will explore what new results in psychological science teach us about how to be happier, how to feel less stressed, and how to flourish more. Throughout the semester students will engage in learning the science of positive psychology and how to increase their own well-being using research-based interventions.

Principles of Psychology (Major)

This course explores key theories and methods in the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. We will pursue such topics as intelligence, emotion, and decision-making in looking at how people think, feel, and behave. In doing so we will consider how the mind develops and the role of mental illness. Students will explore how cognitive, biological, social-cultural, behavioral, humanistic, and psychodynamic perspectives inform the field of psychology and our understanding of human behavior. Students will also learn about the key figures and research findings which have shaped our understanding of the mind as well as cutting edge research in contemporary psychology.

Classical and Modern Languages

As many languages you know,
As many times you are a human being.

The languages offered at PDS are French, Spanish, Latin, Classical Greek, and Chinese (Mandarin). Our languages are taught according to the current ACTFL standards. In some cases, students pursue studying more than one language. Note that all class offerings are dependent on enrollment.

Placement

Students new to PDS or new to the upper school (9th grade) are placed in the appropriate language course by the department; this placement is based on the student's communicative proficiency, which is evaluated through a written placement test, an oral interview, previous experience, and (when applicable) the recommendation of their current teacher.

All students must meet department standards to qualify for and retain honors/AP placement. Honors sections (in French and Spanish) are designed for students with an exceptionally strong grasp of the material covered in the prior year. Honors-level students progress at an accelerated pace, work well independently, and are held to a stricter grading standard.

In order to stay in an Honors track, students need to earn an A- (or higher) for the year AND earn the recommendation of the department. In order to advance from the non-Honors to the Honors track, students need to take a placement test AND earn the recommendation of the department.

Classical Languages: Latin & Greek

Latin classes at PDS offer a balance between consistent progress in grammar study and translation and a close investigation of the history, culture, and literature of the Ancient Mediterranean World. In addition, a coherent word study program helps students improve their English vocabulary through their Latin studies. Latin courses range from introduction to grammar and Roman history to advanced courses such as AP Vergil and Pliny, and Ancient

Greek. "Classics" as a twenty-first century discipline overlaps with and influences many other disciplines in the humanities: history, theology, philosophy, anthropology, literary criticism, archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy, and paleography. Therefore, the pleasures of learning Latin are many: serving as an entry point into many of the human sciences, Latin is a beautiful, elegant language with over a thousand-year tradition of literature.

Latin I (Major)

Using the innovative textbook Suburani, Latin I introduces beginners to Latin through a blend of traditional grammatical instruction and immersive storytelling, where the lives of diverse characters from ancient Rome are explored. The course emphasizes developing a strong foundation in Latin grammar and vocabulary, focusing on reading comprehension, translation skills, and basic composition. Students will delve into the social, political, and cultural life of ancient Rome, gaining insights into significant historical events and figures that shaped the Roman Empire. Interactive learning is a key component, with exercises like dialogues, role-plays, and group discussions, alongside projects and assessments that encourage creative application of learned concepts, including crafting Latin stories.

Latin II (Major)

Latin II builds on the foundation established in Latin 1. The course begins with the completion of Suburani Book 1, reinforcing basic Latin grammar and vocabulary, and then progresses into the more intricate linguistic and cultural nuances found in Suburani Book 2. Students will delve deeper into the stories and lives of ancient Roman characters, enriching their language skills within a vivid historical context. The course focuses on enhancing reading comprehension, translation abilities, and composition skills with a significant emphasis on mastering complex grammatical structures and expanding Latin vocabulary. As students advance through Suburani Book 2, they will gain a more profound understanding of Roman society, politics, and culture. The curriculum includes engaging interactive activities that encourage creative and critical application of Latin. Additionally, students will be introduced to more complex Latin texts, offering a deeper insight into the rich literary heritage of ancient Rome.

Latin III (Major)

Latin III is a comprehensive course that completes the exploration of Suburani Book 2 while delving deeper into advanced Latin grammar and focusing significantly on reading comprehension and prose composition. Throughout the course students strengthen their grasp of complex grammatical concepts and expand their Latin vocabulary, enabling them to read and interpret Latin texts with greater fluency. The emphasis on reading comprehension is twofold: it enhances the students' ability to understand and analyze Latin passages, and it lays the groundwork for their own prose composition, where they apply grammatical structures and vocabulary in creative and expressive ways. As the year progresses, the course introduces students to authentic Roman authors. This introduction to original Latin literature is carefully scaffolded with extensive support including glossaries, annotations, and guided discussions to ensure students are well-equipped to engage with these classical texts.

Latin IV/Latin IV DE (Major)

This advanced Latin course focuses on enhancing reading fluency, prose composition, and the analysis of Classical literature. Students are supported as they transition from reading leveled texts to authentic literature through exposure to a diverse range of texts, including authentic texts, including authentic texts from the Classical period, modern novellas, and medieval and Renaissance literature. The course emphasizes writing in Latin to strengthen the student's grasp of grammar and syntax. A significant aspect involves studying original texts by notable authors such as Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, and Caesar, where students will engage in interpretation and analysis, exploring the historical and cultural contexts of these works. Aimed at deepening the appreciation and understanding of Latin, this course enhances language skills, critical thinking, and analytical abilities. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors have the option to earn 6 college credits through a Dual Enrollment program with Saint John's University.

Advanced Latin/Advanced Latin DE (Major)

This advanced course builds on the foundations of Latin IV/DE and is of equal rigor to AP Latin, requiring a high level of analysis and facility with composition. Students will engage in a deeper and more nuanced exploration of Latin literature, advanced prose composition, and textual analysis. The course emphasizes fluency and sophistication in both reading and writing through extensive work with authentic Classical texts and selected medieval and Renaissance works. In Advanced Latin, students will tackle complex and challenging passages from authors such as Cicero, Vergil, Ovid, and Caesar, with an expectation of increased independence in their interpretation and critical engagement. The course places significant emphasis on Latin composition, with regular exercises designed to strengthen mastery of grammar, syntax, and stylistic elegance. Students will produce original Latin compositions, including analytical responses and narratives, demonstrating the ability to think, write, and express themselves fluently in the language.

Advanced Latin is suitable for advanced juniors and seniors seeking a challenging and rewarding experience in Latin. This course offers the opportunity to earn 6 college credits through the Dual Enrollment program with Saint John's University.

Prerequisites: Latin IV DE or AP Latin

AP Latin – Vergil and Pliny (Major)

This course focuses on two cornerstone works of Roman literature: Vergil's Aeneid and Pliny the Younger's Letters, offering students the opportunity to develop advanced Latin reading, translation, and analytical skills. The curriculum emphasizes close, precise translation of passages from both texts while fostering critical engagement with themes, style, and historical context. Students will explore Vergil's Aeneid as a foundational epic, analyzing its poetic artistry, use of rhetoric, and reflection on Roman values, particularly in the Augustan era. Pliny's Letters provide an invaluable window into life under the early Empire, offering personal, historical, and cultural insights, including Pliny's famous accounts of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Alongside textual analysis, students will study Roman history, society, and rhetoric to

contextualize both authors' works. Themes such as leadership, fate, human resilience, and the interplay of politics and literature will be examined. Emphasis is placed on honing skills in Latin translation, sight reading, and analytical essay writing in English, preparing students for success on the AP Latin Exam.

Prerequisites: Latin IV/DE or permission of instructor

Ancient Greek/Ancient Greek DE (Minor)

This course is an introduction to Ancient Greek language. The course will use Athenaze: Book 1 to immerse students in the ancient Greek language alongside an exploration of Greek civilization and history. Beginning with the Greek alphabet and phonetics, it progresses through basic grammar and vocabulary. The textbook uniquely blends grammatical teaching with engaging reading materials, enabling early engagement with Greek texts. In addition to language study, the course delves into the richness of ancient Greek culture, touching on mythology, philosophy, and art and discussing their enduring influence on the Western world. This approach not only facilitates language acquisition but also provides a comprehensive cultural context. Ideal for those interested in ancient languages and classical studies, this course aims to establish a robust foundation in the Greek language, enriched by a deeper understanding of its historical and cultural backdrop. Juniors and seniors have the option to earn 3 college credits through a Dual Enrollment program with Saint John's University.

Prerequisites: Because of the fast-paced nature of the course, students are strongly recommended to have a background in Latin or another inflected language.

Modern Languages – French, Spanish, and Chinese

French, Spanish and Chinese are taught through a communicative approach stressing proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All classes are conducted in the target language with the goal of enabling students to converse with native speakers, think in the language, and understand and appreciate other cultures.

PDS offers seven levels of French and Spanish and six levels of Chinese. At the beginning levels, students learn how to communicate using basic vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, and become familiar with culture and civilization. In advanced levels they study literature, history, civilization, and contemporary culture. Elective courses allow students to pursue specific aspects of the language and culture, and to reinforce conversational skills. At all levels individual sections of the course are tailored to the abilities and strengths of the group.

French

French I (Major)

Students learn to communicate, using everyday vocabulary, elementary grammar, and basic syntax. Through individual, paired, and group exercises, we encourage students to express themselves in typical situations and everyday activities. Students are involved in meaningful

interactions from the start. Topics include, among others, the family, clothing, school, weather, time, food, pastimes, and seasons. Students learn to use the present tense and the immediate future. Since culture is an essential component of the curriculum, students are exposed to activities infused with cultural aspects of both the French and Francophone worlds. An interactive website as well as other multimedia materials reinforce class presentations and facilitate each student's active practice of the language.

French II (Major)

At this elementary level, students continue to enhance their speaking, listening, reading, writing, and cultural awareness abilities while engaging in the thematic exploration of the French and francophone cultural world. They learn vocabulary and expressions related to basic needs and typical everyday situations, including simple inquiries and statements about family, home, school, food, clothes, weather, leisure, travel, time, and personal interests. Students work on their communication skills, a key component of this class, by writing scenarios and acting out skits. They develop and reinforce their grammatical proficiency: they focus on recognizing and employing present, past, and near future tenses, as well as on acquiring more complex structures, such as object pronouns. Projects are an integral part of the curriculum, linking students' interests to aspects of contemporary French and francophone cultures. Authentic materials, such as movies, songs and interactive media, are used to develop students' listening and reading comprehension.

French III (Major)

At this level, students develop their ability to express more complex thoughts and feelings both orally and in writing. Students learn to read and understand increasingly difficult literary and expository texts, to discuss their ideas, and to organize them in composition form. Students reinforce and expand their knowledge of verb tenses and other grammatical structures (such as double object pronouns, adjectives and adverbs, and interrogative pronouns) in order to communicate more effectively. Themes studied throughout the year include: relationships and feelings; living in the city; the influence of media; values and politics; and the challenges of our contemporary society. Music, movies, and excerpts from audio-visual media enrich the cultural component of the class.

French IV (Major)

At this level, students study and review the most difficult forms of grammar and verb usage (subjunctive with expressions of doubt and with conjunctions; compound relative pronouns, present participle, conditional, demonstrative and possessive pronouns). Critical thinking skills and fluency of expression are fostered through reading and audio selections from newspapers, magazines, and other media. Students hone their communication skills through diverse activities (composition writing, in-class debates, one-on-one conversations). In the Honors section, students are introduced to more advanced literary texts. The literary and cultural components of this level serve as an introduction for those students who are interested in continuing at the AP level.

AP French Language and Culture (Major)

Beyond preparing students to take the AP French Language exam, this college-level course is designed to help them develop their command of the French language and their knowledge and appreciation of French and Francophone culture. Students entering the class should already have a solid grasp of French grammar and vocabulary, and their aural/oral competence should also be strong. During the course of the year through different activities (study of press articles and literary works, oral presentations, email and essay writing, comprehension activities about audio and audio-visual material…), the students will improve their four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) with a special emphasis on written and spoken expression in French. They will review advanced grammar topics and will write essays on various subjects with a focus on the six thematic content areas prescribed by the College Board (personal and public identities, families and communities, science and technology, global challenges, contemporary life, beauty and aesthetics). Students will work on their course project, with the guidance of their teacher. All students will take the AP Language exam in May.

Prerequisites: Students must show mastery of the grammar concepts taught in French IV Honors, demonstrate high proficiency in reading and aural comprehension as well as speaking and writing with fluency and accuracy, earn a grade of A- in French IV Honors or an A in French IV, and receive recommendation of the department.

French V (Major)

This course, open to students who have completed either French IV or an AP class, is designed to develop knowledge of the French language and appreciation of Francophone societies and cultures. Students will broaden their vocabulary and develop their communication skills while studying topics presented primarily in French films. The texts, press excerpts, movies, and songs studied in class will provide a rich historical and cultural background from which students will expand their understanding of the multiple aspects of French and Francophone contemporary societies.

Advanced French Literature (Minor)

This course is an introduction to French Literature. The class is comparable to a college level course. Its goal is not only to perfect the students' already advanced level of proficiency in French, but also to develop a fuller understanding of and appreciation for French and Francophone literature and culture. The students will familiarize themselves with great works of French literature of intermediate to advanced difficulty and mature content. They will be provided with methods for literary interpretation through close reading of those texts. They will practice formulating critical opinions in spoken and written French and will be asked to participate actively in discussions on literary topics. The corpus of texts might include poems (by authors such as La Fontaine, Baudelaire, Apollinaire), short stories (by Maupassant, Balzac) and plays (by Molière, Sartre). It is conducted exclusively in French.

Prerequisites: This course is open to students who have completed AP French (or French IV Honors with recommendation of the department).

Spanish

Spanish I (Major)

Although an introductory course, Spanish I utilizes the communicative approach to engage students in the reading, writing, listening, and speaking of the Spanish language. Students learn to communicate and exchange information about familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences. Through individual, paired, and group exercises, students manage short social interactions in everyday situations. Writing includes short messages and notes on familiar topics related to everyday life. Culture is an essential component of the curriculum; activities are constantly infused with aspects of the respective cultures and their contributions to our global society.

Spanish II (Major)

This course is designed to develop the grammatical concepts and communicative skills acquired in Spanish I and to expand students' ability to interact more fluidly in Spanish in everyday social interactions. Students will continue to grow in phonology, vocabulary, grammar, and culture through the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course requires expressing ideas on a variety of topics in written and oral formats with more complex grammatical structures and a wider breadth of vocabulary. The above skills are improved upon through the use of authentic sources, which provides a greater understanding of the cultural complexity of the Spanish-speaking world.

Spanish III (Major)

Spanish III continues using the communicative approach to engage students in the reading, writing, listening, and speaking of the Spanish language. Through individual, paired, and group exercises, students learn to participate in conversations on familiar topics using sentences and series of sentences. Students are able to handle short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering a variety of questions. They also are able to give presentations on a variety of familiar topics using connected sentences. They are able to understand the main idea of messages, presentations, and texts related to everyday life and personal interests or studies. Culture is an essential component of the curriculum; activities are constantly infused with aspects of the respective cultures and their contributions to our global society.

Spanish IV (Major)

Spanish IV builds on the communicative skills developed in Spanish III through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students can converse with ease and confidence on familiar topics using various time frames. Through individual, paired, and group work, students deliver organized presentations and write on a variety of topics, also in various time frames. They are able to follow stories and descriptions of some length from various genres, even when something unexpected is expressed. Critical thinking skills and fluency of expression are promoted through authentic sources. Culture is an essential component of the curriculum; activities are constantly infused with aspects of the respective cultures and their contributions to our global society.

Spanish V – La experiencia hispana a través del cine (Major)

This topics-based course promotes Spanish and Hispanic culture through authentic sources of film and literature as well as interactive activities from the vast Spanish-speaking world, deepening the students' appreciation for Spanish and Latino experiences both in the native country and the United States. Making a shift from the grammar-based textbook structure of the previous levels, this course brings beauty, traditions, and culture to students in a relaxed and communicative classroom. We will explore cultural, social, and political issues throughout the course such as immigration and migration, formation of cultural identities, gender and class, and experiences of war and dictatorship as well as other relevant themes. Movies viewed in class will provide a context in history and culture as well as language. In preparation for watching the films, students will delve into historical and cultural information that provides the backdrop of the settings of the films. Students will further develop their Spanish language skills by actively engaging in the analysis and discussion of Spanish and Latino culture. Enrollment is open to students that have completed level IV

Spanish: Temas mundiales (Major)

This multimedia, interdisciplinary course will explore language and culture through relevant films from a variety of Spanish speaking countries. We will explore the cultural, social, and political issues throughout the course, such as: Latino representation in the media, global health issues, gender and class, experiences of war and the intercultural. In preparation for watching the films, students will study the historical/cultural information that provides the backdrop of the settings of the films. Readings and discussions will introduce the student to the ways in which history and cultural perspectives can influence both individual and societal behaviors, practices, and beliefs. Ultimately, this course will prompt students to consider their own life experiences in contrast and comparison with the global cultures studied. Through the study of films, literature, visual arts, and current events, students will continue to expand their proficiency in the Spanish language. We will, from time to time, pinpoint a grammatical topic to be reviewed, but the focus of this course is not one of grammar. Student work will be assessed through essays, film reviews, exams, and independent projects. Enrollment is open to students who have completed level V or AP Spanish Language.

AP Spanish Language and Culture (Major)

The AP Spanish Language and Culture course takes a holistic approach to language proficiency and recognizes the complex interrelatedness of comprehension and comprehensibility, vocabulary usage, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. The course strives to promote both fluency and accuracy in language use and not to overemphasize grammatical accuracy at the expense of communication. In order to best facilitate the study of language and culture, the course is conducted exclusively in Spanish. The goal of the course is to provide students with the opportunity to build proficiency at the Advanced level and beyond. The course focuses on the integration of authentic resources with the goal of providing a rich, diverse learning experience. The AP Language and Culture course is divided into thematic units based on recommended contexts and guided by essential questions relating to the AP themes. These essential questions drive instruction; students are regularly assessed and receive

formative feedback to refine communication skills and to develop deep understandings relating to the essential questions. Any student enrolled in this course must take the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam in May.

Prerequisites: Students must receive the recommendation of the department and either a) earn a minimum grade of A- in Spanish IV Honors; OR b) earn a minimum grade of A in Spanish IV AND demonstrate a proficiency level of Intermediate High.

Advanced Spanish: Identidades latinoamericanas (Major)

This course, taught entirely in Spanish, will examine how Latin Americans have constructed and interpreted racial, ethnic, class, and gender identities and ideologies from colonial times to present. The course explores how physical environments and geographies have influenced these identities. Our focus will be on the intersection of Iberian, American, African, and Asian peoples and the resulting multiethnic societies in two specific regions (one country per semester). Over the course of the year, the course will also focus on the intersections between disciplines (history, geography, economics, politics, literature, film, music, and art). Each semester, students will progress toward an integrated synthesis which reflects the benefit of using interdisciplinary tools to understand situations or crises. Upon completion of this course, students must demonstrate content knowledge and mastery of skills across several disciplines, including but not limited to Spanish language. Students will interact with one another; with the instructor; and with local, national, and international communities. This work is completed via classroom discussion, live virtual conferencing, recorded symposia, scholarly articles, site visits, written reactions, case studies, and collaborative group projects.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of AP Spanish Language & Culture (score of 4 or higher on the AP exam) as well as the recommendation of a PDS teacher from another discipline who will attest to the student's readiness for extensive collaborative work and the ability to manage long-term projects independently.

Chinese

Chinese I (Major)

Students learn to communicate in Mandarin Chinese using high-frequency vocabulary, elementary grammar, and basic sentence patterns. Through individual, paired, and group activities, students practice expressing personal information and basic needs in familiar contexts. Topics and functions include introducing oneself and others, talking about family and pets, describing daily routines, telling time and dates, expressing likes and dislikes, and discussing food and leisure activities. The course emphasizes accurate pronunciation, with particular attention to tones. Students learn pinyin as a foundation for pronunciation and begin developing literacy skills through character recognition, handwriting, and introductory typing in Chinese using pinyin input. Cultural learning includes calligraphy, holiday-related food activities in the teaching kitchen, songs, videos, and interactive multimedia experiences that introduce students to Chinese traditions and everyday life.

Chinese II (Major)

Chinese II builds on the foundations of Chinese I by expanding vocabulary, grammatical structures, and communicative functions. Topics and functions include talking about school life and extracurricular activities, transportation, giving directions and identifying locations, shopping and bargaining, making appointments and plans, comparing habits and preferences, and describing basic past and future activities. Students continue to refine tone accuracy while strengthening reading, handwriting, and typing skills. Reading passages of increasing length and complexity are introduced to support comprehension and confidence. Students explore cultural learning through project-based explorations and other hands-on activities that connect language use with everyday life and cultural practices in the Chinese-speaking world.

Chinese III (Major)

In Chinese III, students move beyond isolated sentences to connected discourse, learning to express ideas through strings of sentences linked by conjunctions, transitions, and connective devices. Students communicate more independently in spoken and written Chinese on familiar and personal topics. Areas of focus include dining, weather, health and visiting the doctor, birthday traditions and celebrations, allowing students to narrate events, describe situations in greater detail, and express reasons and opinions. Vocabulary and character knowledge expand significantly. Students read short texts and write cohesive paragraphs, primarily through typed Chinese, while continuing to reinforce handwriting. Cultural study deepens through units that connect language use to everyday life and traditions in the Chinese-speaking world, supported by hands-on activities alongside authentic audio-visual and multimedia materials.

Chinese IV (Major)

Chinese IV emphasizes sustained communication across the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes. Students engage with a wider range of authentic texts and audio-visual materials and demonstrate increased fluency, accuracy, and independence. Topics and functions include renting an apartment, travel, sports, discussing cultural practices and values, describing social issues, narrating events with greater time depth, and interpreting and using common idioms and proverbs to support spoken and written expression. Students participate in extended conversations, deliver structured oral presentations, and write multi-paragraph texts, primarily through typed Chinese, with increasing attention to organization, cohesion, and audience. Instruction introduces strategies for understanding more formal written Chinese, supporting students' transition to more complex texts. Cultural learning emphasizes Chinese social practices and values through targeted hands-on activities and interdisciplinary connections.

Chinese V (Major)

Chinese V is designed for students ready to engage in advanced written expression and sustained discourse. Students use Chinese to explore contemporary topics such as education, technology, travel, media, and social change. Classroom discussions, research-based projects, and presentations require students to develop extended discourse, express and defend opinions, and synthesize information from multiple sources in spoken and written Chinese. Students

engage with a wide range of authentic materials, including essays, short stories, films, news articles, and digital media. They are expected to interpret, analyze, and apply idioms and proverbs to deepen meaning, support arguments, and reflect cultural perspectives. Written work is primarily completed through typed Chinese and emphasizes clarity, organization, and stylistic appropriateness. Selected AP-level tasks are incorporated to further develop all language skills.

Advanced Chinese Literature and Culture (Major)

This course, taught entirely in Chinese, is comparable to a college-level literature course and is open to students who demonstrate a proficiency level of Intermediate High or above according to ACTFL guidelines. Its goal is to refine advanced language proficiency while developing a deep understanding of Chinese literature and culture. Students engage in close reading and analysis of literary works of intermediate to advanced difficulty across genres and historical periods. Functions at this level include interpreting literary language, articulating analytical insights, leading discussions, and producing formal written responses. The course also explores the intersections of literature with history, philosophy, politics, film, music, and art. Students are expected to participate actively in seminar-style discussions and complete independent projects.

Mathematics

Grades Nine through Eleven

All students must complete at least three years of high school-level mathematics, and must include the completion of Geometry and Algebra II. Required courses and electives develop strong reasoning skills and broad conceptual understanding and are offered at various levels, including several college-level classes. Computers and graphing calculators are integrated throughout the math curriculum. A student's initial course selection is dependent upon their previous math background. Placement is determined every year and is based on academic achievement in previous math classes and department recommendation.

Math 1 (Major)

Math 1 is the first course in the Upper School mathematics sequence and builds on students' middle school foundations through a focus on functions and algebraic reasoning. Students study linear, exponential, and quadratic relationships using multiple representations, including graphs, tables, equations, and real-world contexts. Emphasis is placed on conceptual understanding, problem solving, and clear mathematical communication. Math 1 prepares students for Geometry and further coursework in the Upper School mathematics sequence.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Pre-Algebra

Geometry (Major)

This course consists of a study of geometry integrated with a review of skills from Algebra 1. Using classical and modern construction techniques, students will investigate and learn properties that proofs verify. Students will see how geometry relates to the physical world through problem settings and potential projects involving design, architecture, construction, archaeology, etc. Confidence in mathematics is strengthened.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra 1 or Math 1

Accelerated Geometry (Major)

This course offers a clear introduction to the fundamental concepts and operations of plane geometry. Students use sequential logic and deductive reasoning skills throughout the course to provide informal justifications and arguments as well as formal ones that are the basis for two-column and paragraph proofs. Students see the development of Euclidean proofs and attain a working knowledge of trigonometry as it applies to right triangles. Areas and volumes are examples of additional topics. There is an expectation of algebraic proficiency, and algebra is used throughout.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Honors Algebra 1B (B) or Algebra 1 (A) or Math 1 (A)

Honors Geometry (Major)

This course is designed for students with high mathematical curiosity who seek to grow beyond passive study and toward genuine intellectual ownership. While the curriculum moves at a sophisticated pace, covering advanced topics through a rigorous, proof-based lens, the primary focus is the development of a student's ability to construct logical mathematical communication from the ground up. Rather than relying on prior exposure or repeated procedures, students are expected to approach each problem with fresh eyes and the grit to carry the burden of discovery themselves. Superior algebraic skills, mathematical maturity, and strong study habits are assumed; however, these serve only as the foundation for a much deeper pursuit: the ability to flexibly synthesize previously mastered material to solve novel, complex challenges. In this environment, we value the curiosity to find connections, the independence to validate one's own logic, and the courage to navigate the discomfort of an unsolved problem over the mere repetition of expertise.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Honors Algebra I (A)

Algebra II (Major)

This course provides the essential concepts and skills of algebra and the study of functions that are needed for the further study of mathematics. Topics include linear and quadratic, higher polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Geometry.

Accelerated Algebra II (Major)

Accelerated Algebra II combines a rigorous study of algebra with an introduction to the family of functions. Students will gain a strong foundation in algebraic skills while exploring linear, quadratic, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic functions. Applications are also used to reinforce theory and concepts. All of the topics of the Algebra II course are covered in depth with a larger emphasis placed on students developing skills in making connections more independently.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Accelerated Geometry (B)

Honors Algebra II (Major)

This course is intended for students with a strong mathematical ability and desire to study deeply the structure and applications of mathematics. The class includes a more sophisticated study of all of the topics of the Accelerated Algebra 2 class. The faster pace also allows for an in-depth study of trigonometry; circular functions, graphing, and identities are all included.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Honors Geometry (B)

Electives

Precalculus (Major)

Precalculus continues the study of functions begun in Algebra II. Elementary functions are revisited in greater depth and an emphasis is placed on properties and transformations of graphs. Polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions and their graphs are studied thoroughly. Additionally, trigonometry is covered in depth. Students review the basic trigonometric functions in preparation for discussions about the unit circle, trigonometric graphs, trigonometric formulas and identities, and applications of trigonometry.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Algebra II

Accelerated Pre-Calculus (Major)

This course is designed to prepare students for a college level calculus class. Students will study properties of polynomial, rational, exponential and logarithmic functions. An in-depth study of trigonometry includes the properties of circular functions, inverse trigonometric functions, identities, vectors, and polar graphing. Limits, parametric functions, and continuity are used to study each family of functions.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Accelerated Algebra II (B)

Honors Pre-Calculus (Major)

This course is intended for students with a strong mathematical ability and desire to study deeply the structure and applications of mathematics. This course uses limits to continue the study of polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions. The faster pace allows the class to begin the study of differential calculus. If time permits, additional topics may include sequences and series, conics, and matrices.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Honors Algebra II (B) or completion of the Bridge program; students who have an A in Accelerated Algebra II are eligible to be considered for the Bridge program.

Principles of Calculus (Major) - fall semester only

In this fall-semester exploration, students take ownership of developing mathematical content while deepening their mastery of functions. After a focused review of the algebraic groundwork, the course moves into the central ideas of calculus: limits, continuity, and derivatives. Students investigate how instantaneous change is defined and how the derivative arises from the limit process, using these tools to discuss the behavior of real-world phenomena over time.

A primary goal of the course is to strengthen students' problem-solving stamina and their ability to read, write, speak, and think in the formal language of mathematics. By coupling foundational skills with conceptual discovery, students emerge better equipped to communicate complex ideas and model the world around them with mathematical precision.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Precalculus

Accelerated Calculus (Major)

This course provides a numerical, graphical, and analytical introduction to the study of calculus. Functions are revisited before expanding upon the theory of limits in order to develop the concept of the derivative and the definite integral. The definition of the derivative and the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus form the basis to study the mechanics of derivatives, anti-derivatives, and definite integrals. Applications that focus on real world situations are emphasized. Technology is used throughout. While this course gives a sound foundation for the study of calculus in college, it is not intended as preparation for the advanced placement test.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Precalculus (A-) and contingent on calculus-readiness test OR successful completion of Accelerated Precalculus (B)

AP Calculus AB (Major)

This course follows closely, but is not limited to, the guidelines of the Advanced Placement Calculus AB syllabus. Following a short review of functions, trigonometry, and graphing, the concept of a limit and the definition of the derivative are introduced. The theory and techniques of differential calculus are developed and applied to topics including optimization techniques, related rates, and the study of change in physics, economics, and life science models. Numerical

approximation methods and integration techniques are applied to the contexts of areas, volumes, and curvilinear motion. The distinctions between antiderivatives, definite integrals, and improper integrals are addressed.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Accelerated Precalculus (A-) or Calculus (A) and contingent on calculus-readiness test

AP Calculus BC (Major)

A continuation of the honors math curriculum, this course follows closely, but is not limited to, the guidelines of the Advanced Placement Calculus BC syllabus. After a brief review of limits and the fundamentals of differential calculus developed in the Honors Precalculus class, students apply these ideas to their perspective of functions. Topics include optimization techniques, related rates, and the study of change in physics, economics, and life science models. Numerical approximation methods and integration techniques are applied to the contexts of areas, volumes, and curvilinear motion. The distinctions between antiderivatives, definite integrals, and improper integrals are addressed. Other topics include series convergence, vector theory, and polar and parametrically defined functions.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Honors Precalculus (B) or completion of the Zoom program; students who have an A or better in Honors Algebra II are eligible to be considered for the Zoom program.

AP Statistics (Major)

The Advanced Placement Statistics course is designed to introduce students to the Major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. The four Major conceptual themes of the course are exploring data, planning a study, making inferences from data, and modeling. Many real world situations will be explored and students will learn to gather and analyze their own data. Students will use the TI-83 calculator and will also be asked to communicate their analyses through formal writing assignments. The course will follow the College Board's curriculum, and the students will take the AP test in the spring. AP Statistics sectioning is based on previous grades, teacher recommendation, and a math aptitude profile.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Calculus (A), Accelerated Precalculus (B), or Honors Algebra II (B)

Post AP Topics in Mathematics (Major)

Students who complete AP Calculus BC have the opportunity to continue their mathematical studies through advanced, college-level coursework. The Mathematics Department offers two post-AP courses — **Multivariable Calculus** and **Linear Algebra** — which are taught in alternating years. Students may enroll in either course when it is offered, and those who remain in the program for multiple years may take both courses (in either order). These courses emphasize conceptual understanding, mathematical proof, advanced problem solving, and

applications across mathematics, science, engineering, and economics. Both courses are designed to mirror the rigor and expectations of a first-year university mathematics experience.

Topics in Differential Equations and Multivariable Calculus

Students bridge from BC Calculus into post secondary calculus work by first completing a thorough study of the techniques of integration. In this course, students also explore many types of differential equations, including solving linear first-order equations, homogeneous, Bernoulli, and second-order linear homogeneous equations. Euler's method and slope fields are revisited in this unit as well as Ricatti's and Clairaut's equations, orthogonal trajectories, the Cauchy-Euler equation, and Power series solutions. Multivariable Calculus extends the ideas of single-variable calculus to functions of several variables, including domain, range, limits, and graphing. Topics include vectors and geometry in space; parametric curves and surfaces; partial derivatives; optimization; double integrals; Applications are drawn from physics, engineering, economics, and other quantitative disciplines.

Linear Algebra

This college-level course introduces matrix theory and the foundations of linear algebra. Topics include systems of linear equations and Gaussian elimination; vector spaces and subspaces; linear independence and bases; linear transformations and matrix representations; determinants; eigenvalues and eigenvectors; orthogonality and orthogonal reduction; and, time permitting, a variety of theoretical and applied applications. Emphasis is placed on abstraction, structure, and mathematical reasoning.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of AP Calculus BC

Mathematics Elective Offerings

Statistics (Major) - spring semester only

In this fall-semester exploration, students take ownership of developing mathematical content while deepening their mastery of functions. After a focused review of the algebraic groundwork, the course moves into the central ideas of calculus: limits, continuity, and derivatives. Students investigate how instantaneous change is defined and how the derivative arises from the limit process, using these tools to discuss the behavior of real-world phenomena over time.

A primary goal of the course is to strengthen students' problem-solving stamina and their ability to read, write, speak, and think in the formal language of mathematics. By coupling foundational skills with conceptual discovery, students emerge better equipped to communicate complex ideas and model the world around them with mathematical precision.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Precalculus or Accelerated Algebra 2

Financial Literacy (Major) - fall or spring semester

This mathematical modeling course is algebra-based, applications-oriented, and technology-dependent. The course addresses college preparatory mathematics topics from Algebra 2, Statistics, Probability, Precalculus, and Calculus under eight financial umbrellas: Discretionary Expenses, Banking, Investing, Credit, Employment and Income Taxes, Automobile Ownership, Independent Living, and Retirement Planning and Household Budgeting. The course allows students to experience the interrelatedness of mathematical topics, find patterns, make conjectures, and extrapolate from known situations to unknown situations. The mathematics topics contained in this course are introduced, developed, and applied in an as-needed format in the financial settings covered. Students are encouraged to use a variety of problem-solving skills and strategies in real-world contexts, and to question outcomes using mathematical analysis and data to support their findings. The course offers students multiple opportunities to use, construct, question, model, and interpret financial situations through symbolic algebraic representations, graphical representations, geometric representations, and verbal representations. It provides students a motivating, young-adult centered financial context for understanding and applying the mathematics they are guaranteed to use in the future.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Precalculus or Accelerated Algebra 2

Science

Science education at PDS cultivates thoughtful, independent learners who understand both the power and the limits of scientific investigation. Students deepen their appreciation of the natural world and learn how scientific thinking informs responsible decision-making, civic awareness, and global stewardship.

Active investigation anchors the program. Through hands-on laboratory work, well-designed experiments, and inquiry-based projects, students learn to analyze data, test hypotheses, and connect ideas across disciplines. Research habits and scientific writing skills develop across the department's offerings, preparing students to communicate complex ideas with confidence.

The program follows a purposeful sequence that builds conceptual understanding and technical skill. Biology in grade 9, including the interdisciplinary STEAMinar, is followed by Chemistry in grade 10. Students are strongly encouraged to complete an introductory Physics course to ensure a balanced foundation for advanced study. In later years, students may explore a range of AP and elective offerings, including Environmental Science, Anatomy and Physiology, and Cell and Molecular Biology. For those seeking a more immersive experience, the Advanced Research Experience (REx) places select rising seniors in university and professional laboratories for a summer of mentored, independent research.

Graduates leave the department prepared to evaluate evidence thoughtfully, approach complex problems with discipline and curiosity, and carry forward the habits of mind that support lifelong learning.

Introductory/Core Courses

Biology (and STEAMinar) (Major)

This introductory course provides a survey of the Major concepts ranging from the molecular to the community level. Topics include up-to-date coverage of cells, genetics, DNA, evolution, ecology, plants, animals, and human biology. Hands-on laboratory investigations, as well as computer-assisted labs, enable students to take a firsthand look and gain experience in the scientific methods and data-collecting techniques used by biologists. In addition, the course develops scientific literacy as well as prepares students for future science courses in our Upper School.

Embedded within each 9th grader's science and math courses is an interdisciplinary STEAMinar that explores issues at the intersection of biology, mathematics, coding, engineering, and design with the goal of giving students an authentic sense of how these subjects apply to practical questions of the kinds they will confront in their future civic and professional lives.

The goal of the seminar is to give freshmen, through biological topics, an introduction to programming, an understanding of mathematical modeling, and an opportunity to design and build. This experience is meant to kindle an interest in biotechnology, coding, and building that future course experiences can extend through the rest of their high school careers.

Applied Chemistry (Major)

This is an introductory course emphasizing the practical role chemistry plays in modern society and daily life. This course provides an introduction to the fundamental principles of chemistry and covers traditional chemistry topics but within the context of societal issues and real-world scenarios such as petroleum shortages, alternative energy, nutrition, and access to clean water and air. Units of study emphasize environmental chemistry, materials science, and food chemistry. This inquiry-based laboratory course focuses on generating data from investigations, analyzing that data, and then applying a knowledge of chemistry to solve problems that arise in everyday life. Concepts are introduced as they are needed to solve problems and then arranged in meaningful patterns that lead to an understanding of nature. Analysis of written material, proficiency in problem-solving, and thoughtful consideration of risks and benefits (as they connect to course topics) of are emphasized.

Prerequisites: Completion of Biology

Chemistry (Major)

This course provides an introduction to the fundamental principles of chemistry. Topics of study include atomic and molecular structures, the periodic table, bonding, chemical reactions and

nomenclature, states of matter, stoichiometry, and acids and bases. Emphasis is placed on mastery of the theoretical framework of modern chemistry and the quantitative skills necessary to support this understanding. While this course is more traditional in design than Applied Chemistry, frequent laboratory investigations provide opportunities for analytical thinking, experimental design, and scientific writing. The laboratory experience is further enhanced by allowing students to participate in an independent project-based learning experience. Overall, this course is a challenging and creative journey in understanding chemistry and its place in science, technology, and society.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Biology (B) and Geometry (B+), Accelerated Geometry (B), or Honor Geometry (C+) or higher

Honors Chemistry (Major)

This course is intended for students with a strong mathematical ability, an inclination towards problem solving, and a keen interest in the finer details of chemistry. As an introductory course, it includes all the topics described above for Chemistry. However, a faster pace allows for a greater breadth and depth of topics, including thermodynamics, kinetics and nuclear chemistry, chemical equilibria, redox reactions and electrochemistry, an introduction to organic chemistry, and a deeper probing of the concepts of quantum mechanics and molecular structure. Furthermore, advanced applications of the material are examined, particularly in the stoichiometry unit. Laboratory work ranges from traditional experiments to microchemical techniques and simulations with written reports emphasizing clear, logical development of concepts as supported by the data.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Biology (A) and of Accelerated Geometry (A) or Honors Geometry (B) or higher

Physics (Major)

Have you ever wondered how noise-canceling headphones "erase" sound, why an airbag can save your life in a fraction of a second, or how the moon manages to move the entire ocean? Physics provides the answers. This course is an invitation to look "under the hood" of the universe and understand the invisible rules that govern everything we do.

We cover the essentials—motion, forces, energy, electricity, sound, and optics—but the real goal is to build the analytical architecture needed for the future. Through hands-on labs and interactive demonstrations, you won't just solve equations; you'll learn to break down complex systems and build better solutions.

Physics gives you the advantage of seeing the world through a lens of logic, making you a sharper problem-solver and a more informed inhabitant of our high-tech world.

Prerequisites: Permission of the Department, and successful completion of Biology, Applied Chemistry, Chemistry, or Honors Chemistry, and Algebra II or higher

Honors Physics (Major)

While Physics establishes a strong conceptual framework for understanding the physical world, Honors Physics extends that exploration by bridging the gap between conceptual theory and high-level mathematical application. Designed for students who enjoy intellectual challenges, this course focuses on the rigor of inquiry - taking the same core principles as Physics and exploring their theoretical foundations with greater nuance and mathematical depth.

In this course, you won't just use formulas; you will build the mental models necessary to understand the "hidden dynamics" of the universe—from the multi-dimensional trajectory of a projectile to the complex behavior of electric fields. You will utilize trigonometry, systems of equations, and logarithms as tools to prove your conceptual theories and solve intricate, real-world problems.

This is a mental bootcamp for the inquisitive mind. By emphasizing foundational science practices such as data analysis, critical questioning, and evidence-based reasoning, this course provides an advantage for any student who wants to master the art of logical thinking in a complex world.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Chemistry (A) or Honors Chemistry (B) and of Accelerated Algebra II (A-), Honors Algebra II (B), or Accelerated Precalculus (B) or higher

Electives

Human Anatomy and Physiology (Major)

This elective introduces students to the structure and function of the human body. A wide variety of classroom activities helps to maintain a high level of interest and participation. These include labs, demonstrations, guest presenters, audiovisual materials, and open discussion of topics that are pertinent. Students will be asked to apply their knowledge to clinical situations using case studies and will also be using clay to make models of the various systems. With the completion of this course, students should have greater awareness of the factors that influence their health and well-being.

Prerequisites: Completion of Biology and Applied Chemistry, Chemistry, or Honors Chemistry

Environmental Science (Major)

Environmental Science empowers students to master the scientific principles and systems thinking essential for navigating the high-stakes complexity of our global ecosystem. This elective moves beyond theory, positioning students as researchers who utilize field ecology, sustainability frameworks, and climate modeling to diagnose and mitigate modern environmental issues. The curriculum is driven by three rigorous foci: Field Ecology, conducting site-specific research; Sustainability, an investigation into the critical intersection of ecological

health, economic viability, and social equity; and Climate Change, an intensive dive into complex problem-solving and risk management. By integrating biology, chemistry, and physics with insights from economics and history, students leverage a team-based approach to tackle real-world case studies and intensive fieldwork. This course is designed for ambitious thinkers ready to apply their scientific training to the defining challenges of the 21st century.

Prerequisites: Completion of Biology and of Applied Chemistry, Chemistry, or Honors Chemistry

Cell and Molecular Biology (Major)

Experimental Cell and Molecular Biology is a skills-based course providing students with hands-on experience in the field of biotechnology. Students will use foundational molecular genetics techniques to solve problems, conduct investigations, and create products with real world connections to human health, pharmaceuticals, and commercial biotechnology. Techniques students will learn and apply include: PCR, RFLP, gel electrophoresis, bacterial ligation and transformation, cell culture, column chromatography, and bioinformatics for sequence analysis. Following a "teach, apply, create" model, students work collaboratively to design, conduct, and communicate a novel investigation, developing both technical skills and scientific practices essential for future careers and research in biotechnology and beyond.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Biology (B+) and Applied Chemistry (A and teacher's recommendation), Chemistry (B+ and teacher's recommendation), or Honors Chemistry (B)

Bioethics (Major)

Should humans use animals for food or other resources? Should a person be able to end their life when they have a terminal illness? Is it right to terminate a pregnancy? Always? Sometimes? Never? Most importantly, why? If thinking about, discussing, researching, and grappling with questions like these excites you, Bioethics is the course for you! Bioethics is a broad field of study that pulls from different disciplines to explore and respond to moral and ethical dilemmas. For any dilemma we study, we'll explore it scientifically and ethically. Scientific conclusions can inform moral decisions. For example, when grappling with whether to use new vaccine technology (as we did with the COVID vaccines), scientists can gather empirical observations about safety and efficacy to inform decision making. We will learn not only to understand relevant scientific content, but to analyze those conclusions for power and limitations to help us decide how they inform a moral dilemma. To determine what we might consider a right action, we will learn to employ ethical frameworks – such as utilitarianism – to assist us in our decision making. Likewise, we will read ethical positions constructed by philosophers (who sometimes disagree with each other!) to see how they think about the dilemmas we discuss.

In this course students will be asked to do the following:

- Start any exploration by asking questions to direct their learning;

- Consume a variety of sources to learn pertinent scientific content;
- Evaluate scientific conclusions (pulled from primary literature) for power and limitations;
- Read philosophical positions to understand them (rather than critique them);
- Apply ethical frameworks to inform one's decision making;
- Fairmindedly articulate positions with which one may disagree;
- Listen to and learn from classmates; and
- Construct positions on dilemmas for which there is no one right answer.

Astronomy (Major)

Explore the mysteries of the cosmos in this comprehensive introduction to the universe.. Topics covered include the history of astronomy, gravity, light, telescopes, the Earth, the Moon, the solar system (including planets, asteroids, and comets), the Sun, stars, and cosmology. The study of astronomy is presented in a conceptual manner with little emphasis on math, though a knowledge of chemistry and physics is helpful. The course is activity based with demonstrations, experiments, slide presentations, videos, and observing projects. The school's planetarium is used to observe motions of the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Biology.

AP Biology (Major)

This course is the equivalent of a first year college biology course and follows a syllabus approved by the College Board. The four "Big Ideas" are evolution, cellular processes: energy and communication, genetics and information transfer, and interactions. The AP Biology investigative labs are produced by the College Board. These labs lead to student-directed inquiry-based investigations. A lab notebook will contain the information necessary for making formal collaborative lab reports. Students will be able to apply math skills that have been acquired in their mathematics courses, including graphing, modeling, and statistical analysis. Students are required to take the AP exam in the spring.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Biology (B+) and Applied Chemistry (A and teacher's recommendation), Chemistry (B+ and teacher's recommendation), or Honors Chemistry (B)

AP Chemistry (Major)

This course is the equivalent of a first year college chemistry course. It follows a rigorous syllabus approved by the College Board and requires students to complete a significant amount of work outside of the classroom. Laboratory experiences reinforce the quantitative nature of the course and utilize highly analytical pieces of equipment and glassware with an emphasis on inquiry-based investigations. Students are expected to have a strong mathematical background with an emphasis on good problem solving abilities. Students are required to take the AP exam in the spring.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Honors Chemistry (B) or Chemistry (A and teacher's recommendation) and Honors Algebra II (B) or Acc. Algebra II (A-)

AP Physics C: Mechanics (Major)

AP Physics C is the equivalent of a first year calculus-based college course. It follows the curriculum of the AP Physics C course in mechanics as established by the College Board. This course is intended for students who have a strong inclination toward physics, mathematics, and engineering. The Major goal of the course is for the students to understand the fundamental principles of physics and to develop strong problem solving abilities. Physics content is introduced both conceptually and mathematically through the lens of calculus. Inquiry-based methods of learning the content are emphasized, as are other foundational science practices such as data analysis and engaging in critical thinking and questioning. Students are required to take the AP exam in the spring.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department and successful completion of Physics (A and teacher's recommendation) or Honors Physics (B+); concurrent enrollment in Calculus BC or successful completion of Honors Precalculus (B) or Accelerated Precalculus (A-)

Advanced Research Experience (Major)

The Research Experience course, or REX, will provide students with first-hand knowledge of scientific practices in realistic settings by combining a unique inquiry-based curriculum with a summer laboratory research placement (approximately 5-8 weeks) for the summer following the junior year. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to explore their individual interests in science through subject specific inquiry, including journal article explorations, laboratory investigations and techniques, and communications with specialists in subject specific fields of research. One of the unique features of the course is its attention to both the breadth and depth of scientific inquiry. The curriculum begins with an overview of the research experience through a guided investigation of scientific journal publications. After an introduction to the process of scientific literature review, students will begin a deeper investigation into a particular area of interest, which can be any area of scientific focus: biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, technology, or computer science. This more nuanced investigation is intended (i) to enable students to become proficient in experimental design and (ii) to help students prepare for their internship, a summer research laboratory placement.

Prerequisites: Students entering 11th grade are eligible for consideration upon completion of a course application and committee review. Upon acceptance, students must agree to the fulfillment of 5-8 weeks of summer laboratory research upon acceptance into this course.

Computer Science and Innovation

Computer Science

Introduction to Computer Science (Minor)

In this year-long introductory Minor, students will explore a variety of computer science topics, including basic programming logic, the design cycle, text-based coding, web design, and app programming. Projects are designed to appeal to a broad range of student interests, ranging from music and graphic design to community service and sustainability, demonstrating the power of programming to solve problems across disciplines. By the end of the course, students will be able to code at a basic level and will be ready to dive into more complex programming languages and applications. This course, which will be graded on an A-F scale, is open to all students – no prior experience is required and there are no prerequisite courses.

Interactive Media and Game Design (Major)

This year-long intermediate Major combines the principles of object-oriented programming (OOP) with a project-based approach to creative computing. Moving beyond the fundamentals, students explore the intersection of technology and the arts, utilizing the Java language and the Processing.org library to build visually-driven, interactive applications. The curriculum emphasizes the design and implementation of complex systems—such as original video games and generative art—while teaching students how to organize code into reusable, efficient objects. By blending interdisciplinary skills with rigorous logic, students develop a portfolio of creative applications that demonstrate the power of programming as a tool for both problem-solving and self-expression.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Computer Science or sufficient prior experience with programming logic, algorithms, and text-based coding.

Data Structures and Algorithms (Major)

This rigorous, post-AP Major expands upon students' Computer Science tool kit through the study of how data is organized, analyzed and manipulated. Students will learn essential data structures including arrays, linked lists, stacks, queues, hash tables, trees, and graphs, understanding when and why to use each one. The course covers fundamental algorithms for searching, sorting, and data traversal, with hands-on coding implementation in Python. Students will analyze algorithmic efficiency using Big O notation and apply their knowledge to real-world problems like building recommendation systems or solving mazes. Through coding challenges and projects, students develop strong problem-solving skills and computational thinking that prepare them for advanced computer science study, technical interviews, and careers in technology. Projects include cryptographic algorithms, interactive web applications and data analysis challenges. Students will study and solve problem sets such as those found in the Project Euler or USACO competitions, as well as participate in Cybersecurity and Data Science competitions.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of AP Computer Science A and department recommendation.

AP Computer Science A (Major)

AP Computer Science A is a year-long course intended for students with an interest in pursuing computer science in college and in future careers that involve significant involvement with technology. The course is built around the design and implementation of computer programs that solve problems relevant to our society, using an object-oriented approach to problem solving in the Java programming language. Students learn how to write programs that are understandable, adaptable, and reusable. The design and implementation process is used as a context for introducing important aspects of computer science, including the development and analysis of algorithms, the development and use of fundamental data structures, the study of standard algorithms and typical applications, and the use of logic and effective methods. In addition, the responsible use of these systems is an integral part of the course. All students are required to take the AP Computer Science A exam.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department AND successful completion of Object Oriented Programming or AP Computer Science Principles

Advanced Computing: Coding with a Purpose (Major)

This year-long Major provides a platform for advanced learners to design and implement projects that are relevant to them and to our school community. Students who have completed the AP Computer Science A course and exam develop knowledge and expertise that is beyond a standard high school curriculum. They focus on topics such as cryptography, cybersecurity, algorithms and data structures, web applications, and machine learning in a framework that prepares them for future careers in software engineering and information technology. Students drive their own learning by exploring novel tools and techniques in collaboration with their classmates and guided by their instructor. They choose original project topics and are offered ample space for researching, designing, developing, and implementing their own ideas and products. Students are encouraged to participate in coding competitions and hackathons as well as to pursue service projects that incorporate computational thinking. The course emphasizes ethical and responsible uses of technology and a mindset of global citizenship in today's technology-driven world.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department AND successful completion of AP Computer Science A

Innovation

Navigating the Age of AI (Minor)

How does artificial intelligence shape our world, how does it work, and what does its future hold? This year-long course offers an accessible introduction to AI, focusing on its societal applications, ethical implications, and real-world impact. Students will be introduced to key AI concepts—such as machine learning and natural language processing—through hands-on activities and discussions. By engaging with case studies, debates, and projects, students will examine how AI affects fields like healthcare, education, and entertainment as well as critical

issues like bias, privacy, and accountability. The course encourages students to become informed consumers and users of AI by analyzing its benefits and challenges in a global context. Over the course of the year, students will employ the design-thinking process to build an AI project addressing a real world challenge. Through critical thinking and collaboration, students will gain the tools to thoughtfully navigate and contribute to an AI-driven world. This Minor course will meet two times each cycle and will be graded on an A-F scale. It is not a programming course. It is open to all students. No technical or coding experience is required, and there are no prerequisite courses.

Robotics (Major)

Dive into the principles of robotics engineering through the lens of competition engineering on the Vex V5 platform. Apply the Design Cycle to complex challenges in a hands-on, collaborative, project-based environment. Students will engage in a study of the current year Vex V5 Game Challenge. They will design, prototype and code robots, then test and iterate on those designs. The course will culminate in participation in regional Vex V5 competitions as part of the PDS Robotics Team. Key topics include structural design, drivetrains, simple machines, sensors, and the fundamentals of coding in Python. Finally, students will also be given a historical background in artificial intelligence, robotics, and microprocessors and consider the future ethical and economic implications of these applied sciences.

Prerequisites: Permission of the department

Engineering – Engineer Your World (Major)

Engineering impacts human lives and the world around us. Engineer Your World is an innovative, student-centered course that engages learners in authentic engineering experiences in a hands-on, project-based environment. The course was developed by the University of Texas at Austin and NASA and has been designed to be inclusive of all high school students. In this course students discover how engineering shapes their world, develop engineering skills, build engineering habits of mind, and explore a broad range of engineering fields and professions. Collaborative, student-directed projects and design challenges build resilient problem-solving skills and empower students to think like engineers. They learn to quantify systems; apply common engineering tools and techniques; generate and select concepts; embody, test, and verify designs; and document and communicate their work. Engineer Your World covers the breadth of engineering fields and professions so that students can make informed decisions about pursuing engineering. The skills developed during the course will be valuable whether or not students decide to further pursue an engineering career. Students will have the opportunity for dual enrollment with the option of applying for college credit through the University of Texas.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of a geometry course and sophomore or higher standing

Product Design (Major)

This course will enable the student to learn how to design and manufacture a new product by exploring iterative processes of the Innovation Ecosystem to develop a portfolio of projects that seek to offer solutions to meet societal needs. Working collaboratively, students will create semester-long, hands-on projects that incorporate innovative problem solving while mastering a wide array of skills: concept drawing, drafting, 3D CAD modelling, rendering, and model making. The course will offer an in-depth overview of diverse production methods, manufacturing, and product lifecycle management. The final portfolio will receive feedback from peers, cross-disciplinary faculty, and professionals from the field.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of any introductory level visual arts or design course or permission of department

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The Arts

The Arts graduation requirement can be fulfilled by completing two Minor courses or one Major course. Minor courses meet three times per cycle, while Major courses meet four times per cycle. Students are also encouraged to continue beyond the minimum requirement and to take advantage of the range of offerings as well as to deepen skills in selected areas. All introductory courses are taught as foundation courses and are prerequisite for advanced courses. All courses are graded on an A-F scale.

Visual and Design Arts

Studio Art: Drawing and Painting

Intro to Fine Art (Minor)

The introductory fine art Minor is the prerequisite to the advanced fine art Major. The course introduces students to the fundamental elements of spatial design, practiced academic rendering skills, color theory, and techniques of both wet and dry mediums. The drawn image will provide the format for exploring the process of visual communication with concentration on understanding spatial rendering, linear perspective, value, texture and form, and the relationship between subject and object. There will be an introduction to human anatomy and several sessions with a model, both posed and in movement. Learning objectives include gaining an understanding of visual elements including line, value, shape, form, space, perspective, texture, and color in wet and dry mediums; gaining an understanding of figure/ground relationships, spatial perception, perspective, and color theory on the two-dimensional surface through technical and experimental drawing and painting exercises as well as multiple figure-drawing sessions; recognizing and synthesizing representational and abstract considerations of drawing and painting; gaining an understanding of how to incorporate narrative, psychological, emotional, and conceptual aspects of two-dimensional artwork and how to balance those with

technique and process; developing an understanding of contemporary drawing, painting, and collage; participation in group critiques, discussions, written and visual exercises to improve oral, written, and visual communication; and beginning to develop a personal visual language that allows students to express you're their own visions and ideas.

Advanced Fine Art (Major)

Alternative and traditional methods of image and experience-making will be explored as a means of facilitating visual communication. While this course will emphasize how a single work and series develops, it will also unpack visual impact, content, and communication of imagery. Students will explore personal, social, and political themes while forming connections to other artists working in similar and opposing methodologies. Each year the class will focus on a specific theme from the history of art that encompasses artistic processes and methods, lectures, and readings about artists working in that theme and ways in which that theme translates to the contemporary art world and current social, political, and environmental climate. Learning objectives include developing an understanding of contemporary drawing, painting, printmaking, installation, and mixed media artwork and a critical assessment of their relationship to cultural, political, and social events and practices; acquiring skills for an independent, sustainable, and community-engaged studio practice; gaining knowledge of historical developments in the history of drawing, painting, printmaking, installation, and mixed media art work and its ability to create a singular and unique experience or multiplicity, seriality, and continuation; learning of academic, artistic, social and personal research methods; participation in group critiques, discussions, and written and visual exercises to improve oral, written, and visual communication; use of creative expression to connect with a wide, inclusive range of experiences, topics, and resources of the academic/global/local community; social and educational opportunities through attendance of lectures, museum visits, and projects that expand beyond our campus; and experience of the empirical and expansive nature of intellectual and visual curiosity.

Prerequisites: Completion of any introductory visual or design art course

Film, Video, and Animation

Intro to Film and Video (Minor)

Intro to Film and Video is a full year offering focusing on the production, theory, and history of film and video media. Utilizing DSLR cameras, our focus will begin with foundations of digital cinematography, lighting, and audio design before diving into genre specific production of documentaries and narrative films. Though heavily involved in the production of films, students will be exposed to a survey of 20th century American and international films focusing on traditions of narrative, documentary, and experimental filmmaking. Through assigned projects and in-class screenings, students will build upon their storytelling abilities, media literacy, and historical context of film and video works.

Intro to Animation and Digital Design (Minor)

Intro to Animation and Digital Design is a full year offering that introduces students to the process of 2D and 3D design and animation through the Adobe Creative Suite on both iPads and desktop workstations. Beginning in Photoshop, students will learn the basics of designing, creating characters and objects in 2D space. Students will then learn the basic language of filmmaking, scripts and editing in Premiere to carry their stories to a time-based medium. Finally, the year will end exploring 3D motion, graphics, and movement in After Effects. Through the assigned projects, students will be exposed to communication theory, design principles, basic animation and filmmaking principles applicable to their other areas of study in the arts.

Advanced Film, Video, and Animation (Major or Minor)

The Advanced Film, Video, and Animation class continues to build on the foundation established through the Minors, concentrating on a mix of history, analysis, and production. We will focus more closely on dynamic storytelling through the study of auteur directors and genre bending films in order to inform students' own creative processes. Students will use the year to develop a time-based production of their choosing and to nurture it through pre-production, production, and post-production in a strongly collaborative studio environment. Students can enroll in this class for up to three consecutive years after their completion of the intro level. Each year is structured in a unique manner to continue building as solid a foundation and depth of individual voice in media making as possible. Students who choose to pursue the Major option will participate in the Cinematography Lab. Every cycle, students will conduct technical investigations into principles including depth of field, camera angle, lighting, shot design and more.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Film and Video OR Intro to Animation and Digital Design

Ceramics

Intro to Ceramics (Minor)

This foundation course in ceramics provides a thorough introduction to the fundamentals of 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional concepts and techniques in the field with an emphasis on direct studio experiences, technical proficiency and personal expression. Following the design thinking stages, and understanding the significance of these stages to all fields of study, is emphasized with each project. Students learn the fundamentals of wheel-throwing and hand-building while realizing the vast potential for surface techniques using carving tools, slips, glazes, and resist printmaking processes. This course provides an inspiring realm of possibilities with the versatile material of clay including ancient, traditional techniques and new, innovative materials and processes. Historical and contemporary ceramic artists will be referenced throughout the course for their artistic and cultural significance. Group critiques, as a way of formulating educated and analytical opinions about their work and that of others, are practiced throughout the course.

Intermediate/Advanced Ceramics (Major)

In this studio course, a greater emphasis will be placed on developing more advanced techniques within the realm of ceramics. Vessel aesthetics and sculptural principles will be explored to expand one's potential for innovation. Historical and contemporary topics will be regularly referenced throughout the course for a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the vast field of art and design. Students continue to rely on the design thinking stages to develop their projects and many students begin to design their own parameters for their projects, relying on a more self-directed research and design process. The regular use of a sketchbook, as a means of journaling concepts and ideas, becomes second nature in the studio and students begin to craft a personal artistic and design vision. Portfolio development is emphasized during this course for both college applications, summer program pursuits, and competition entries. This course may be repeated.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Ceramics

Photography

Intro to Photography (Minor)

This is a foundation course, the prerequisite for all advanced photography classes. It covers basic camera controls, composition, digital imaging, black-and-white film developing, darkroom printing, and mounting. Students use the school's analog cameras and provide their own digital SLR cameras. Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop are used in the digital darkroom. Each young photographer is expected to take part in critique, to exhibit work, to maintain a sketchbook, and to become familiar with some of the Major figures in the history of photography. Please note: a lab fee will be billed to each student in January.

Advanced Photography – Lighting and Printing (Major or Minor)

This course explores advanced lighting and printing techniques. The first semester is dedicated to lighting, including natural, artificial, and studio strobe. The second semester is allocated to the craft of fine printing, both digital and analog. Many topics will be discussed, including the history of photography and iconic photography books. Students will learn historic and alternative processes. The coursework will culminate with two Major projects, one due at the end of each semester.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Photography or permission of instructor
Please note: a lab fee will be billed to each student in January.

Advanced Photography – Fine Art (Major or Minor)

This course covers both analog and digital capture as well as advanced printing techniques in the darkroom and the digital lab. Students use both analog and digital SLRs, the medium-format camera, the Holga camera, and the iPhone (or a school iPod). They explore lighting and lenses and the large format printer. They study the work of current and past fine-art photographers. Each young photographer is expected to develop a personal style, to participate actively in critiques, to maintain a sketchbook, and to produce a mounted portfolio of work.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Photography
Please note: a lab fee will be billed to each student in January.

Advanced Photography – The Photo Book (Major or Minor)

The emphasis of this course is on creating two long-term documentary projects, both culminating in the production of a photo book. Students learn new skills and content including the history of photography books, different sequencing techniques, and the use of metaphor and symbolism in visual media. Students are expected to maintain a sketchbook.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Photography
Please note: a lab fee will be billed to each student in January.

Architecture

Intro to Architecture (Minor)

In order to understand architecture, engaging in a direct experience of space is critical. Fundamentally, the physical scale model allows us to perceive the three-dimensional experience rather than having to try to imagine it. In this studio, students profit from the dynamic relationship between learning basic design and architectural concepts and physically employing them in the construction of prototypes. Important architectural principles will be introduced through studio exercises, presentations, and demonstrations. Here the student is introduced to historical ideas and begins to build informative models of influential designers to understand concepts. This course will sharpen the student's powers of observation as well as the student's ability to conceptualize, analyze, and create the world of architecture and design. Students will also explore concepts through drawing and abstract three-dimensional constructions. The studio will focus on creative problem solving as well as artistic experimentation. Each student will be required to obtain a kit of basic construction and design tools.

Advanced Architecture II: The Private Home, a Puzzle, and the Power of Mock-Ups (Major)

In this course students realize that they are more relaxed than in the first year because they actually learned how to experiment and craft an idea. Now they begin to refine how they work and raise the bar for themselves to become more independent thinkers. Drawing and sketching become more pivotal as does problem solving through abstract three-dimensional constructions. Model making takes on a more important role as the process is used to explore and understand one's research into the study of an architect's ideas or as a method for the student to gain insight into various possible design solutions. Group projects are used for some aspects of this course, but the main focus will be on individual studio work with the design and construction of scale models for site specific houses and the powerful construction of a complex abstract design challenge which is actually based on the study of Urban Design.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Architecture

Advanced Architecture III: Complex and Public Spaces (Major)

Here the student becomes immersed in the concepts of complex and public spaces. This might start off with abstract three-dimensional design exercises and even the study of a home that is not a single structure but is made of multi-purposed buildings. Another aspect is the study of urban plazas, urban parks, memorials, museums and performance centers, and even new city centers like Hudson Yard in New York City. Here field trips are important to use for inspiration and to actually measure and build to scale. The student takes on complex ideas and finds solutions which express the needs of a particular site, culture, and client. In the studio, which begins with some very abstract design problems, the student finds that seemingly diverse ideas can be beautifully orchestrated together. The final projects bring all of each student's presentation and rendering skills together in one site specific model.

Prerequisites: Completion of Advanced Architecture II

The Master's Studio: Architecture IV (Major)

The fourth year architecture student will develop a year of study with the instructor. In this studio, the student is invited to work out a thesis project that will develop over the year and either end when the senior project begins or evolve into the senior project. Permission to take this course is determined on an individual basis and must be worked out by the end of the student's junior year.

The 3D Design Studio: Furniture and Sculpture

Intro to Furniture Design (Minor)

In this course students are introduced to basic design and woodworking skills that allow for creative self-expression. Students explore wood as a material, learn and practice proper safety procedures, and become acquainted with the tools and machinery of the design studio. Each student is required to design and build an original piece of furniture. Throughout the processes of design and fabrication, students are asked to explore and problem-solve, an exploration that will include sketching and model making as well as some historical referencing. Projects will be evaluated and critiqued during various stages of these processes. This class encourages self-motivation, originality, and creative thinking. A disciplined work ethic is essential.

Advanced Furniture Design (Major)

This studio is for serious, self-directed students who have demonstrated a proficiency in both design and fine woodworking and wish to continue to develop more advanced and refined skills. During the course of the year, students will create several pieces of their own design. Students will learn more sophisticated applications of joinery, material, and building techniques. Projects will be evaluated and critiqued during various stages of design and fabrication. For the student who has become comfortable with the demands of the design studio, this course invites self-motivation and original thinking.

Prerequisites: Completion of Intro to Furniture Design

Intermediate Sculpture (Major)

This course aims at developing a personal vision of sculptural forms and spaces. We will use traditional and contemporary materials to investigate a wide range of fabrication techniques. With a developed visual vocabulary, we will use additive and subtractive processes to explore line, texture, form, space, value, unity, proportion and balance. Students will build personal sculptures as well as collaborate on installations and large-scale outdoor works.

Prerequisites: Completion of any introductory visual or design art course

Performing Arts

Dance

The Performer in Action (Minor)

Musical theater, stage combat, on camera, improvisation games, the basics of dance technique, and acting are taken from beginning stages through to production stage in this year-long performance course. In a fun and welcoming environment, this course is the perfect introduction to the art of stage performance. Stan Cahill, theater teacher, leads students in the basics of acting while Ann Robideaux, PDS choreographer and dance teacher, hones in on essential dance skills and movement for the actor. This course is a prerequisite for Advanced Acting and is highly recommended for those intending to participate in mainstage productions.

Dance: Technique and Performance (PE credit)

This trimester-long course, typically offered in the fall trimester for PE credit, is recommended for the beginning and intermediate level student. This class prepares students to dance with healthy alignment through warm-ups and technical skills typical to jazz, ballet, and contemporary dance techniques. Each trimester is filled with different dance combinations pulling from a variety of styles such as hip-hop, jazz, tap, and dances from around the world with the optional opportunity to perform in the spring dance concert. Because the choreography changes each trimester, students are welcome to take this class more than once during their time at PDS.

Dance: Choreography and Beyond (Minor/PE credit)

This year-long course is recommended for students who are at the high intermediate to advanced levels of dance training and who are interested in developing a conscious use of the body as an instrument of artistic expression. For dancers with a developed technical base, a number of movement styles will be explored with a heightened emphasis on polishing performance for the annual dance concert. In-class dance improvisation, movement staging, and choreography comprise a regular part of class work. Since the course content changes each year,

students are welcome to take this course for more than one year during their time at PDS. This course is taken for art credit.

Prerequisites: A minimum of two years of dance technique training and permission of instructor

Yoga (PE credit)

In this trimester-long course, typically offered in the spring for PE credit, students will be guided through sequences of yoga poses combined with breathwork for the Majority of the class. Deep relaxation, mindfulness, and meditation as powerful mind-body centering tools will also be covered. Open to all levels of ability.

Music

Band (Minor)

This course is for students who have experience playing woodwind, brass, or percussion instruments as well as piano or bass guitar and who have the desire to practice and perform with an instrumental ensemble of their peers. The course is designed to help students improve both playing technique and music reading as well as to teach valuable performance and ensemble playing skills. Students in this course will study a wide variety of music including repertoire of various genres, composers, and style periods. The Band performs several times a year in evening school concerts and other community events.

Prerequisites: Audition or permission of instructor

Chorus (Minor)

This course is for students who enjoy singing and have the desire to practice and perform with a choral ensemble of their peers. The course is designed to help students improve both vocal technique and music reading and to discover how the voice works, as well as to teach valuable performance and ensemble skills. Students should have some background in music literacy. They will study a wide variety of music, including a repertoire of various genres, composers, and style periods. Students are graded largely on participation, concert preparation, and acquisition of singing skills and will have both written and individual performance exams each trimester. The Chorus has several required performances throughout the year in school concerts and other community events.

Prerequisites: Participation the prior year in Chorus (Upper or Middle School) or by audition

Orchestra (Minor)

This course is for students who play string instruments and have the desire to practice and perform with an instrumental ensemble of their peers. The course is designed to help students improve both playing technique and music reading, as well as teach valuable performance and

ensemble playing skills. Students in this course will study a wide variety of music including repertoire of various genres, composers, and style periods. Students are also expected to attend sectional rehearsals (grouped by instrument) twice each month. The Orchestra performs several times a year in school concerts and other community events.

Prerequisites: Audition or permission of instructor

Note: A student may be a member of more than one of the above ensembles at the discretion of and through arrangement with the directors of the Band, Chorus, and Orchestra as relevant.

Introduction to Music Theory (Minor)

This course is for the student who wishes to pursue more knowledge of the inner workings of music. It is an introduction to the principles and practices upon which music is built. Students will learn analytical and compositional techniques that will be valuable to them as performers, listeners, and creators of music. This course will cover the following topics: rhythm, pitch, keyboard, intervals, Major and Minor scales, key signatures, and the circle of fifths. Students will also begin to develop their aural skills through sight-singing and melodic dictation. No prerequisite or prior knowledge of music is required.

Music Technology (Minor)

This course focuses on the creative use of computers in music composition and production. Students will learn about the tools and techniques needed to produce high quality audio work. They will have the opportunity to learn these skills by creating their own compositions and arrangements on different types of software and hardware. Topics to be covered will include MIDI sequencing, sound synthesis, audio sampling, digital audio recording, and digital music notation. Students will be expected to acquire a basic understanding of music theory prior to taking this course.

AP Music Theory (Major)

This is a course for the experienced music student (grades 10-12) to develop his/her creative skills while preparing to take the AP Music exam. Topics will include figured-bass realization, four-part voice leading, form, and analysis. Emphasis will be placed on mastery of aural skills including rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation as well as sight-singing. Students will be expected to take the Advanced Placement Music Theory exam in May.

Prerequisites: Completion of Introduction to Music Theory or permission of instructor.

Jacobson Music Scholar Program (Major)

The Jacobson Music Scholars Program was founded to honor the teaching career of Frank Jacobson, a passionate and committed music teacher who taught at PDS from 1967 to 2000. Its core principle is based on the premise that the college application process for a music Major is vastly different from an academic pursuit. For a music applicant, performance level, technical achievement, and artistic expression play a key role. A college acceptance is primarily based on a

live audition rather than high school transcripts or standardized test scores. The ideal Jacobson Candidate is a student who:

- intends to Major in music in college
- has shown a commitment to music study in vocal/instrumental performance or composition.
- has developed a high level of technical skill and a deep understanding of music fundamentals.
- is an organized, focused, self-learner who can function effectively in an independent course of study.
- has been actively involved in the PDS Music ensembles program.

The program is intended to be a two-year program to be taken in junior and senior year. The program gives the scholar a reprieve from one academic Major requirement each year and allows them the time to pursue musical growth and prepare for college auditions during the school day through independent study. Jacobson Scholars receive Major credit for this course.

The Jacobson Program is also designed to expose the scholar to the unique rigors associated with pursuing a music performance degree. Each scholar will take high level music theory courses, participate in a mid-year jury assessment, and perform on a spring recital.

Application to the Jacobson Scholars is done through a written application, letter of recommendation and a live audition.

Chamber Music (extra-curricular)

Instrumental students are placed in small ensembles and work with a faculty member on selected repertoire of various styles. Rehearsals take place outside the school day or at mutual free times for the players and teacher. Emphasis is placed on collaboration, ensemble playing, and musical independence. Students participating in the Chamber Music program (open to grades 9-12) must be taking lessons with a private instructor (either at PDS or elsewhere). Chamber groups will perform in various settings throughout the year, including a Chamber Music Concert in the spring. (Chamber Music is also open to capable vocalists). Students must be enrolled in Band, Orchestra or Chorus to participate in Chamber Music.

Madrigal Singers (extra-curricular)

The Madrigal Singers (open to grades 9-12) is an auditioned, mixed (SATB) group, which performs highly challenging music of various languages and styles, including classical, contemporary jazz, and pop styles, with a focus on a cappella singing. Princeton Day Singers will perform several times throughout the year at school concerts and community events. Students must be enrolled in Chorus, Band or Orchestra in order to participate in the Madrigal Singers. Auditions are held within the first weeks of the school year.

A Cappella Groups (extra-curricular, student lead)

PDS traditionally has an all-female and an all-male a cappella group. These groups rely heavily on student leadership and work in conjunction with the music faculty. Repertoire is generally contemporary pop. Auditions are held within the first weeks of the school year.

Musical Production (extra-curricular)

Students (grades 9-12) interested in musical theater can audition to be part of the annual musical production, which is a joint project of the Theater, Dance and Music progams in the Upper School. Rehearsals and performances run throughout the winter term. Auditions are held in November each year. Enrollment in a theater, music or dance class is strongly recommended for those interested in participating.

Private Lessons (extra-curricular, additional fee)

Private lessons are available in piano, voice, guitar and all string, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. PDS has an excellent Adjunct Music Faculty, comprised of qualified instructors in each instrument. There is an additional fee for private instruction. Details about the Private Lesson Program, including fees, scheduling, and instructor bios can be obtained from the Music Department.

Theater

The Performer in Action (Minor)

Musical theater, stage combat, on camera, improvisation games, the basics of dance technique, and acting are taken from beginning stages through to production stage in this year-long performance course. In a fun and welcoming environment, this course is the perfect introduction to the art of stage performance. Stan Cahill, theater teacher, leads students in the basics of acting while Ann Robideaux, PDS choreographer and dance teacher, hones in on essential dance skills and movement for the actor. This course is a prerequisite for Advanced Acting and is highly recommended for those intending to participate in mainstage productions.

Advanced Acting (Minor)

This class introduces elements of naturalistic acting using improvisation, text analysis, and Stanislavski-based rehearsal exercises. The work of various contemporaries of Stanislavski, including Michael Chekov and Uta Hagen, is used to develop skills in characterization and inner life. Students will explore a range of influential works of contemporary theater, while also exploring on-camera technique. Students will also have the opportunity to visit a Major NYC production. Since content changes each year, students are welcome to take this course for more than one year during their time at PDS. This course is strongly recommended for those intending to participate in mainstage productions.

Prerequisites: Completion of The Performer in Action or permission of instructor

Directing and Playwriting (Minor)

The first half of this course will focus on directing skills, including how to analyze a play, how to conduct auditions, and how to employ basic tools of directing: composition, picturization, and blocking. The second half of the course explores key playwriting skills such as storytelling, structure, dialogue, characterization, and the role of obstacles in building a story arc. Along with the Advanced Acting class, students will develop and direct short plays to be showcased at the end of the year.

Prerequisites: Completion of The Performer in Action or permission of instructor

Independent Study

This option is available to students with specialized or advanced areas of interest. Proposals are subject to faculty approval. Previous areas of study have included topics ranging from Theater of the Absurd to computer-assisted design for the stage.

Theater Production and Design (extra-curricular)

Students have the opportunity to work in all aspects of theater production, including lighting, sound, costumes, props, and stage management. Students will work with professional designers and technicians, using state of the art technology and equipment. Students also support assemblies, US productions, and visiting artists and serve as mentors to MS technicians. Student crews meet in the afternoons and at other scheduled times. (Year round)

Fall Production (extra-curricular)

Students experience all aspects of mounting a full-scale theater production. Cast members focus on character development, intentions and obstacles, stage composition, and memorization. Student crews are responsible for running the show during performance. An audition is required. Enrollment in a theater class is strongly recommended for those interested in participating. (Fall term only)

Musical Production (extra-curricular)

This is the largest and most complex Main Stage production. Students work with guest artists while refining and building on performance skills. Students will also gain professional dance training as well as experience in solo/choral singing. High quality production values provide opportunities for advanced work by student crews. An audition is required. Enrollment in a theater, music or dance class is strongly recommended for those interested in participating. (Winter term only)

Performing Arts Festival (extra-curricular)

This is a three-day marathon of shorter performances, many written, directed, and produced by students. Faculty and Guest Artist participation is also a valued part of the event. (Spring term only)

Table of Arts Offerings

2 year-long arts Minors or 1 year-long art Major are required for graduation.

Course	Major/Minor	Prerequisite
Intro to Architecture	Minor	None – foundation course
Advanced Architecture II	Major	Intro to Architecture
Advanced Architecture III	Major	Advanced Architecture II
The Master's Studio: Architecture IV	Major	Advanced Architecture III & permission of instructor
Intro to Ceramics	Minor	None – foundation course
Advanced Ceramics	Major	Intro to Ceramics
Intro to Fine Art	Minor	None – foundation course
Advanced Fine Art	Major	Any introductory visual/design art course
Intro to Furniture Design	Minor	None – foundation course
Advanced Furniture Design	Major	Intro to Furniture Design or Intro to Architecture
Intermediate Sculpture	Major	Any introductory visual/design art course

Intro to Film and Video	Minor	None – foundation course
Intro to Animation and Digital Design	Minor	None – foundation course
Advanced Film, Video, and Animation	Major and Minor	Intro to Film and Video OR Intro to Animation and Digital Design
Intro to Photography*	Minor	None – foundation course
Advanced Photography – Lighting and Printing*	Major and Minor	Intro to Photography
Advanced Photography – Fine Art*	Major and Minor	Intro to Photography
Advanced Photography – The Photo Book*	Major and Minor	Intro to Photography
Intro to Music Theory	Minor	None
AP Music Theory	Major	Intro to Music Theory
Music Technology	Minor	None
Chorus	Minor	Previous experience/audition
Orchestra	Minor	None – other than some instrumental proficiency
Band	Minor	None – other than some instrumental proficiency

The Performer in Action	Minor	None
Advanced Acting	Minor	The Performer in Action
Directing and Playwriting	Minor	The Performer in Action
Dance: Technique and Performance	PE	None
Dance: Choreography and Beyond	Minor	Permission of instructor

N.B. A lab fee will be billed to each student in January.

Health and Physical Education

Physical Education (Minor)

All students are required to take six trimesters of physical education, one of which must be Health. A student may choose to fulfill the other five credits of this requirement either by taking regularly scheduled physical education classes or by joining athletic teams. Some of the activities that are available include: strength training, PE dance, and yoga. Note that not all options are available every term. Also, PE Dance is designed for beginning and intermediate level dance students. PE Dance is highly recommended for students interested in auditioning for the upper school musical or continuing on to the Choreography and Beyond Minor here at PDS. Beginning with the class of 2030, PE credit will no longer be granted for theatre tech or participation in the fall play, but may be granted for participation on stage in the winter musical.

Health Education (Minor)

As one of their six terms of physical education, students are required to take one semester of Health; this is usually taken during the tenth grade year. This course is required for graduation; therefore, a student who enters PDS after the sophomore year will need to be scheduled into this class unless he/she has completed an equivalent course at his/her previous school.

PE Independent Study (Minor)

The Health and Physical Education Department will accept and evaluate applications to substitute outside activities in place of regular physical education classes for up to one term of

the school year. These activities must be supervised by an instructor/coach and not already be offered at PDS in the term of interest. Additionally,10 hours of instruction is required weekly and progress report log sheets must be completed and submitted to the department head every other week. A student who is enrolled in a pre- professional dance program may apply for an exemption for a second trimester of PE. For more information, contact the Director of Athletics Katie Fay.

Interscholastic Teams

The PDS Athletic Department administers all varsity and sub-varsity teams for boys and girls. Interscholastic competition begins in sixth grade and continues through upper school. PDS fields teams in 14 sports across three seasons. By competing with other schools, students broaden their outlook while matching their physical skill and knowledge of game strategy against their peers. Coaches instill the values of team play, good sportsmanship, and respect for rules and authority.

Girls Teams – Fall: field hockey, soccer, tennis, volleyball; Winter: basketball, ice hockey, squash; Spring: lacrosse

Boys Teams – Fall: soccer; Winter: basketball, ice hockey, squash; Spring: baseball, lacrosse, tennis

Coed Teams – Fall: cross-country; Winter: fencing, winter track; Spring: golf, figure skating, track & field

Sign-Up Procedure

Students sign up for PE/Health courses and athletics at the same time that they sign up for all of their other courses, though they may make changes later as space permits.

Peer Leadership

Approximately thirty rising seniors are selected each year to become peer leaders (after an extensive interview process during the spring of their junior year). Peer leaders begin their training involving leadership, teamwork, personal responsibility, and group dynamics in late summer with a three-day overnight retreat. Seniors selected for peer leadership are mentored by faculty supervisors in a class that meets three periods per cycle both semesters (the fourth period involves a one-on-one or small-group conference with faculty supervisors). The introduction of Peer Group for all freshmen begins during orientation when ninth graders meet new and returning peers (and their new peer leaders) and learn and experience firsthand the program's objectives. Throughout the academic year, peer leaders design lessons and conduct regular discussions with freshmen on topics such as peer pressure, academic demands, time-management, drug and alcohol abuse, and healthy relationships. Peer leaders meet with

freshmen in classrooms once or twice per cycle and lead and organize social-bonding activities for the nines throughout the year (including an overnight retreat near the Appalachian Trail in March).

Service Learning

There is a 50-hour service learning graduation requirement. By the end of 9th grade, 5 hours must be completed. By the end of 10th grade, 10 new hours must be completed for a total of 15 hours. By the end of 11th grade, 15 new hours must be completed for a total of 30 hours. By the time senior projects start, 20 new hours must be completed for the total of 50 hours.

PDS service learning nurtures our students to become responsible global citizens. Service learning erases the "us" vs. "them" approach by facilitating authentic opportunities for developing empathy. At PDS students are supported as they investigate issues to gain a deeper understanding of various problems. Collaboration to develop action plans and build reciprocal partnerships is at the root of service learning. This leads to a greater sense of student agency in the world. The "us" vs. "them" becomes a collective "we."

PDS recognizes that students pursue volunteer work across the spectrum of their diverse pursuits and will honor as many initiatives as possible within the context of our hourly graduation requirement.

Exchange Programs

PDS offers upper school students in their sophomore and junior years a remarkable array of opportunities to pursue studies off-campus, both through semester schools and study abroad programs. Students who are interested in participating in these off-campus opportunities should contact the Exchange Program Coordinator.

Semester School Programs

Alzar

Alzar School is a semester school for motivated 10th and 11th grade students that combines engaging academics, cultural exchange, and outdoor adventure. Students live alongside their peers at our home campus in Idaho, immerse themselves in Chilean culture for seven weeks in Patagonia, and explore incredible landscapes during four weeks of backpacking and whitewater paddling expeditions. On campus students take a full course load at the honors/AP level and while on expedition they engage in place-based lessons. For more information, please visit the Alzar website: https://alzarschool.org/

High Mountain Institute

Formerly known as the Rocky Mountain Semester, the High Mountain Institute was founded in 1995 by Molly and Christopher Barnes in the spirit of combining wilderness education with traditional academics. Located in Leadville, Colorado, the HMI Semester offers 10th and 11th grade students the opportunity to live, travel, and study in the mountains of central Colorado and the canyons of southeastern Utah. Students spend five weeks over the course of the semester on three wilderness expeditions that focus on leadership and community-building and twelve weeks on campus completing a standard junior year curriculum. Each semester up to 42 students are offered admission. For more information, please visit the HMI website: http://www.hminet.org/HMIsemester

Island School

The Island School Semester is designed for high school sophomores and juniors. This program is place-based and experiential, immersing students in both the natural and cultural landscape of South Eleuthera in The Bahamas. Island School students work alongside educators, scientists, and others across the local community, investigating South Eleuthera's local ecosystems. Integral to the semester are the physical and outdoor education programs. Each morning, students are challenged with an hour-long workout on land or in the ocean, waking up their mind and body for the day ahead. Throughout the program, students embark on kayak, sailing, scuba, and wilderness expeditions. Island School website: https://islandschool.org/high-school-semester-summer-term/semester/

Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki

The Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki program was established in 1988 by S. Scott Andrews, currently a faculty member teaching U.S. History. Located in Wiscasset, Maine, Chewonki offers 11th grade students a challenging academic program with an emphasis on environmental studies. Students in the school study the natural history of the Maine coast, work on an organized farm, go on two short wilderness trips, help maintain the campus, and participate in a rigorous academic program. Each semester is sixteen weeks long, and up to 40 students are offered admission for each. For more information, please visit the Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki Semester School website: http://www.chewonki.org/mcs/

School for Ethics and Global Leadership

Located in Washington, DC, and established in 2006, the School for Ethics and Global Leadership is a semester school for high school juniors. The school's residential facilities are located on Capitol Hill right behind the Supreme Court, and its academic building is a block from Dupont Circle. Its rigorous academic program focuses on ethical thinking skills, leadership development, and international studies. In addition to completing a standard junior year curriculum, students take an ethics and leadership course. The program features visits to and by prominent speakers in such fields as foreign policy, public service, diplomacy, law, and humanitarian aid. Each semester is sixteen weeks long, and up to 24 students are offered

admission for each. For more information, please visit the School for Ethics and Global Leadership website: http://schoolforethics.org/.

Study Abroad Programs

School Year Abroad

Founded in 1964, School Year Abroad is an academic program which places American high school juniors, seniors, and post-graduates in 4 countries, including China, Italy, France, or Spain, for a year. Students intensively learn the respective language of their country and live with a host family. The program includes extensive cultural immersion and a number of select courses taught in the native language. Requisite subjects, such as math and English, are taught in English. Extracurricular activities and organized travel round out the year. The program provides academic advisors and college counseling services and administers the AP, SAT, SAT II, and PSAT tests at each school. Each year SYA brings around 60 juniors and seniors to each of its locations around the world. For more information, please visit the School Year Abroad website: http://www.sya.org/

Additional Information

PDS encourages students to attend the programs listed above; however, students may ask the school to consider other programs as well. Upon further review of such programs, decisions will be made on an individual basis in consultation with the Head of Upper School. Special consideration will be given to study abroad programs endorsed by the Council of Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), an accrediting body to which PDS belongs. While PDS tuition may be waived for students participating in all long-term programs, no more than 3 students can receive such financial consideration at one time; such decisions will be made by PDS on a first-come/first-served basis.

Senior Project

Each senior is required to arrange for an independent project during the final four weeks of the second semester, culminating in a project showcase during the last week in May. The Senior Project serves as a full-time substitute for traditional classroom instruction. Students are expected to dedicate **25–30 hours per week** to their project, mirroring the standard academic schedule. Faculty mentors guide students to create projects that suit individual interests and needs. Senior Projects include a wide variety of internships, research projects through the school or local universities, and community service organizations. To promote success, each student will be assigned a Senior Project Coordinator and an Accountability Mentor for ongoing support. Successful completion of the Senior Project is a requirement for graduation.