



**VILLA DUCHESNE**  
**Middle and Upper School**  
**Curriculum Guide**  
**2026-2027**

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## INTRODUCTION

Villa Duchesne is a school grounded in relationships. As Sacred Heart educators, we believe that education is transformative because it is inherently relational. At Villa, each student is known as an individual with unique gifts and talents. We foster serious intellectual habits and challenge our students to reach their full potential while supporting each student throughout her experience.

Our students are prepared to lead beyond the confines of our campus and to truly become global citizens. As a faith-based school, our students are educated to a critical consciousness and encouraged to consider how they can change the world. We aspire to impart a capacity for logical reasoning, understanding, self-awareness, emotional knowledge, social justice, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and reflection. Students graduate with a unique combination of academic preparation, faith, resilience, and social awareness.

Our students are full of courage and confidence. This academic program guides their learning, enriched by their relationships with their teachers and their sisterhood with each other. We look forward to welcoming you to our community!

Sincerely,

Emily Kaplan  
Upper School Principal

Rachel de Almeida Oliveira  
Middle School Principal

## OUR MISSION

Madeleine Sophie Barat, who founded the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1800, envisioned a transformational education. Inspired by that vision, Villa Duchesne strives to educate the heart and mind of each child in a nurturing and challenging environment. We are dedicated to educating the whole child and preparing our students for lives of faith in God, integrity, leadership and service to others.

*Our mission is to transform the world, one child at a time.*

The foundation of our mission and education philosophy are the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools. These give meaning and purpose to our objectives and unite us through a common thread with other Sacred Heart schools around the world. Serious in principles, strong in studies, and rich in the spirit of love and life, we are a Catholic school which takes great pride in living Saint Madeleine Sophie's vision.

**Goal 1:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a personal and active faith in God.

- The school identifies itself to the wider community as a Catholic-independent-Sacred Heart School and embodies the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.
- The school forms its student and adult members in attitudes of the heart of Jesus, such as gratitude, generosity, compassion and forgiveness.
- The school community reflects an ethos of joy, hope and celebration and its programs assert that there is meaning and value in life.
- The school community welcomes and respects persons of all faiths and educates to an understanding of the religions and spiritual traditions of the world.
- School leadership prioritizes space and time for silence and contemplation for its members to deepen their interior life.
- Members of the school community, open to the transforming power of the Spirit of God, engage in personal and communal prayer, discernment and reflection which inform their actions.
- The school community, rooted in the love of Jesus Christ, nurtures the spiritual lives of its members through the exploration of one's relationship to God, to self, to others and to creation.

**Goal 2:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values.

- Sacred Heart educators and students engage in challenging experiences that inspire intellectual curiosity, a global mindset and a life-long love of learning.
- Sacred Heart educators develop and implement a dynamic curriculum, effective instructional methodology, current educational research and ongoing evaluation.
- Sacred Heart educators and students utilize a variety of teaching and learning strategies to support their growth and development.
- The school curricular and co-curricular programs integrate innovation and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, the exploration of emerging technologies and critical evaluation of information.
- The school utilizes space and the physical environment in alignment with best pedagogical practices.
- The school cultivates aesthetic values and the creative use of the imagination.
- Sacred Heart educators assume responsibility for their professional growth, supported by resources and a culture that Promotes life-long learning.

**Goal 3:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a social awareness which impels to action.

- Sacred Heart educators prepare students to serve the common good in an interdependent world.
- Sacred Heart educators immerse students in diverse global perspectives, developing competencies such as critical consciousness, language facility and cultural literacy.
- The school, drawing from Catholic Social Teaching, educates students to analyze and work to eradicate social structures, practices, systems and values that perpetuate racism and other injustices.
- All members of the school community accept accountability for the care of God’s creation, practice effective stewardship of the earth’s resources and work to alleviate the climate crisis.
- School programs promote informed active citizenship and civic responsibility on the local, national and global level.
- The school community engages in direct service, advocacy, outreach and partnerships to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
- Sacred Heart educators work to develop in the students a life-long commitment to service.

**Goal 4:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to the building of community as a Christian value.

- The school, affirming that all are created in the image and likeness of God, promotes the inherent dignity of the human person and strives for relationships characterized by inclusion and mutual respect.
- The school implements an ongoing plan for educating all members of the community to the charism, mission and heritage of the Society of the Sacred Heart.
- The school engages with the Network of Sacred Heart Schools in the United States and Canada and Sacred Heart schools around the world.
- All members of the school community support a clean, healthy and safe environment.
- Members of the school community practice and teach with a spirit of peace and reconciliation the principles of non-violence and conflict management.
- School leadership demonstrates a conscious effort to recruit students and employ faculty and staff of diverse races, ethnicities and backgrounds.
- School leadership allocates financial resources to support socioeconomic diversity both in the admissions process and in the daily life of students.

**Goal 5:** Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.

- Student and adult members of the school community grow in courage and confidence as they discover new abilities, cultivate strengths, learn from mistakes, develop empathy and exercise resilience in meeting challenges.
- All members of the school community take personal responsibility for health and balance in their lives supported by a school culture that promotes spiritual, intellectual, physical and social-emotional well-being.
- Members of the school community model and teach respectful dialogue in support of clear, direct, open communication.
- All members of the school community endeavor to practice informed, ethical decision-making and accountability.
- Student and adult members of the school community model, practice, and teach safe, ethical and responsible use of technology.
- Sacred Heart educators cultivate in the students life skills, such as initiative, creativity and agility.
- Sacred Heart schools recognize and educate to motivational, inspirational, and transformational leadership.

## GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The information represented in this curriculum guide should be used by students in tandem with their parents to learn about the courses offered at Villa Duchesne and to make choices about studies. All information is subject to change from year to year.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

As described in the student handbook, students in grades 9-12 must earn credits in each department as listed below. A one-year course counts as 1 credit. To receive a diploma from Villa Duchesne, a student must maintain full-time status at Villa Duchesne for her fourth (senior) year of upper school.

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Credits Required</u>
English	4.0
Fine and Performing Arts	2.0
Health/PE	2.0 ( <i>classes of 2027 and 2028</i> ) 1.0 ( <i>class of 2029 and beyond</i> )
Mathematics	4.0
Science	3.0
Social Studies	3.0
Theology	4.0
World Language	2.0 consecutive levels in upper school
College Counseling Seminar	0.25
Electives	1.0 additional Science Social or Studies course.

In addition, a student must fulfill her commitment to Service Learning each year and attend the college counseling class in her junior and senior years.

### COURSE ENROLLMENT:

Effective with the class of 2029, every student in grades 9 and 10 must enroll in eight in-person courses during each semester. Students in grades 11 and 12 must enroll in at least seven in-person courses during each semester, but eight courses are encouraged. The College Counseling Seminar does not count toward the minimum number of courses required.

Students will be placed in courses deemed appropriate for the skill level of the student based on teacher recommendations, test scores, and entry assessments (when applicable). If a family petitions for a student to be placed in an alternate course, they must meet with the Principal to discuss the ramifications of the change, and their request may be granted if space is available in the desired course. The family will be asked to sign documentation of the School's recommendations before the course change is granted.

Enrollment contracts must be completed and submitted prior to student course scheduling for the next academic year or receiving college counseling. Priority is given to students who have completed all required steps to enroll for the next school year. The School reserves the right to cancel a course for which there is insufficient enrollment.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR THE CLASSES OF 2027 AND 2028:**

To meet Villa Duchesne’s graduation requirement in Physical Education, students must complete four semesters of PE credit. Two of those semesters are fulfilled with the required freshman Physical Education 9 course. Students must complete two additional semesters through Villa team sport participation, independent fitness at Villa, or a preapproved independent study.

Any student who drops out of a team sport before the end of a season is required to make up any needed credits. Playing a team sport is the equivalent of a PE semester or 0.5 credit. A student may earn only one credit per year even if she plays all three seasons.

### **HONORS, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, AND ADVANCED COLLEGE CREDIT 1818 COURSES:**

Honors courses are those in which the students and teachers cover more difficult subject matter and study it in greater depth than the material covered in a regular course. An Advanced Placement (AP) course is an honors course that directly prepares students to take an Advanced Placement examination, administered by the College Board, in that field of study. Villa also offers courses in select subjects that may be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University’s 1818 Advanced College Credit Program. The 1818 Program allows students to simultaneously earn upper school and college credit through coursework completed at Villa Duchesne.

For a student to qualify for any of these courses, she must meet the departmental requirements for that specific field of study. She must expect to spend at least one hour per evening on this course. Any student who fails to keep up with the standards of an honors course will have her situation reviewed by the teacher, her counselor, and the Principal. Advanced Placement courses receive additional grade point value because they are considered college level.

The following departments include Honors courses: English, Fine Arts, Mathematics, Science, World Language. The following departments offer AP courses: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, World Language.

Depending on enrollment, all courses may not be offered each year or may not be offered as honors courses.

### **COURSE CHANGES:**

Schedule changes once the semester begins will be considered if the following criteria are met:

- The request to add a course is made by **Friday of week 2** of the semester/yearlong course.
- The request to drop a course is made by **Friday of week 2** of the semester/yearlong course.
- The student has discussed the schedule change with the teacher of the course she is requesting to drop and/or add.
- The course is not a core course that affects graduation requirements, if making a request to drop.
- Dropping the course would not result in the student being enrolled below the minimum requirement.
- The student has obtained a “Request for a Change of Schedule” and has signatures from her Parents, counselor/academic advisor, teacher, and Principal.

Schedule changes requested after the course change deadline will only be considered in the following situations:

- At the teacher’s suggestion. Teachers may recommend alternate placement of a student at any time. If a teacher recommends that a student move to a lower level of an equivalent course, the higher-level course will drop from the transcript, and the new course will replace it.
- At the Principal’s discretion in cases of extraordinary circumstances, such as medical concerns. The course will remain on the transcript as a withdrawal.

**GRADING SCALE:**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Equivalent</b>	<b>GPA Points Value</b>
A	95-100	4.30
A-	90-94	4.00
B+	87-89	3.60
B	84-86	3.30
B-	80-83	3.00
C+	77-79	2.60
C	74-76	2.30
C-	70-73	2.00
D	65-69	1.70
F	64 & below	0

An additional half point (.5) will be given for AP or dually enrolled college credit courses (such as Saint Louis University’s 1818 program) in which a grade of C+ or better is earned.

# CURRICULUM PROFILE

## MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>
English	Literary Explorations 6: Understanding Myself Through Literature and Composition Writing Across the Curriculum 6	Literary Explorations 7: Understanding Others Through Literature and Composition Writing Across the Curriculum 7	Literary Explorations 8: Understanding the World Through Literature and Composition Writing Across the Curriculum 8
Mathematics*	Numeracy and Data	Algebraic Foundations Prealgebra	Prealgebra Algebra I Honors Algebra I

*\*Students are placed in courses based on class history and an entrance test*

Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
Science	Earth Science	Life Science	Physical Science
Social Studies	Human Geography	American Civics	Ancient History
Theology	The Sacred Heart and Covenant Relationships	Christian Discipleship, Prayer, and Sacraments	Church History, Morality, and Social Justice
World Language	Foundations in World Languages: Introduction to Latin	French Spanish	French Spanish
Electives & Arts Rotation	Art 6 Public Speaking Robotics Sixth Grade Show Choir	Art 7 Journalism Personal Finance Theatre: One-Act Plays	Art: Ceramics or Painting Eighth Grade Musical Science Fair Stock Market & Investing Debate Yearbook

## UPPER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

\*\* Signifies a course with an Honors option | ▪ Signifies a course offered every other year.

	<b>Freshman</b>	<b>Sophomore</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Senior</b>
English	Foundations of Literature and Composition** Introduction to Publications Villa Ink (Literary Magazine) Entre Nous (Yearbook)	Themes in World Literature** Creative Writing Communication Arts Introduction to Publications Villa Ink (Literary Magazine)** Tower Talk (Newsmagazine)** Entre Nous (Yearbook)**	American Literature and Composition AP/ACC English Language and Composition Creative Writing Communication Arts Introduction to Publications Villa Ink (Literary Magazine)** Tower Talk (Newsmagazine)** Entre Nous (Yearbook)**	Advanced Exposition and Research AP/ACC English Literature and Composition Female Bildungsroman The Gothic Novel: The Original Thriller Introduction to Publications Creative Writing Communication Arts Villa Ink (Literary Magazine)** Tower Talk (Newsmagazine)** Entre Nous (Yearbook)**
Fine and Performing Arts	Studio Art 2D & 3D Beginning Show Choir Theatre I Guitar I	Ceramics I & II Graphic Arts Painting/Drawing I & II Printmaking I & II Sculpture Studio Art 2D & 3D Beginning Show Choir Chorus I Guitar I & II Broadcast Journalism Theatre I & II	Ceramics I & II Graphic Arts Honors Fine Arts Painting/Drawing I, II & Honors III Printmaking I & II Sculpture Studio Art 2D & 3D Beginning Show Choir Chorus I & II Guitar I & II Theatre I & II Broadcast Journalism Technical Theatre Internship	Ceramics I & II Graphic Arts Honors Fine Arts Painting/Drawing I, II & Honors III Printmaking I & II Sculpture Studio Art 2D & 3D Beginning Show Choir Chorus I & II Guitar I & II Theatre I & II Broadcast Journalism Technical Theatre Internship
Mathematics	Algebra I** Geometry** Algebra II Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry	Geometry** Algebra II Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry Honors Precalculus Financial Mathematics Logic Statistics	Algebra II Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry Precalculus** Financial Mathematics Logic Statistics Calculus AP Statistics AP Calculus AB and BC	Precalculus** Financial Mathematics Logic Statistics Calculus AP Statistics AP Calculus AB and BC
Physical Education	PE (9)	Advanced PE and Wellness I & II Participation in a sport	Advanced PE and Wellness I & II Participation in a sport	Advanced PE and Wellness I & II Participation in a sport

	<b>Freshman</b>	<b>Sophomore</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Senior</b>
Science	Biology	Chemistry** Anatomy and Physiology Introduction to Astronomy Introduction to Computer Coding Introduction to Engineering Forensic Science	Physics/AP Physics Anatomy and Physiology Introduction to Astronomy AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Computer Science Introduction to Computer Coding Introduction to Engineering AP Environmental Science Forensic Science AP Psychology	Physics/AP Physics Anatomy and Physiology Introduction to Astronomy AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Computer Science Introduction to Computer Coding Introduction to Engineering AP Environmental Science Forensic Science AP Psychology
Social Studies	Modern History Global Studies Summer Seminar	AP World History AP European History American Government Anthropology Contemporary History I Latin American History Women's History Global Studies Summer Seminar	US History AP European History AP/ACC US History AP US Government and Politics AP World History American Government Anthropology Contemporary History I Economics Latin American History Women's History Pre-Law* Global Studies Summer Seminar	AP US Government and Politics AP European History AP World History American Government Anthropology Contemporary History I Economics Latin American History Women's History Pre-Law* Global Studies Summer Seminar
Theology	Salvation History	Comparative Religions/Women in the Church	Morality/Social Justice	Bioethics Grief, Suffering, and Healing The Sacramental Imagination in the Arts ACC God-Talk
World Language	French I French II Spanish I Spanish II	French I French II French III Spanish I Spanish II Spanish III	French I French II French III ACC Honors French IV AP/ACC French Language and Culture Spanish I Spanish II Spanish III ACC Honors Spanish IV	French I French II French III ACC Honors French IV AP/ACC French Language and Culture Spanish I Spanish II Spanish III ACC Honors Spanish IV AP/ACC Spanish Language and Culture
College Counseling			College Counseling 11	College Counseling 12

**Department Philosophy:**

Each Villa Duchesne English teacher knows that writing is a refinement of thinking, and effective writing is a refinement of logical thinking. To that end, a student extends the classroom discussions on the intentionally built scaffold of classic and modern literature through our one-on-one writing conference program. Each writing conference is a personal conversation between the student and teacher; many topics – academic, social, spiritual – can be addressed, nurtured, taught, and responded to as the student’s needs require. Each course is geared toward increasing a student’s reading and writing skills while fostering their development into becoming engaged and active citizens of the world.

**Department Chair:**

Kim Gutchewsky

[kgutchewsky@villa1929.org](mailto:kgutchewsky@villa1929.org)

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

*Students in the Middle School will enroll in both Literary Explorations and Writing Across the Curriculum at each grade level.*

**LITERARY EXPLORATIONS 6: Understanding Myself Through Literature and Composition [ENG60]****Grade 6 | Two Semesters**

The sixth-grade English course is designed to help students know themselves better through the art of storytelling. Students will experience joy and engagement as they develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students develop their abilities to read and study a variety of genres and texts, while learning how different literary elements convey an author’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Reading instruction supports foundational skills, such as accessing and building upon prior knowledge, making predictions and inferences, and using context clues to understand vocabulary, as well as post-reading habits, such as annotating, summarizing, and analysis. Sixth-grade students learn how to lead and participate in student-centered discussions, and writing in this course develops confidence in the writing process with individualized instruction from the teacher. The course culminates in a festival featuring creative student work that showcases their understanding of mythology and creation stories from different cultures.

**WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM 6 [ENG61]****Grade 6 | Two semesters**

This course focuses on foundational elements of writing, such as organization, mechanics, and grammar, as well as transitional skills, including fluency and style. Writing Across the Curriculum 6 will also introduce students to various types of composition as they navigate standard writing expectations in all genres, including argumentative, descriptive, expository, and narrative. Mentor texts may be used to scaffold developmental writing skills. Students will be assessed on their ability to write in various modes and to demonstrate an evolving understanding of the writing process. This course is designed to support student writing across all disciplines, such as ELA, Social Studies, and Theology.

**LITERARY EXPLORATIONS 7: Understanding Others Through Literature and Composition [ENG70]****Grade 7 | Two semesters**

Inspired by the thematic topics of community and relationships, students will explore literature that invites self-discovery through social reflection. Class essential questions include, “How does literature help me to better understand others?” Students receive a firm foundation in literature, composition, grammar, vocabulary, and discussion of various genres. In writing, students refine their composition skills through literary analysis, research, and creative pieces. This course culminates in a poetry celebration in which students perform their own creative work or the work of another poet.

**WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM 7 [ENG71]****Grade 7 | Two semesters**

In this course, students develop mastery of the writing process as they continue to explore multiple modes of writing. Students will exercise more choice as they determine essay topics within various types of composition, such as research, poetry, personal narrative, and flash fiction. They will learn to discern strong versus weak writing and how to control their argument by making their language powerful and well-organized. Students learn how to blend their original ideas with concepts found in texts as they begin to build analysis skills and grow more comfortable using text-based evidence to prove their claims. Students will also focus on grammar as an essential part of writing, experimenting with various sentence structures and punctuation.

**JOURNALISM [ENG75]****Grade 7 | One Quarter**

Students will step into the role of journalists—researching stories, conducting interviews, writing articles, and designing layouts to create a middle school magazine. They'll explore the basics of journalism, including news writing, photography, and graphic design, while learning to meet deadlines and work as a team. This course encourages critical thinking, creativity, and curiosity as students learn how to inform and engage their middle school community through the power of the press.

**LITERARY EXPLORATIONS 8: Understanding the World Through Literature and Composition [ENG80]****Grade 8 | Two Semesters**

Literary Explorations 8 expands on the foundational work of the seventh-grade course and introduces the thematic topics of agency and global community. Looking outward, students ask themselves, “How do I shape my life and the world around me? Why should I share my voice with the wider community?” Students continue to add to their working knowledge of reading techniques for short stories, plays, poetry, and novels; develop their discussion skills; apply decoding to new vocabulary; and solidify their understanding of the writing process as they become experienced communicators and editors. This course culminates in a Shakespeare festival.

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### **WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM 8 [ENG81]**

#### **Grade 8 | Two semesters**

In this course, students demonstrate confident familiarity with writing expectations by making choices in structure and style. Students will expand their horizons by generating their own questions and completing choice-based research. They will continue to hone their knowledge of MLA style and will become acquainted with APA format. Writing Across the Curriculum will also introduce students to rhetoric, exploring how rhetorical elements such as audience, purpose, and tone shape students' own writing as they develop a unique writer's voice. Students will end the year alternating between evidence integration styles, including paraphrasing, summarizing, and directly quoting. Students will be assessed on their ability to utilize the range of writing skills and styles learned through Writing Across the Curriculum in grades 6 and 7 to create writing that is not only academically effective but also indicative of their developing voice.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARBOOK [ENG85]**

#### **Grade 8 | One Quarter**

In this course, students will work as a team to collaborate on creating quality middle school spreads for the upper school Entre Nous yearbook. Through individual assignments and group projects, students will develop essential journalistic skills, including reporting, writing, design, and photography. Emphasizing responsibility, communication, and cooperation, students will also learn about their rights and responsibilities as student journalists while striving to include every member of the middle school community in the final product.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COURSES**

### **FOUNDATIONS OF LITERATURE & COMPOSITION [ENG101]**

#### **Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

The essential questions for this course are: *What value does storytelling have in our lives? How do stories help us explore what it means to be human? Why is my story significant? How can I discover or invent myself through storytelling?* To answer these questions, students begin with the earliest stories, such as Homer's *The Odyssey* and Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*. During the second semester, students focus on coming-of-age stories such as Wiesel's *Night*, Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, and Satrapi's *Persepolis*. This course emphasizes the relationship between reading and writing and focuses on developing the foundational skills students need for success in upper school and college. Throughout the year, students hone their writing skills by examining the writing of a variety of different authors and develop their reading skills by reflecting on and analyzing the writing process. Moreover, students work on their writing skills in a range of modes—creative, reflective, and analytical—and especially through constructing formal academic essays. The student and teacher conference different writing pieces, and the student revises each essay afterwards to practice and improve writing skills. Students focus on building vocabulary, improving grammar, and learning Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation and format.

**HONORS FOUNDATIONS OF LITERATURE & COMPOSITION [ENG102]****Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: A- or above in eighth grade English and 90% in Reading/Language Arts/English on standardized tests.*

The essential questions for this course are: *What value does storytelling have in our lives? How do stories help us explore what it means to be human? Why is my story significant? How can I discover or invent myself through storytelling?* To answer these questions, students begin with the earliest stories, such as Homer’s *The Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and Shakespeare’s *Romeo & Juliet*. During second semester, students focus on coming-of-age stories such as Wiesel’s *Night*, Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*, and Satrapi’s *Persepolis*. This course emphasizes the relationship between reading and writing and focuses on developing the foundational skills students need for success in upper school and college. Throughout the year, students hone their writing skills by examining the writing of a variety of different authors and develop their reading skills by reflecting on and analyzing the writing process. Moreover, students work on their writing skills in a range of modes—creative, reflective, and analytical—and especially through constructing formal academic essays. The student and teacher conference different writing pieces, and the student revises each essay afterwards to practice and improve writing skills. Students focus on building vocabulary, improving grammar, and learning Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation and format. This accelerated course allows for more student-directed learning. Moreover, this course is more rigorous than the traditional Foundations of Literature and Composition course, creates enrichment experiences for students to delve deeper into course material, and includes supplemental texts. Students interested in taking this Honors course should have a love of reading, a willingness to embrace challenges and accept constructive feedback, and be self-motivated with a strong work ethic.

**COMMUNICATION ARTS [ENG200]****Grades 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Communication Arts is designed to provide students with the foundational skills and practical application necessary to master public speaking in professional and business settings. Students will delve into the ins and outs of effective public speaking, learning core principles such as speech organization, audience analysis, non-verbal communication, and message delivery. The class is highly focused on direct application. Students will apply their skills through in-class presentations, which will serve as the primary basis for assessment. This course does not fulfill the English requirement for graduation.

**THEMES IN WORLD LITERATURE [ENG201]****Grade 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

All literature contains universal themes; moreover, literature across cultures and time contains archetypes and symbols that link humans together. This course will introduce students to a wide span of universal themes in world literature as they examine classical and contemporary works of literature. Students will seek to answer the following essential questions to deepen their global competency: How does literature both document and inform the cultures and societies in which it is written? How are these various themes relevant to our own lives? How does literature bring us closer to the experiences of others? How does literature bring us closer to understanding the experiences and perspectives of

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others, especially those who are different from us? Utilizing this thematic approach, students have the opportunity to study several genres such as novels, memoirs, short stories, plays, poems, essays, and films and to apply a variety of approaches in analyzing them. They also write a number of short and long expository, analytical, argumentative, and research essays while focusing on the development of sophistication, clarity, and coherence in their writing. Students continue their vocabulary studies and individualized writing program through regularly scheduled meetings with the teacher, revising works after each conference.

### **HONORS THEMES IN WORLD LITERATURE [ENG202]**

**Grade 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B+ or above in ninth grade English*

All literature contains universal themes; moreover, literature across cultures and time contains archetypes and symbols that link humans together. This course will introduce students to a wide span of universal themes in world literature as they examine classical and contemporary works of literature. Students will seek to answer the following essential questions to deepen their global competency: How does literature both document and inform the cultures and societies in which it is written? How are these various themes relevant to our own lives? How does literature bring us closer to the experiences of others? How does literature bring us closer to understanding the experiences and perspectives of others, especially those who are different from us? Utilizing this thematic approach, students have the opportunity to study several genres such as novels, memoirs, short stories, plays, poems, visual art, and films and to apply a variety of approaches in analyzing them. In addition to this approach, students prepare for AP Language & Composition through an in-depth study of the literary analysis process and the foundations of rhetoric. They also write a number of short and long expository, analytical, argumentative, and research essays while focusing on the development of sophistication, clarity, and coherence in their writing. Students continue their vocabulary studies and individualized writing program through regularly scheduled meetings with the teacher, revising works after each conference. This accelerated course allows for more student-directed learning. Moreover, this course is more rigorous than the traditional Themes in World Literature course, creates enrichment experiences for students to delve deeper into course material, and includes supplemental texts. Students interested in taking this Honors course should have a love of reading, a willingness to embrace challenges and accept constructive feedback, and be self-motivated with a strong work ethic.

### **INTRODUCTION TO PUBLICATIONS [ENG204]**

**Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This course will familiarize students with the various aspects of publishing, including writing, designing, and promoting student publications. Students explore and practice news writing techniques with a deeper understanding of media literacy and journalistic ethics and laws. Creativity will flourish as students are introduced to photojournalism practices and graphic design techniques (Adobe InDesign). Students will also explore how marketing and audience engagement techniques are used to promote the publications. This course serves as an introduction for students interested in joining the staff of Villa student publications, including the newsmagazine, yearbook, and literary magazine. This course does not fulfill the English requirement for graduation.

**AMERICAN LITERATURE & COMPOSITION [ENG301]****Grade 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

American Literature is a college preparatory course devoted to a chronological study of important selected writers, diverse voices, and genres from the 17th through the 21st centuries. Major texts include selections from Native American and Puritan writers, the Transcendentalists, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Krakauer's *Into the Wild*, and a selection of memoirs, short stories, poetry, and essays. Readings from significant American women writers include Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston, Flannery O'Connor, Alice Walker, and Amy Tan. The focus of the course is on close reading, critical thinking, cooperative inquiry, academic discourse, and argument. Students read deeply, analyze a text carefully, look for and summarize ideological differences, locate points of controversy and causal relationships, form an opinion, develop a thesis, find evidence to support it, systematically construct an argument, and draw conclusions. Compositions are conferenced individually with the teacher and revised by the student, along with an ongoing study of vocabulary and grammar.

**AP/ACC ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION [ENG302]****Grade 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: A in English 10 or an A- in Honors English 10*

The course is designed to prepare students with the skills they need to navigate the multitude of messages they receive every day. The course guides students to become curious, critical, and responsive readers and flexible, reflective writers. The work of the course should deepen and expand student understanding of how written language functions rhetorically: to communicate writers' intentions and elicit readers' responses to particular situations. Students read and analyze a variety of texts from different genres, including speeches, personal narratives, short stories, essays, novels, editorials, films, advertisements (both print and film), and political cartoons. Furthermore, students are required to write across these various genres and employ the rhetorical strategies and techniques they have learned throughout the course. This is also an American literature course. Therefore, the reading selections are written by American authors, including Hawthorne, Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman, Chopin, Fitzgerald, Hurston, O'Connor, Didion, Wilson, and many others. All literature in this course serves as a foundation for further discussions on current trends in American culture as students seek to draw comparisons and contrasts between voices of the past and present. These discussions nurture a learning environment in which students form their own viewpoints on issues through exploration, analysis, research, and questioning. Students in this course are required to take the Advanced Placement exam in May. This course may also be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program. Students enrolled in AP English courses can expect an average of 45 minutes of homework per class meeting.

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### **VILLA INK (LITERARY MAGAZINE) [ENG380] & HONORS VILLA INK [ENG382]**

**ENG 380: Grades 9, 10, 11, 12 | ENG 382: Grades 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*May be taken multiple semesters; editors must register for two semesters.*

In this multi-grade course, students explore the creative process and deepen their understanding of creative expression. Students learn about magazine publishing from every angle: advertising and how to effectively solicit material, how to build relationships between artists and across disciplines, how to manage budgets and balance business decisions with creative decisions, how to prepare a layout using Adobe InDesign, how to evaluate and critique written and visual art, how to assemble a collection of work thematically, how to help writers revise creative pieces, and how to express their own artistic inclinations. The course offers a collaborative setting that acknowledges important connections between form and function, genre and subject, and tradition and innovation. Students read and assess the best work of the school community and use it to further their own craft. They provide feedback to each other and to the Villa Duchesne community as a whole. Meeting times are established each semester as a reflection of the needs of the staff. This course does not fulfill the English requirement for graduation.

### **FEMALE BILDUNGSROMAN [ENG400]**

**Grade 12 | Offered Semester One | 0.5 credit**

Originating from the 19th century, the term “bildungsroman” is German for “novel of development.” While the bildungsroman genre has historically applied mainly to young men, there are several narratives across time periods and genres that explore what it means to “come of age” as a young woman. In Female Bildungsroman, students will engage with various bildung narratives centered around girlhood, ranging from classical texts like Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* or Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* to contemporary narratives like *Winter’s Bone*. The class will also have an interdisciplinary film component, where students can identify the contours of the traditional bildungsroman genre through movies like *Ladybird* and *Pretty in Pink*. Scaffolded by literary theory, students will be able to think critically about what various media tell us about the female experience across time and contribute their own, unique ideas about such narratives. The class culminates with an essay, demonstrating mastery over voice, quote integration, literary analysis, and reading comprehension. Other projects in the class may include multimodal forms of expression, such as podcasts, videos, social media presentations, creative writing, or visual art. This course fulfills the English requirement for graduation.

### **THE GOTHIC NOVEL: THE ORIGINAL THRILLER [ENG401]**

**Grade 12 | Offered Semester One | 0.5 credit**

Starting with a study of the elements associated with the early gothic novel, this course will examine the origins of modern-day thrillers. The course will be built around Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, which is considered the original gothic novel, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, which combines both gothic and sci-fi elements to explore hubris and the impact of society’s cruelty on the individual, and *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James, as well as poetry and short stories by Edgar Allen Poe. Students will explore the ways in which gothic literature uses elements like setting, characterization, and atmosphere to create suspense and learn about the tropes that are still used in thrillers written in the 21st century. The course will then move on to modern-day thrillers and expand student

understanding of the origins of the techniques writers use to create suspense. The course will culminate in a book club-style study of modern-day thrillers; students will choose from a selection of contemporary thrillers such as *The Silent Patient*, *Nightwatching*, and *Gone Girl*. This course fulfills the English requirement for graduation.

### **ADVANCED EXPOSITION AND RESEARCH [ENG402]**

**Grade 12 | Offered Semester Two | 0.5 credit**

This course is designed to prepare students for college composition courses by building a student's command of language and argument. Students will write analytical and expository essays, creative responses, and research-based arguments. Students will read articles and books to study qualities of effective communication, focusing on how to implement various strategies and styles to create a purposeful message in their own writing. The class culminates with a research project and presentation to an authentic audience. This course fulfills the English requirement for graduation.

### **AP/ACC ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION [ENG450]**

**Grade 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: A in English 11 or an A- in AP Language*

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition is a specialized course for students who demonstrate an exceptional interest in and commitment to the study of literature. In this course, students are engaged in the careful and close reading of imaginative prose and poetry to sharpen their awareness of literature and language, as well as their understanding of the writer's craft. To achieve these goals, students study literary works in relation to the historical, cultural, and literary movements that influenced them, as well as their relationship to the contemporary experience. Reading selections include works by Shakespeare, O'Brien, Poe, Marquez, Dove, Bishop, Plath, O'Connor, and others. Core material is supplemented with readings and exercises designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition exam in May. Taking the Advanced Placement exam is a required element of this course. This course may also be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program. Students enrolled in AP English courses can expect an average of 45 minutes of homework per class meeting.

### **TOWER TALK (NEWSMAGAZINE) [ENG501] & HONORS TOWER TALK [ENG503]**

**ENG501: Grades 10, 11, 12 | ENG503: Grades 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*May be taken multiple semesters; editors must register for two semesters*

Newsmagazine offers talented writers and graphic designers a chance to make their voices heard throughout the school. As part of the Tower Talk staff, Villa Duchesne's student journalists spend their class time producing a quarterly publication that serves to inform, enlighten, and entertain the Villa community. Pitched, written, designed, and packaged by students, stories range from news of the world and St. Louis to opinions regarding contemporary issues to reviews and details of the latest music, art, and entertainment catching the student's attention. Students who show promise in organization, exemplary attendance, and efficiency in the work produced, have the opportunity to be named editor at the end of each school year (Honors Tower Talk). Students progress as they try their hands at various aspects of the magazine including reporting and writing, editing, and design. They

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sharpen their skills using the latest photo-editing and design software (Adobe InDesign). This course does not fulfill the English requirement for graduation.

### **ENTRE NOUS (YEARBOOK) [ENG502] & HONORS ENTRE NOUS [ENG504]**

**ENG502: Grades 9, 10, 11, 12 | ENG504: Grades 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*May be taken multiple semesters; editors must register for two semesters*

Yearbook staff members gain skills in page design, advanced publishing techniques, copywriting, editing, and photography while producing a creative, innovative yearbook. Each year's school memories and events are visually recorded in a volume of *Entre Nous*. Students build useful, real world skills in time management, teamwork, and design principles. Students who show promise in organization, exemplary attendance, and efficiency in the work produced, have the opportunity to be named editor at the end of each school year. All new Yearbook students are required to attend a week-long camp prior to the start of school to prepare them for the task ahead. This course does not fulfill the English requirement for graduation.

### **CREATIVE WRITING [ENG507]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Offered Semester Two | 0.5 Credit**

Creative writing instructs students in the fundamental approaches to the process of creating original prose, poetry, and/or dramatic format works for the purpose of publication. Students read writing examples and then practice their own craft. Teachers guide students through their manuscripts and on the creative acts of revision and self-editing. The course provides students with a framework and sustained blocks of time to focus extensively on their own writing. Students are expected to submit four pieces of original work (of their choosing) to the school's literary magazine, *Villa Ink*, per semester. This course is a single-semester experience and does not fulfill the English requirement for graduation.

## FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENTS

### Department Philosophies:

The Fine Arts Department encourages students to make concrete connections between observation, production, and reflection. This creates an experience where they must learn physical, analytical, and expressive skills. An artistic response is concrete and personal, especially when paired with an emphasis on skill and craft. At Villa Duchesne, we are committed to art education not only as an enrichment program, but as a vital part of a well-rounded education. We facilitate student growth and help develop a creative approach to daily life and the wider world.

The Performing Arts Department provides our students with the time, skills, and space to express themselves through drama, music, and dance, fostering self-confidence and growth as individuals and as members of our school community and the world at large. The performing arts develop critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills, which serve the student far beyond the classroom or school stage.

### Department Chairs:

Fine Arts:

Christine Sarra

[csarra@villa1929.org](mailto:csarra@villa1929.org)

Performing Arts:

Madison Hausdorf

[mhausdorf@villa1929.org](mailto:mhausdorf@villa1929.org)

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

### ART 6 [FNA61]

#### Grade 6 | One Quarter

This course bridges the gap between what students have learned in elementary school art classes while further expanding their skills in three specific art mediums. In this quarter, the theme is “Art Across Cultures,” and students will explore art from two to three different cultures as an inspiration for their projects.

### ART 7 [FNA71]

#### Grade 7 | One Quarter

The theme of this quarter in art is “Artistic Problem-Solving,” which will expand the students’ understanding of the elements and principles of design. Each project challenges students to use their creative problem-solving abilities, technical skills for individual expression, and attention to detail and craftsmanship. Students will learn about several art movements and work with different mediums.

### ART 8 [FNA81]

#### Grade 8 | One Quarter

Eighth grade art builds on the skills and techniques students acquired in seventh grade, with an emphasis on each student finding her “Artistic Voice.” Building on their art foundation, students continue developing creative problem-solving and retaining skills through assignments which encourage students to find ways for individual expression. In addition, the class focuses on attention to detail and mastery of skills and craft that will be used in upper school art courses.

## ❖ FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS ❖

### **SIXTH GRADE SHOW CHOIR [PFA60]**

**Grade 6 | One Quarter**

In this class, sixth grade students will explore what it is like to perform in a Show Choir. During class time, students will work on both singing and dancing, honing basic skills in both areas. The course will culminate with a performance at the Villa Christmas Concert in December. The Sixth Grade Show Choir will perform alongside the Upper School Show Choir in this cherished annual event. In addition to the Christmas Concert, there will be one rehearsal outside of school hours as a requirement for this class.

### **THEATRE: ONE-ACT PLAYS [PFA70]**

**Grade 7 | One Quarter**

Students will experience the play process by participating in a one-act play. Students will learn skills such as auditioning, character and world building, collaborative work, and much more! This class will culminate in a final performance in October.

### **EIGHTH GRADE MUSICAL [PFA82]**

**Grade 8 | One Semester**

The entire eighth grade class works together to create a full-scale musical theatre performance. The course begins with skill-building activities for the first four to six weeks, giving students opportunities to explore which roles they may want to pursue in the production: singing, dancing, acting, working on the set, and tech crew are all possibilities. Auditions are held after six weeks of preparation, then class time is spent in rehearsal leading up to the public performances of the show. Goals of the production are to build performance skills and confidence, have students experience the joy of performing, and to build community within the eighth grade class.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COURSES**

### **STUDIO ART 2D [FNA101]**

**Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This is the Fine Art prerequisite course for Painting and Drawing and Printmaking. This course emphasizes drawing skills; utilizing “draw what you see” as the theme. In this class, students learn perspective, measuring, shading to show form, color theory, and compositional skills. Materials include pencil, acrylic paint, and charcoal.

### **STUDIO ART 3D [FNA102]**

**Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This is the Fine Art prerequisite course for Ceramics and Sculpture. This course focuses on the manipulation of form in space as well as the use of design-based thinking. Special consideration is given to developing craftsmanship as students tackle the challenges presented by clay, wire, and other building materials. Students learn how to build and are empowered to design their own solutions to problems.

**PAINTING/DRAWING I [FNA201]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Studio Art 2D*

This Fine Arts course uses representational subject matter as a basis for learning more about composition and perspective and building on skills and materials introduced in Studio Art 2-D. Assignments include still life paintings and charcoal drawings of various sizes and subject matter which gain complexity as the class progresses.

**PRINTMAKING I [FNA202]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This course introduces students to the relief process and uses our school's roller press. The course is process-oriented, and students learn how to make a successful print, beginning with design and composition. Tools such as the scanner and Photoshop are used to assist the printmaking design process. Assignments encourage the use of original imagery and compositions as a means of creative expression for individual design, self-assessment, and critique exercises.

**SCULPTURE [FNA203]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Studio Art 3D*

This studio course explores three-dimensional construction of objects in clay, wood, wire, foam, fibers, and other materials. As materials and methods are introduced, students are encouraged to use their previous knowledge to enrich new work. Classes occasionally participate in field trips to the Frank Lloyd Wright house and Laumeier Sculpture Park. Throughout the course, students work on developing problem-solving skills to construct outdoor sculptures and other projects with a variety of desired outcomes but a constant emphasis on craft, communication, and critical thinking.

**CERAMICS I (HANDBUILDING) [FNA204]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Studio Art 3D*

This course expands on the students' knowledge of the sculptural and functional aspects of clay. Students gain additional in-depth expertise in handbuilding techniques. Students also explore a wide range of surface treatments including glaze and colored slip. There is a strong emphasis on the combination of form and function inherent in the medium of clay, leading students to create many useful pieces during this semester-long course.

**CERAMICS II (WHEEL THROWING) [FNA206]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Ceramics I*

This course is the next step in ceramics — the potter's wheel. While continuing to grow with clay as a medium, students will learn how to throw functional pieces on the potter's wheel. Throughout the course, students will investigate the difference between forms that they use every day and forms made solely for artistic expression. Using this knowledge and their growing clay skills, students will create an entire dinner set suited to their taste.

## ❖ FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS ❖

### **PRINTMAKING II [FNA207]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Printmaking I*

This course allows students to continue their exploration of relief print processes. Design challenges in reduction and other multi-color relief techniques are introduced to encourage students to problem-solve how to create more complex imagery using their prior print knowledge.

### **GRAPHIC ARTS [FNA210]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Graphic Arts introduces students to the basics of digital graphic design. Students will learn how to use Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop in depth. These tools will allow students to draw digitally and manipulate photography. They will learn to create work for a client and to navigate the world of professional graphic design. Field trips to professional graphic design studios, as well as Zooming with people who are deep in the business, will expand students' understanding of the real-world application of techniques and methods learned throughout this course.

### **PAINTING/DRAWING II [FNA301]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Painting/Drawing I*

This course provided the opportunity for some student choice in assignments using drawing and painting materials, including a portion of the semester dedicated to working in a series. Students use their knowledge of acrylics and new and old drawing mediums to make a body of work that has an underlying theme. This class challenges the students to apply skills, dig deeper, and create a cohesive body of work.

### **HONORS PAINTING/DRAWING III [FNA305]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Painting/Drawing I or II and approval of the instructor*

This course continues to build on the skills presented in Painting and Drawing I and II and is an introduction to oil paints. During the first semester, students are introduced to the history and techniques of oil paints while exploring representational subject matter. In the beginning, projects are small and intended to get the students acquainted with the material. Interspersed throughout the class are drawing assignments in various materials familiar to the students. Second-semester painting projects include a self-portrait in oil paint and a larger painting, using the theme "through the window." This class visits the St. Louis Art Museum, typically in the spring semester.

### **HONORS FINE ARTS [FNA406]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

This is a course for students who have taken four semesters of art including both Studio Art 2D and 3D and a full year in one discipline (for example, Painting and Drawing, Ceramics, or Printmaking). This course is for motivated students who want to do in-depth problem-solving and exploration in a particular area. Students must propose their area of study in the spring for approval the following year by the Fine Arts teachers.

**BEGINNING SHOW CHOIR [PFA100]**

**Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Beginning Show Choir is open to any student in grades 9-12 who loves to perform and wants to improve their singing and dancing skills. Throughout the semester, students learn about music theory, vocal structure and function, and basic dance techniques. The class will explore a variety of different musical styles, and the group will perform at the Christmas Concert or Spring Spectacular, depending on the semester in which they are enrolled. Students will be required to attend some rehearsals and performances outside of school hours. These are course requirements, and students are made aware of the dates and times of these events at the beginning of the semester. While this class is typically comprised of freshmen, students in grades 10-12 are also welcome to enroll. Beginning Show Choir is a prerequisite for Chorus I (Show Choir).

**CHORUS I [PFA101]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Beginning Show Choir*

Chorus I is the course title for Villa Duchesne’s show choir, a performing ensemble available to students in grades 10-12 after completing Beginning Show Choir. Students in Chorus I work on choral singing in parts and continue to learn about music theory and develop skills in sight reading. They also continue to develop their dance skills through choreography in a variety of different dance styles. Show Choir has two major performances each year – the Christmas Concert and Spring Spectacular. Students enrolled in this course are required to attend rehearsals and performances outside of school hours. This is a course requirement, and students are made aware of the dates and times of these events at the beginning of the year. Show Choir occasionally takes a trip outside of the St. Louis area. The cost for this trip will be communicated to parents in the fall. There are occasionally additional events for Show Choir throughout the year. These events are optional and provide extra opportunities for performing and group bonding.

**GUITAR I [PFA105]**

**Grades 9, 10, 11, 12 | One semester | 0.5 credit**

Students will have the opportunity to learn the basics of acoustic guitar. Topics covered will include notes on all six strings, basic first position chords, reading chord diagrams and chord symbols, basic tablature and standard notation, finger-style and picking techniques, barre-chords, as well as music styles, genres, and a variety of “four chord songs.” Students will demonstrate concepts learned in solo and ensemble performances in class and for larger audiences. This course is a prerequisite for Guitar II.

**THEATRE I [PFA111]**

**Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Not only an acting class, this course challenges students to explore, understand, and appreciate the art and process of theatre with the goal of developing a lifelong appreciation of the performing arts. Students will build their skills through analysis, games, group activities, projects, and performances.

## ❖ FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS ❖

### **CHORUS II [PFA201]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Chorus II meets at the same time as Chorus I, and the two classes constitute Villa’s Show Choir. Students in Chorus II continue to work on developing their skills in choral singing, music theory, and dance. Show Choir has two major performances each year – the Christmas Concert and Spring Spectacular. Students enrolled in this course are required to attend rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours. This is a course requirement, and students are made aware of the dates and times of these events at the beginning of the year. Show Choir occasionally takes a trip outside of the St. Louis area. The cost of this trip will be communicated to parents in the fall. There are occasionally additional events for Show Choir throughout the year. These events are optional and provide extra opportunities for performing and group bonding.

### **GUITAR II [PFA205]**

**Grades 10, 11, 12 | One semester | 0.5 credit**

*Prerequisite: Guitar I*

A continuation of the concepts learned in Guitar I, students will have the opportunity to learn more complex chords and finger-picking styles. More in-depth focus will be spent on learning scales, note reading, and technique. Students will learn an introduction to classical guitar and build a larger repertoire through class collaboration and solo exploration.

### **THEATRE II: ACTING [PFA211]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Theatre I or audition required*

In this course, students will continue to explore the world of theatre and to develop their skills on stage. They will examine different methods of acting and develop their script analysis skills, as well as work with monologues, duets, and collaborative scenes. Performing is part of this curriculum.

### **BROADCAST JOURNALISM [PFA217]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Students learn the power of media messages as they create news stories for Tower News Network (TNN) and have opportunities to take over school social media accounts for certain events. Working in Studio 116, students will write, direct, edit, and produce broadcasts. Successful projects will reach a broader audience through Villa’s website and social media. In addition to creating content, students develop media literacy skills as they analyze news media.

### **TECHNICAL THEATRE INTERNSHIP [PFA240]**

**Grade 11, 12 | One Semester – 0.5 Credit or Two Semesters – 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Theatre I or interview required*

Technical Theatre Internship is designed for students who are motivated to work beyond the scope of the classroom to take on responsibilities with upper school and middle school productions, including costumes, props, lighting, sound, stage management, and much more.

## Department Philosophy:

The philosophy of the Mathematics Department at Villa Duchesne is based on the primary concept that mathematics is learned best when learned with meaning. Therefore, a conceptual and investigative approach guides lesson planning, classroom discourse, and assessment. Learning is supported with graphing calculators and computer software that allow students to make connections between different representations of mathematical ideas and increase critical-thinking ability. Classrooms are conversational environments where the personal growth of one student enhances the growth of another. Teachers continuously adapt the learning experience to meet the needs of a variety of learning styles and abilities.

## Department Chair:

Josh Wells

[jwells@villa1929.org](mailto:jwells@villa1929.org)

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

### NUMERACY AND DATA [MTH60]

Grade 6 | Two Semesters

This course focuses on the development of students' sense of numeracy and operations with real numbers. Students will extend knowledge of numeric expressions to problems involving geometric measures and elementary algebraic thinking. Data and statistical measures of center and spread, along with data displays, are a focal point of the end of the course.

### ALGEBRAIC FOUNDATIONS [MTH70]

Grade 7 | Two Semesters

*Prerequisite: Placement by instructor*

This course reinforces the concepts of *Numeracy and Data* and extends them further into algebraic thinking. Students will develop skills in working with algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities. Applications of ratios and rates as a means of expressing change will lead students to a thorough study of proportions and percentages and statistical learning will extend to concepts in probability.

### PREALGEBRA [MTH80]

Grade 7, 8 | Two Semesters

*Prerequisite: Placement by instructor*

This capstone middle school course brings the concepts of preceding courses to a level of mastery. As irrational numbers are introduced, students complete their knowledge of the set of real numbers. Functions and their representations are explored for the first time as students examine relationships between two variables, and algebraic thinking is extended to include properties of exponents, three-dimensional geometric figures, and more sophisticated methods of statistics and probability.

## ❖ MATHEMATICS ❖

### **ALGEBRA [MTH90]**

**Grade 8 | Two Semesters**

*Prerequisites: Prealgebra or placement by instructor*

Students in this course extend their mastery of real numbers and algebraic expressions to the formal study of functions. Multiple representations and points of analysis of linear and nonlinear functions are explored using a variety of techniques and points of views. Communication skills in mathematics are developed by examining these relationships and their models as a means of prediction and problem solving.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COURSES**

### **ALGEBRA I [MTH100]**

**Grade 7, 8, 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

In Algebra I, the language of algebra is developed through the study of variables, properties, and operations. Students explore linear, quadratic, and polynomial functions through multiple representations with an emphasis on graphing in the coordinate plane. They enhance their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills through connections to science and other disciplines.

### **HONORS ALGEBRA I [MTH101]**

**Grade 7, 8, 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: B+ or above in Prealgebra*

This course introduces students to honors-level mathematics. Building on prealgebra skills, students develop additional strategies for solving more complicated linear equations during the first semester. Students also learn how to graph and write linear functions to enhance mathematical modeling. In the second semester, students solve systems of equations and inequalities and are introduced to exponential and quadratic functions. An emphasis is placed on building problem-solving and critical thinking by analyzing concepts using multiple representations.

### **FINANCIAL MATHEMATICS [MTH150]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

*Prerequisite: B+ or above in Algebra I or completion of Geometry*

This course explores a variety of topics in finance and the mathematical principles that govern them. In an exploratory manner, students will investigate investments, banking systems and practices, insurance markets, and more. In addition to typical assessments, students will engage in project-based learning throughout the course. This course does not fulfill the Math requirement for graduation.

**GEOMETRY [MTH200]****Grade 8, 9, 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

This course introduces students to the systematic development of the logical structure of mathematics. Students discover the properties of two- and three-dimensional figures using both traditional drawing, measuring tools and computer software. Skills in logic and deductive reasoning mature as students progress from verbal explanations to formal proofs. Algebra is integrated through the exploration of relationships among plane figures.

**HONORS GEOMETRY [MTH201]****Grade 8, 9, 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B or above in Honors Algebra I or placement by instructor*

In Honors Geometry, students study the same fundamental Euclidean geometry topics covered in the standard Geometry course, but the content is explored with greater intensity and with an emphasis on geometric proof, coordinate proof, and three-dimensional applications. Students also explore transformations, non-Euclidean geometry, and graph theory. Students employ the compass, straightedge, and computer software to discover and investigate relationships among figures.

**LOGIC [MTH250]****Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit***Prerequisite: B+ or above in Geometry, B or above in any higher-level course, or permission of instructor.*

This course explores logic statements and operations as a means to analyze language and arguments. Building on knowledge of conditional statements from Geometry, students will rigorously approach problems found throughout history, from the ancient Greeks to the puzzles of Lewis Carroll. Topics covered are foundational to a meaningful study of mathematics, philosophy, computer sciences, and law. This course does not fulfill the Math requirement for graduation.

**ALGEBRA II [MTH300]****Grade 9, 10, 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Algebra II focuses on the analysis and application of linear, quadratic, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic functions. An investigative approach is used to help students build their knowledge of simplifying expressions, solving equations, and analyzing functions. Connecting the structure of an algebraic function with characteristics of its corresponding graph is an overarching theme for the course.

**HONORS ALGEBRA II/TRIGONOMETRY [MTH301]****Grade 9, 10, 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B+ or above in Geometry or B or above in Honors Geometry*

This course, designed for the Advanced Placement Calculus-bound student, emphasizes the analysis and application of polynomial, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions. Algebraic, graphical, and numerical approaches are all utilized to develop a full understanding of concepts. Students expand their understanding of these concepts through essential questions.

## ❖ MATHEMATICS ❖

### **STATISTICS [MTH400]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Completion of Algebra II*

This course looks at concepts of probability and statistics through applications. Students analyze and summarize data and use technology to display data in meaningful ways. Concepts of randomness and probability are studied, and students learn how to use samples to make meaningful inferences about a population.

### **PRECALCULUS [MTH450]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: B- or above in Algebra II or Honors Algebra II, or permission of the instructor.*

This senior-level course completes the study of functions begun in Algebra I and Algebra II and combines elements of Geometry to create a bridge to higher-level mathematics. Topics include polynomial functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, and trigonometric functions. Conic sections and an introduction to limits will round out the course. Emphasis will be placed on the relationship between equations, graphs, tables, and real-world applications. Students will use an investigative approach to develop mathematical concepts.

### **HONORS PRECALCULUS [MTH451]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B+ or above in Honors Algebra II with permission of the instructor or B or above in Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry*

This course is designed to prepare students for Advanced Placement Calculus. The analysis of polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions emphasizes the study of parent graphs, properties, and applications. Students practice techniques for graphing transformations and solving equations for each function. Given the time, the course culminates with an introduction to calculus and limits.

### **CALCULUS [MTH460]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B in Precalculus or B- in Honors Precalculus*

The course is focused on the study of continuous change, focusing on limits, derivatives, and integrals to analyze rates of change, slopes, and areas. Key topics include function analysis, optimization, and the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus. Learning outcomes in this course prepare students for continued study of calculus and applications in engineering, physics, business, and economics.

**AP STATISTICS [MTH500]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: A- or above in Algebra II; B or above in Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry, Precalculus, or Honors Precalculus; or permission of the instructor*

The Advanced Placement Statistics course is the equivalent of a one-semester, introductory, non-calculus-based college course in statistics. Advanced Placement Statistics introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Students are exposed to four broad themes: exploring data, planning a study, anticipating patterns by producing probability models, and confirming models through statistical inference. Students use graphing calculators and computers as computational aides in analysis, simulation, and the generation of sampling distributions. Students are required to take the AP exam upon completion of this course.

**AP CALCULUS AB [MTH501]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B+ or above in Honors Precalculus and teacher recommendation*

Advanced Placement Calculus AB is roughly equivalent to a first-semester college calculus course and is focused on providing students with an understanding of differential and integral calculus, as well as its methods and applications. A multi-representational approach is used as concepts are investigated graphically, numerically, and analytically. Students are prepared for and are required to take the Advanced Placement Calculus AB exam upon completion of the course.

**AP CALCULUS BC [MTH502]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: A- or above in Honors Precalculus*

Advanced Placement Calculus BC is roughly equivalent to two semesters of college calculus and is focused on providing students with an understanding of differential and integral calculus, as well as its methods and applications. In addition to the topics covered in AP Calculus AB, students will study advanced integration techniques; infinite series; and parametric, polar, and vector functions. So that there is ample class time to explore these additional topics, students are required to work through the first two chapters independently during the summer preceding the course. Students are prepared for and are required to take the Advanced Placement Calculus BC exam upon completion of the course.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

## Department Philosophy:

The Physical Education Department works to educate young women in athletics, activities, fitness, sportsmanship, and wellness, so that students remain physically active throughout their lifetime and reap the benefits of doing so. Villa Duchesne PE classes focus on traditional sports and games, individual and dual sports, cooperative learning activities, rhythm and dance, and a variety of strength and fitness activities. Our program is a total movement experience focused on fun, involvement, character, self-esteem, cooperation, tolerance, sportsmanship, health, and wellness.

## Department Contact:

Kate Graft

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6 [PED60]

#### Grade 6 | Two Semesters

The physical education program for grade 6 serves as a foundation to the middle school PE and athletics program, introducing and developing fundamental movement skills, basic sport-specific techniques, and cooperative game play in a supportive and inclusive environment. Students are exposed to a variety of activities including introductory units in volleyball, basketball, soccer, kickball, various types of hockey, frisbee, track and field, and racket sports such as tennis and pickleball. These units focus on basic rules, movement patterns, and skill progression, helping students build confidence and competence before advancing to more structured and competitive play in later grades.

Throughout the year, students participate in rhythm and dance activities to develop coordination, creativity, and body awareness. Fitness education is also introduced, with a focus on understanding and practicing aerobic activity, basic resistance exercises, and core strength development. Students begin to explore how physical activity contributes to overall health and wellness. An important component of grade 6 PE is learning teamwork, cooperation, and sportsmanship. Students are encouraged to communicate effectively, support their peers, and develop positive attitudes toward participation and effort. By the end of grade 6, students will have established the foundational skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to successfully transition into the more skill-focused, strategic, and independent physical education experiences in grades 7 and 8.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION 7 [PED71]

#### Grade 7 | Two Semesters

The physical education program for grade 7 introduces/reinforces fundamental skills for sports including volleyball, basketball, soccer, kickball, frisbee, track and field, tennis, pickleball and various types of hockey. Throughout the year, students will actively participate in rhythm and dance units as well as individual and group fitness activities. Aerobic, resistance, and abdominal/core strength activities are incorporated throughout the year to promote individual fitness and well-being. Students choose different types of fitness skill development activities based on their interests and comfort level. They are assessed for individual improvement throughout the year and are expected to set personal goals.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8 [PED81]****Grade 8 | Two Semesters**

The physical education program for grade 8 continues to reinforce basic skills and components from PE Grade 7. In addition to the fundamental skills and reinforcement of skill sets pertaining to each activity, the students begin to learn and incorporate strategy into the units. In all activities and sports, students are expected to engage with their peers, develop and promote sportsmanship, and work together to problem solve as many activities begin to become more competitive. Intramural games such as tchoukball, pickleball, bowling, and Frisbee golf are also introduced to allow students to explore new activities. Individual fitness continues to be a weekly component, and students are encouraged to improve in fitness categories throughout the year. Categories include cardiovascular fitness, resistance activities, and abdominal/core exercises. In addition to a variety of sports, games, and fitness activities, students will continue to build on the rhythm and dance unit from seventh grade. All students will have a balanced and well-rounded year of physical education and are assessed based on their effort, sportsmanship, and individual improvement.

**UPPER SCHOOL COURSES****PHYSICAL EDUCATION 9 [PED101]****Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

The physical education program for grade 9 continues with popular team and individual sports such as but not limited to volleyball, soccer, basketball, and tennis. An emphasis is placed on sportsmanship, teamwork, cooperation, participation, and individual skill development. In ninth grade, the fitness component emphasizes specific muscle development and biomechanics. Students begin to learn which muscle groups are targeted through specific exercises and about the different forms of cardiovascular development. Additionally, guest speakers present topics and activities pertaining to self-defense as well as healthy/unhealthy relationships. This class focuses on continuing to maintain a healthy lifestyle while also making positive choices outside of the classroom. Healthy relationships and communication with their peers become an integral part of upper school and this class allows students to build upon their peer relationships while working together to accomplish a common goal. (Ex: winning a game, team building, etc.)

**ADVANCED PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND WELLNESS I AND II [PED200, PED201]****Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester – 0.5 Credit or Two Semesters – 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Completion of Physical Education 9 and currently playing a Villa Duchesne sport or teacher recommendation*

Advanced Physical Education and Wellness is a comprehensive high school course designed to integrate team sports, lifetime activities, and personal wellness. Students engage in a wide range of individual and group activities that promote physical fitness, skill development, teamwork, and lifelong participation in active leisure pursuits. Students involved in Villa Duchesne athletics have the opportunity to further develop and refine their sport-specific skills and overall fitness within this course. The program places a strong emphasis on cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, coordination, and agility, while also addressing stress management and mental well-being. Activities may include sport-specific game play, group fitness training, walking for fitness, mindfulness

## ❖ PHYSICAL EDUCATION ❖

practices, and collaborative team challenges. By the end of the course, students will have enhanced their skills, knowledge, and habits necessary to support lifelong physical activity, enhance personal health, and promote overall wellness. This class can be taken in two consecutive semesters or for just the first or second semester.

## SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

### **Department Philosophy:**

The Science Department works to expand every student's awareness of what science is, both the fundamentals of science and the nature of science, and to develop the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that empower students to analyze real-world situations. To capitalize on the full power of science as a way of better understanding the world around us, the department provides an in-depth and solid foundation in understanding science content and skills, including communication, collaboration, problem solving, and multi-sensory and hands-on experiences that utilize emerging technologies and discoveries.

### **Department Chair:**

Kirstin Blase

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

### **EARTH SCIENCE [SCI60]**

#### **Grade 6 | Two Semesters**

Earth Science explores the Earth's materials, resources, weather, and climate. Students will take part in daily collaborative activities to develop skills of data organization and scientific communication, all while investigating how natural phenomena affect our planet. Topics explored will include plate tectonics, geological history, rock formation, ecology, and biomes. Each semester will culminate with a project. The first semester will conclude with a natural resource project, and the second will end with a study about biodiversity.

### **ROBOTICS [SCI65]**

#### **Grade 6 | One Quarter**

This one-quarter course is an introduction to the fundamentals of engineering, coding, and design through the world of robotics. Students will work collaboratively to design, construct, and program functional robots to solve specific challenges and complete defined tasks. The curriculum emphasizes hands-on problem-solving, teaching students core programming concepts to control motors and sensors. By the end of the quarter, students will have developed essential computational thinking skills and the ability to test, iterate, and troubleshoot their designs.

### **LIFE SCIENCE [SCI71]**

#### **Grade 7 | Two Semesters**

In seventh grade, students explore the characteristics of life, cell structure and function, DNA and genetics, taxonomy and evolution, and human body systems on an introductory level. This culminates in a dissection activity. In addition, students will do a brief computer programming unit. Students focus on model building, inquiry-based laboratory experiences, and collaboration skills, while engaging in daily hands-on learning opportunities.

## ❖ SCIENCE ❖

### **PHYSICAL SCIENCE [SCI81]**

**Grade 8 | Two Semesters**

In eighth grade, students expand their understanding of matter and how it changes during an introduction to physical science. During first semester, students will focus on chemistry through topics of properties of matter, changing matter, and atomic structure. Second semester's topics include measuring motion, forces, and laws of motion. Students will study simple machines and energy through a robotics unit. The year culminates in a playground physics project which builds on the topics discussed throughout the semester. Students engage in daily hands-on inquiry experiences while deepening collaboration and problem-solving skills.

### **SCIENCE FAIR [SCI85]**

**Grade 8 | One Quarter**

This quarter-long course guides middle school students through the rigorous process of designing, executing, and presenting a formal science fair project, culminating in a class competition and potential regional fair entry. The curriculum is structured around the scientific method, where students learn to identify a testable idea, formulate a clear hypothesis, and develop a sound experimental design by focusing on variables and accessible materials. Students will engage in hands-on experimentation, collecting and organizing data, and analyzing their findings through the creation of graphs and charts. The final phase involves drawing conclusions, creating a professional display board and abstract, and practicing essential presentation skills for the competition. Winners of the local competition will receive dedicated support to prepare their projects for submission to the regional science fair.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COURSES**

### **BIOLOGY [SCI101]**

**Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

What properties do all living things share in common? Why are forms of life so diverse? How do we learn about the living world? Biology lays the foundation for exploring these and other questions. The course begins with the atoms and molecules that make up living things, then moves on to a study of cells. Students delve into energy relationships and metabolism, explore the realm of DNA and inheritance, and examine the diversity and evolution of life from microorganisms to mammals. The relationships that weave living things together and connect them with planet Earth are investigated. Students learn through a variety of laboratory investigations designed to hone their basic exploratory skills, provide opportunities to explore technologies important to the field of biology, and prepare them for future scientific studies.

### **CHEMISTRY [SCI201]**

**Grade 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Chemistry is the study of the composition, structure, and properties of matter and the processes that matter undergoes, including the energy changes that accompany these processes. The study of chemistry within a Sacred Heart School is also an opportunity to deepen one's faith through the study and appreciation of God's creation, which is the foundation of all science.

This introductory college preparatory course is presented by means of an integrated computer and print curriculum and includes the following major concepts: classification of matter, reaction types, stoichiometry, thermodynamics, atomic structure, periodic table and periodic properties, bonding, states of matter, solutions, kinetics, equilibrium, and acids and bases. Nuclear chemistry, organic chemistry, and oxidation-reduction reactions are introduced as time permits. The laboratory exercises, accompanied by written reports, are designed to relate specifically to each module's concepts and to develop skills in the safe and proper use of laboratory equipment.

### **HONORS CHEMISTRY [SCI202]**

**Grade 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B+ average in mathematics courses, B+ average in Biology*

Honors Chemistry is designed to provide students with a college-preparatory introduction to general chemistry. Topics covered in this course include classification of matter, reaction types, stoichiometry, thermodynamics, atomic structure, bonding, states of matter, solutions, gas laws, kinetics, equilibrium, and acids and bases. Nuclear chemistry, organic chemistry, and oxidation-reduction reactions are introduced as time permits. In order to cover this wide range of topics, the course is taught at an accelerated pace, with an emphasis on problem-solving skills to augment the lecture material, laboratory work, and in-class activities. Each student should have an excellent background in mathematics. Students who successfully complete this course are prepared for the College Board SAT subject test in chemistry at the end of the academic year.

### **INTRODUCTION TO ASTRONOMY [SCI270]**

**Grade 10,11,12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This course provides an overview of Astronomy on both large and small scales. Astronomy is the science that deals with the study of the heavens and the realms extending from the Earth's atmosphere to the distant reaches of the universe. Students explore the structures and evolution of the universe, galaxies, stars, solar systems, and planets (within our solar system and extrasolar). Students also delve into the interactions of the Earth, moon, and sun system. Students are expected to attend some night viewing activities.

### **INTRODUCTION TO ENGINEERING [SCI280]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This course provides students with an overview of the history of engineering and an introduction to basic engineering concepts and practices through project-based learning. The curriculum takes students through the engineering process: problem identification, engineering design, model building, and testing. Model building and projects incorporate the use of CAD software and laser engraving. Guest speakers, including women engineers, give students the opportunity to explore STEM careers.

## ❖ SCIENCE ❖

### **ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY [SCI303]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: B- or above in Biology or permission from instructor*

How does your body work? What are functional units of the body, and how do they interrelate? How does the body maintain its delicate balance, both within and with the outside world, and what happens when this balance is disturbed? How does the body develop? Anatomy and Physiology uses an inquiry-based approach to learning with emphasis on two major conceptual themes: the relationship between structure and function and homeostatic mechanisms within the body. Health issues and diseases are researched and discussed throughout the course. Dissections are also an integral part of the course.

### **PHYSICS [SCI304]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: Completion of Algebra II*

Physics is a laboratory-based science course that examines the relationship between matter and energy and how they interact. Using the process of scientific inquiry, engineering design, and critical thinking, students discover and apply knowledge in topics such as motion, energy, momentum, forces, and electricity. An important aim of the course is to develop and build problem-solving skills, scientific literacy, and graphical analysis. The foundation for future science courses is laid through lectures, problem solving, inquiry-based labs, simulations, demonstrations, and hands-on activities.

### **FORENSIC SCIENCE [SCI315]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisite: B- or above in Biology*

How has science impacted the legal system? In what ways does serological evidence aid in solving crime? How is skeletal evidence used in the reconstruction of a person's life and death? Forensic Science involves all areas of science including biology, anatomy, chemistry, physics, and earth science. It also requires skills in observation, reasoning, and critical thinking. Students use, discuss, and interpret current technology available in the field of forensics as well as examine its impact on and use within the legal system. Students explore how scientists collect, analyze, and store evidence. They discover the chemical and physical tests used in analyzing trace evidence. The ability to communicate their findings during lab activities will strengthen students' language, art, and mathematics skills. Topics include crime scene investigation, handling such evidence as hair, fibers, pollen, glass, fingerprints, DNA and blood.

### **AP PHYSICS [SCI380]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B average in Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry, B or above in previous science courses, and teacher recommendation*

Advanced Placement Physics 1 is equivalent to a first-semester college course in algebra-based physics. The course covers Newtonian mechanics (including rotational dynamics and angular momentum) and work, energy, and power. The lab portion of Advanced Placement Physics 1 is an integral part of the course, which includes inquiry investigations that enable students to research practical applications of the topics presented. This course, along with independent work by the individual student, prepares students for the Advanced Placement Physics 1 exam administered each spring.

**AP BIOLOGY [SCI401]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B+ or above in Biology, B+ or above in Chemistry or Honors Chemistry, recommendation from previous year's science teacher, and approval from course instructor*

Advanced Placement Biology is the equivalent of an introductory college-level biology course and is designed around the College Board's Advanced Placement Biology curriculum framework that focuses on four major concepts (Big Ideas) in biology and their corresponding enduring understandings. The four Big Ideas are:

1. The process of evolution drives the diversity and unity of life.
2. Biological systems utilize free energy and molecular building blocks to grow, to reproduce, and to maintain dynamic homeostasis.
3. Living systems store, retrieve, transmit, and respond to information essential to life processes.
4. Biological systems interact, and these systems and their interactions possess complex properties.

The course provides a basis for students to develop a deep conceptual understanding of biology and the opportunity to integrate biological knowledge and the science practices through inquiry-based activities and laboratory investigations. In the process, students have the opportunity to develop advanced inquiry and reasoning skills. They design their own investigations, analyze data collected, and connect within and across domains. Laboratory investigations comprise a minimum of 25% of instructional time. Formal laboratory reports are part of the laboratory experience. The course is also designed to prepare students to take the Advanced Placement Biology exam.

**AP CHEMISTRY [SCI402]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B+ average if taking Honors Algebra II Trig/Algebra II as a sophomore or A in Algebra and Geometry if taking Geometry as a sophomore, B+ or above in Honors Chemistry or A in Chemistry*

The Advanced Placement Chemistry course covers the equivalent of one full year of college-level General Chemistry. The course is designed around the Advanced Placement Chemistry syllabus provided by the College Board. It is a rigorous math-based course with a significant laboratory component. Advanced Placement Chemistry revisits a number of topics from first-year chemistry but at a deeper level, delving further into kinetics, equilibrium, acid-bases, thermodynamics, and electrochemistry and redox reactions. Students perform more sophisticated lab work. The purpose of the labs is to apply concepts, practice problem-solving techniques, improve critical-thinking skills, analyze results, and collaborate in small groups. This course is excellent preparation for students considering the study of science, engineering, or pre-health in college. The course culminates with the option of taking the Advanced Placement exam; students may earn up to 12 hours of college credit depending on their Advanced Placement exam score and the university.

## ❖ SCIENCE ❖

### **AP PSYCHOLOGY [SCI410]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Are you interested in finding out more about how you think, societies think, babies think, and how your brain works? Psychology is the study of the brain and behavior. It is a fascinating branch of the social sciences with units on how our brains, senses, and nervous systems function. This course provides students with a survey of the major schools of Psychology, Social Psychology, Child Psychology and Personality. In addition, students prepare for the AP Psychology exam.

### **AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE [SCI415]**

**Grades 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Completion of Biology and Chemistry earning a B or above in both.*

AP Environmental Science helps students identify and analyze natural and human-made environmental problems, evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and examine alternative solutions for resolving or preventing them. Big ideas include energy transfer, interactions between Earth systems, interactions between different species and the environment, and sustainability. Environmental Science is interdisciplinary, embracing topics from geology, biology, environmental studies, chemistry, and geography.

### **INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER CODING – Python [SCI513]**

**Grades 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | .5 Credit**

We live in a digital world, where computer literacy is more and more necessary for all professions. Coding is how humans communicate with computers. This course provides students with an opportunity to learn to code using Python, an interpreted, object-oriented, high-level programming language. Students are exposed to the fundamentals of Python coding, including iterations, loops, conditional statements, and writing basic programs.

### **INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER CODING – HTML AND CSS [SCI514]**

**Grades 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | .5 Credit**

We live in a digital world, where computer literacy is more and more necessary for all professions. Coding is how humans communicate with computers. This course provides students with an opportunity to learn web-based coding using HTML (HyperText Markup Language) and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). Students are exposed to the fundamentals of HTML and CSS coding, including static vs. dynamic web pages, version control, forms and data gathering, local development, and web applications.

### **AP COMPUTER SCIENCE [SCI 515]**

**Grades 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 credit**

This course is based on the syllabus developed by the College Board. Topics include program design and implementation, algorithm analysis, standard data structures, and object-oriented programming design. AP Computer Science utilizes Java to learn programming methodology with an emphasis on problem-solving and algorithm development. It is intended to serve both as an introductory course for computer science majors and for students who will major in disciplines that require significant involvement with computing.

**Department Philosophy:**

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne once said, “You may open new worlds of knowledge which were never dreamed of before; yet, if you have not developed in the soul of the pupil strong habits of virtue which will sustain her in the struggle of life, you have not educated her.” The Social Studies curriculum at Villa Duchesne is designed to prepare students to wrestle with rich questions of historical and cultural significance while leading them to define their own values and beliefs in a complex world. Some of the major questions we raise with students include asking whether humans are inherently nationalistic, or whether a universal identity is possible; considering what role government should play in promoting justice; and whether or not one can impose the values and biases of the present on the past. The personal and ethical implications of such questions underlie every course in the Social Studies Department.

**Department Chair:**

Chris Livingston

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

**HUMAN GEOGRAPHY [SOC60]****Grade 6 | Two Semesters**

This course is designed to spark curiosity about the world and the people who inhabit it. Students will explore the “why of where”—investigating how physical environments shape human societies and how, in turn, humans transform the Earth. From the birth of ancient civilizations to the modern global economy, students will develop the spatial thinking skills necessary to understand our interconnected world.

This course invites students on an investigative journey to explore the dynamic relationship between human societies and the physical Earth. Students will examine the “where” and “why” behind human activities, focusing on key themes such as population distribution, cultural patterns, and the movement of people and ideas across borders. By analyzing how different communities adapt to and modify their environments, students develop a foundational understanding of the cultural, political, and economic forces that shape our global landscape. Through the use of modern geographic tools, including digital mapping and spatial data analysis, students will cultivate essential inquiry skills to solve real-world problems. The curriculum emphasizes critical thinking as students investigate contemporary global issues such as urbanization, resource management, and sustainable development. By the conclusion of the course, students will emerge with a broadened global perspective and the analytical framework necessary to navigate and contribute to an increasingly interconnected society.

## ❖ SOCIAL STUDIES ❖

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING [SOC65]**

#### **Grade 6 | One Quarter**

This one-quarter course is designed to empower middle school students to become confident and effective communicators. Students will learn the fundamental skills of public speaking, including how to structure a compelling presentation and manage performance anxiety. They will focus on developing engaging delivery through practice with vocal projection, clear articulation, and purposeful body language. Throughout the quarter, students will prepare and present several types of speeches, such as informative talks and how-tos. By the end of this class, they will have the confidence and tools necessary to speak clearly and convincingly in front of any audience, both in and out of the classroom.

### **AMERICAN CIVICS [SOC72]**

#### **Grade 7 | Two Semesters**

This civics course provides a comprehensive introduction to the rights, responsibilities, and functions of citizenship within the American political system. Students will explore the historical foundations of our government, beginning with the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, to understand how democratic principles are applied in modern society. The curriculum delves into the structure and function of the three branches of government—Legislative, Executive, and Judicial—while emphasizing the vital role of “we the people” in the democratic process through voting, advocacy, and community service. By analyzing current events and engaging in civil discourse, students will develop the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate complex social issues and become informed, active participants in their local and national communities.

### **FOUNDATIONS OF PERSONAL FINANCE [SOC75]**

#### **Grades 7 | One Quarter**

This introductory course helps students develop the skills needed to make responsible financial decisions. Students learn the basics of earning income, budgeting, saving, banking, credit, and responsible spending, while discussing how financial choices affect individuals, families, and communities.

Students are introduced to the concept of assets and investing, learning how money can grow over time through saving and investment. In keeping with Catholic values, the course emphasizes ethical decision-making, stewardship of resources, and generosity toward others. This course prepares students for further study of investing and financial markets in the eighth grade.

### **ANCIENT HISTORY [SOC81]**

#### **Grade 8 | Two Semesters**

This course establishes major themes and questions that students will wrestle with for the entirety of their educational life. Beginning with the civilizations of the ancient world and continuing through the European Renaissance, the course takes a broad view of human history in order to consider a number of important questions: Is human nature selfish, empathetic, or cooperative? What constitutes just government? How do we define progress, and have we progressed? The course encourages students to evaluate the merits of their own Western civilization in the context of the histories of other traditions and cultures around the world. The course lays the foundation for a rigorous social studies

curriculum by asking students to read primary and secondary sources, to research topics in history, and to write argument-driven essays.

**DEBATE [SOC85]****Grade 8 | One Quarter**

This one-quarter elective is designed to introduce eighth-grade students to the fundamentals of structured and competitive debate. Students will master essential skills like conducting thorough research, constructing logical cases, and presenting clear, evidence-based arguments. They will explore timely and relevant topics, fostering civil discourse, respect for opposing viewpoints, and a comprehensive understanding of complex issues. By the end of the quarter, students will be confident in thinking critically, articulating strong positions, and participating effectively in reasoned public discussion.

**STOCK MARKET AND INVESTING [SOC86]****Grades 8 | One Quarter**

Building on the personal finance foundations introduced in seventh grade, this course focuses on how the stock market works and how individuals invest in companies. Students explore how businesses raise money through stock, how investors buy and sell shares, and how the value of companies changes over time.

Students learn to evaluate companies, understand market trends, and explore concepts such as risk, diversification, dividends, and long-term investing strategies. Through simulations and real-world examples, students practice making investment decisions and tracking the performance of their portfolios. The course also introduces students to the role of ethical decision-making and responsible investing while connecting classroom learning to the real world through discussions of current market events and possible interactions with professionals in finance and business. Guest perspectives from professionals in business or finance may be incorporated to help students connect classroom concepts to real-world investing.

**UPPER SCHOOL COURSES****MODERN HISTORY [SOC104]****Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Modern History students will investigate significant events, individuals, developments, and processes from 1500 to the present. Students develop and use the same skills, practices, and methods employed by historians: analyzing primary and secondary sources; developing historical arguments; making historical connections; and utilizing reasoning about comparison, causation, and continuity and change over time. Students will also continue to develop skills in using appropriate research tools and effective argument-driven writing, as well as using critical reading strategies.

## ❖ SOCIAL STUDIES ❖

### **ANTHROPOLOGY [SOC205]**

**Grades 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This one-semester elective offers students an engaging exploration of the fascinating field of anthropology – the study of what makes us human. The course encompasses the four main subfields: cultural anthropology, linguistics, biological anthropology, and archaeology. Students will explore different cultures and their practices, uncover the story behind artifacts through archaeological study, and investigate how language influences human interaction. Additionally, learners will explore how biology shapes who we are, gaining insights into human evolution and adaptation. Through thoughtful discussions and hands-on projects, students will enhance their critical-thinking skills and develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of our diverse human world and God’s intelligent design.

### **AP WORLD HISTORY [SOC206]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

AP World History: Modern is an introductory college-level modern world history course. Students cultivate their understanding of world history from c. 1200 AD to the present through analyzing historical sources and learning to make connections and craft historical arguments as they explore concepts like humans and the environment, cultural developments and interactions, governance, economic systems, social interactions and organization, and technology and innovation.

### **U.S. HISTORY [SOC301]**

**Grade 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Can history be dangerous? Yes, it can if it perpetuates commonly assumed, but false and harmful myths and stereotypes. United States History helps the student avoid this danger by exploring such concepts as American exceptionalism and changing interpretations of the American past. The course covers American history from the pre-Columbian era through the late twentieth century and explores such controversial topics as race and racism and the relationship between self-interest and idealism in American foreign policy. It also considers the forces of unity and diversity in American society, and what it means to be an American. Furthermore, it shows how historians write history by exploring the use of the raw materials of the past (documents, artifacts, etc.) before they are turned into history.

### **AP/ACC U.S. HISTORY [SOC302]**

**Grade 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B+ or above in the student’s previous Social Studies class*

Historians today are in deep disagreement over every major issue in the American past. Is the American past the story of freedom and democracy or is it rather dominated by oppression and injustice? Are we, as a society, one nation or many? In terms of foreign policy, is what is good for the United States good for the world? Much of AP United States History is designed to allow students to consider such explosive issues from varied perspectives. Through rigorous reading and writing experiences, students prepare for the AP American History exam. Graduates of the course can earn up to 6 credit hours through the Saint Louis University 1818 Advanced College Credit Program and/or the Advanced Placement Program.

**ECONOMICS: UNDERSTANDING MARKETS AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY [SOC350]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisite: Algebra I*

This course provides students with a foundation for understanding how economic decisions affect individuals, businesses, and societies. The first semester focuses on microeconomics, examining how people allocate scarce resources, how markets function, and how incentives influence decision-making. Students explore consumer behavior, production, pricing, competition, and government intervention in markets.

The second semester explores macroeconomics, addressing the economic performance of nations and the policies used to influence it. Topics include GDP, unemployment, inflation, monetary policy, fiscal policy, banking, and international economic relationships.

Students will build analytical skills by evaluating economic data, discussing current economic issues, and applying economic models to real-world problems. The course encourages students to consider ethical decision-making, stewardship of resources, and the impact of economic choices on human dignity and the common good. The course also introduces spreadsheet and Excel-based analysis, allowing students to work with data, construct graphs, and interpret economic trends.

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT [SOC402]****Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

As students prepare to enter society as voting citizens, how can they navigate the complex and contentious world of American politics? Students learn to grapple with controversial current issues as they relate to the Constitution, the role of state and federal government, civil rights and liberties, the electoral process, political parties, interest groups, and the three branches of federal government.

**AP EUROPEAN HISTORY [SOC405]****Grade 10, 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: A- or above in most recent social studies course*

Why study the European past when many of the world's headlines seem to relate more to the world outside of Europe? The answer is that European ideas and institutions have, for better or worse, shaped the world today more than those of any other region. Ideas like nationalism, capitalism, socialism, progress, and liberal democracy all have their origins in Europe. Advanced Placement European History gives each student the opportunity to explore these exciting ideas and their history. Students also explore their broader values and beliefs as they relate to European heritage. Students prepare to take the Advanced Placement European History exam.

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY I [SOC406]****Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Understanding history is integral to understanding our world today; however, recent history is frequently overlooked or glossed over in traditional history courses. This course focuses primarily on events that have occurred both locally and internationally since 9/11. The first focus of the course is the conflict between political and religious ideologies, which is illustrated in the study of the post 9/11 world, the wars in the Middle East, the rise and fall of ISIS, and the ongoing violence associated with

## ❖ SOCIAL STUDIES ❖

the Israeli-Palestinian ‘issue.’ The second theme of the course is how athletics both unite and divide people at a local level and sometimes at a national level. Students look at famous and infamous sports-related events such as the OJ Simpson murder trial, the US Women’s Gymnastics cover-up, the rise and dominance of the US Women’s soccer team, and the Boston Marathon bombing. Throughout the semester, students prepare and present talks to their classmates on a variety of contemporary topics.

### **AP US GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS [SOC408]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B+ or above in previous Social Studies course and teacher recommendation*

As students prepare to enter society as voting citizens, how can they navigate the complex and contentious world of American politics and economics? In the fall semester, students learn to grapple with controversial current issues as they relate to the Constitution, the role of state and federal government, civil rights and liberties, the electoral process, political parties, interest groups, and the three branches of federal government. In the spring semester, the course introduces students to basic principles of micro- and macroeconomics. The course concentrates on the laws of supply and demand; efficient production of goods and services; unemployment, inflation, and economic growth; and fiscal and monetary policy, the Federal Reserve, and the financial markets. Over the course of the year, students explore the major question of the role of government in a just society. As an Advanced Placement and Honors course, students read college-level texts and write argument-driven essays. Additionally, students prepare for the AP US Government and Politics exam.

### **WOMEN’S HISTORY [SOC409]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Did you know that, on average, only 13% of named historical figures in upper school history textbooks are women? Building on the idea that women’s history is history, this course introduces students to women’s history across a range of time periods and geographic regions around the world. It offers a chronological as well as thematic survey of women’s roles in world history, looking at the lives of women in societies ranging from prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities, the medieval Islamic world, and early modern African empires to the world today. Students will seek to understand women’s experiences with an emphasis on comparative issues rather than looking at civilizations in isolation. For example, how did the rights of women in classical India compare to those of women in dynastic China? By examining the lives of women throughout history with a global lens, we will better understand ourselves and the world in which we live.

### **LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY [SOC415]**

**Grade 10, 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This one-semester course will explore the rich and diverse history of Latin America, including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, from the pre-Columbian civilizations of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca to the era of European colonization and independence movements. Students will examine key historical events, such as the Spanish and Portuguese colonization, the colonial struggle for independence, the origins and impacts of revolutions, as well as the region’s rich cultural heritages. Through discussions, readings, films, music, and projects, students will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and lasting influences of Latin American history on global politics and culture today.

**PRE-LAW [SOC506]**

**Grade 11, 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit** [*This course is offered every other year, and does not qualify as core social studies graduation requirement. This course may qualify as the social studies/science elective requirement.*]

Pre-Law is a one-semester elective course that exposes students to the American legal system through readings, case studies, discussions, and speakers. Students will focus on legal principles and the framework of laws and procedures derived from those principles. They will study individual rights and liberties, the justice system, legal careers, and contemporary legal issues impacting life in our country. Students will build inquiry, analysis, problem-solving, and communication skills. They will leave this class with the confidence to be engaged and informed citizens and to work for positive change.

**GLOBAL STUDIES SUMMER SEMINAR**

**Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 | Up to 14 days | 0.25 Credit**

The Global Studies Summer Seminar is offered to students in grades 9-12 as an educational travel experience. Students study, travel, and receive 0.25 Social Studies course credit for participating in a mini-Social Studies course and travel experience. Rising 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades are offered domestic travel adventures, with past seminars traveling to Chicago, New York City, and Santa Fe. An international trip is offered to rising 12<sup>th</sup> graders, with recent seminars traveling to China (2016), Central Europe (2018), and Greece and the Aegean Sea (2023). The goal of the Global Studies Summer Seminar is to expose students to the questions they'll be confronting in their Social Studies classrooms, with a special emphasis on "the story not told." Students are asked to consider narratives often left out of history through an in-depth travel and learning experience.

**Department Philosophy:** Through the study of theology, Villa Duchesne graduates will have encountered the Person of Jesus Christ and deeply pondered His love for the world as expressed through His Sacred Heart. They will have gained a solid understanding of the Judeo-Christian scriptures and be able to apply them to their daily lives. They will have a strong foundation of the Catholic faith, including its history, doctrine, and worship, and will have the necessary skills to reflect upon and evaluate personal attitudes and behaviors toward God, themselves, and others. They will have explored and experienced various forms of spirituality and prayer methods that will enhance and sustain their lives after graduation. They will understand what it means to live a life of faith, discipleship, moral integrity, service, and social action, founded upon a profound respect for the inherent dignity of all human persons created in God's image and likeness.

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

### **THE SACRED HEART AND COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS [THE60]**

**Grade 6 | Two Semesters**

This year-long course orients students in sixth grade to the history, mission, and charism of the Society of the Sacred Heart, focusing on the story of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat. It also introduces students to the idea of studying theology as an academic discipline, integrating faith and reason (Goal II). Students reflect on the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which reveals God as a loving communion of Persons who desires to be in relationship with humanity (Goal I). Through a survey of the Hebrew Scriptures, students discover the meaning of divine revelation and the significance of covenants. A focus on the prophetic tradition invites students to a deeper awareness of God's love for the poor and marginalized and our call to serve as prophetic witnesses in the world today by practicing solidarity with the human family (Goal III).

### **CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP, PRAYER, AND SACRAMENTS [THE70]**

**Grade 7 | Two Semesters**

In their seventh grade year, students meet the person of Jesus through the Gospels. They reflect on Jesus' teachings, miracles, and the meaning of discipleship. Through an exploration of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and engaging in Christian prayer practices, students realize the ways in which they are called to practice their discipleship actively and cultivate their personal relationship with God. Studying the seven sacraments in the spring semester offers students opportunities to see how God's grace is at work in their lives through participation in these sacred signs and the importance of living a sacramental life.

**CHURCH HISTORY, MORALITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE [THE80]****Grade 8 | Two Semesters**

In eighth grade, students discover how their own story connects with the bigger story of Church History that continues to unfold today (Goal IV). By learning from the lives of the saints, students come to understand that everyone is called to a life of holiness expressed through love and service. Students encounter St. Rose Philippine Duchesne and consider her contributions to Sacred Heart Education in the United States. In the second semester of the course, students reflect on morality and social justice, using the 10 Commandments, Beatitudes, and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching as frameworks. As students transition from middle school to high school, they are encouraged to cultivate wise freedom in pursuit of moral excellence, character formation, and work for justice (Goal V).

**UPPER SCHOOL COURSES****SALVATION HISTORY [THE101]****Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

Salvation History is a study of the person of Jesus of Nazareth through the lens of the Christian story arc, focusing on Hebrew Scriptures and the Gospels. Throughout the year, students read Old and New Testament texts with spiritual maturity in order to understand the Catholic worldview at its deepest level. Students play with scriptural metaphors and recurring themes that are essential to understanding the Heart of God and how God works in the world. By the end of the course, each student should know the person of Jesus well enough to imagine how He might respond to contemporary issues and situations that students face in the world today. The final project is to create and deliver a public gospel reflection demonstrating the relevance of the gospels even today.

**COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS/WOMEN IN THE CHURCH [THE201/THE202]****Grade 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

**Comparative Religions:** This course explores the religious beliefs of the great religions of the world, with special emphasis on Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam. The course examines religion as an inseparable part of every culture and promotes movement towards tolerance and peaceful coexistence through an understanding of other religious traditions. Students examine the similarities and differences that these religions have in relationship with Catholic Christianity. Students have the opportunity to examine other faith traditions, giving their own beliefs new meaning and fresh perspectives.

**Women in the Church:** Students are invited to explore how female disciples have participated in the Church's mission over the past two millennia. Students will learn about essential concepts in Ecclesiology and key moments in Church History by reflecting on the diverse stories of holy women who have helped the Church more faithfully fulfill Christ's Great Commission and build the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven. Students will be challenged to consider how they are called to bring themselves, their stories, and their gifts to the Church today and in the future.

## ❖ THEOLOGY ❖

### **MORALITY/SOCIAL JUSTICE [THE301/THE302]**

**Grade 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

**Morality:** *Who am I? Who do I want to become? What is the good, and how can I know it and live it?*

Guided by Catholic theology and its roots in philosophy, this morality and ethics course leads students to ask questions centered around our human responsibility to one another, themselves, and to God. The goal of this course is to lead students to develop their moral character and their ability to listen to and follow their consciences. This gives students a valuable tool with which they might better the world through their lifelong choices, orienting themselves to love more fully.

**Social Justice:** This course allows students to reflect on how to become their own social ethicists in the context of learning the basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the big question, *“How will I reveal the heart of Jesus in our blessed and broken world?”* The course also allows students to investigate their own passions with social action opportunities and interior work.

### **BIOETHICS [THE403]**

**Grade 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

Bioethics examines moral questions involving practices and advancements in science, healthcare, and technology. This class builds on and applies the Catholic ethical framework learned in junior morality, diving into topics such as cloning, gene editing, medical research ethics, human dignity, and more.

### **GRIEF, SUFFERING, AND HEALING [THE404]**

**Grade 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

The Grief, Suffering, and Healing course offers students the opportunity to explore the mystery of human suffering in its different dimensions, to learn how to navigate the experiences of grief and loss, and to cultivate hope and engage in healing for themselves, others, and the world. This course draws upon insights from theology, Sacred Heart spirituality, psychology, liturgy, and pastoral ministry. Students learn through engaging with texts, guest speakers, class discussions, written reflections, and projects. At the conclusion of this course, students will have the knowledge and skills to encounter grief and suffering in their own lives and in the lives of others with compassion, empathy, and solidarity.

### **THE SACRAMENTAL IMAGINATION IN THE ARTS [THE405]**

**Grade 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

This course considers God’s grace as it is expressed through human imagination and creativity. Depending upon the instructor’s and the students’ interests, those fields may include literary arts (e.g., poetry, storytelling), performing arts (e.g, dance, theater, music), and visual arts (e.g., film, painting, sculpture). At the conclusion of the course, students will have acquired essential knowledge and skills for discovering God’s presence in, with, and through all things and all people.

**ACC GOD-TALK [THE415]****Grade 12 | One Semester | 0.5 Credit**

God-Talk centers around the genre of historical and autobiographical narrative as a way of getting at the ultimate questions at the heart of theology and religion. In dialogue with Jewish and Christian scripture, as well as classic and contemporary spiritual autobiographies written from within the Christian tradition and beyond, students will wrestle with the nature of faith; the nature, existence, and personhood of God; the nature and ends of creation and human life; evil and salvation; and other matters of ultimate concern. Through the narrative, this course will address questions that matter most to the arc of human life. This course is eligible for credit through the Saint Louis University 1818 Advanced College Credit Program.

**Department Philosophy:** The World Language Department strives to transform each child through the study of French and Spanish languages and cultures. Learning a new language broadens students' horizons and makes them citizens of the world. Through the study of French and/or Spanish, students are able to communicate with more than 700 million people and discover countless cultures throughout the world. By comparing and contrasting different languages, ways of thinking, and modes of daily living, learners of French and/or Spanish become sensitive to cultural diversity and are prepared to take their place in our global society. Moreover, world language study develops cognitive skills that will serve our students beyond the classroom in all their intellectual pursuits.

**Department Contacts:**

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

### **FOUNDATIONS IN WORLD LANGUAGES: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN [FLG60]**

#### **Grade 6 | Two Semesters**

This introductory Latin course lays the foundation for successful world language learning in middle school and beyond. Designed for sixth grade students who will continue with Spanish or French in seventh and eighth grade, the course uses Latin as a springboard to build strong linguistic awareness, vocabulary skills, and cultural understanding. Students explore the basics of Latin through engaging stories, word-building activities, and connections to English. By examining Latin roots, prefixes, and suffixes, students develop a deeper understanding of how language works—knowledge that directly supports future study of Romance languages. In addition to language basics, students learn about daily life in ancient Rome, mythology, and the Latin alphabet, helping them appreciate the cultural legacy that shapes modern languages and societies. This course sets students up for success in their future world language pathways, giving them the tools and mindset to become effective and enthusiastic learners of Spanish or French.

### **FRENCH 7 [FLG71]**

#### **Grade 7 | Two Semesters**

Students with minimal or no prior instruction begin the formal study of French. This course presents basic vocabulary and grammatical structures in an integrated program aimed at developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with special emphasis on oral communication. Students are also introduced to the geography, culture, traditions, and customs of French-speaking countries. Class is conducted in French as much as possible.

### **SPANISH 7 [FLG72]**

#### **Grade 7 | Two Semesters**

Students with minimal or no prior instruction begin a formal study of Spanish. This course presents basic grammatical structures in an integrated program aimed at developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with special emphasis on oral communication. Students are also introduced to geography, culture, traditions, and customs in Spanish-speaking countries. Class is conducted in Spanish as much as possible.

**FRENCH 8 [FLG81]****Grade 8 | Two Semesters***Prerequisite: Successful completion of French 7*

Students build upon the listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills acquired in Grade 7 and expand their knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures in a culturally authentic context. The further study of Francophone culture is an integral part of the course. Class is conducted primarily in French. Students complete the equivalent of the first year of French at the upper school level.

**SPANISH 8 [FLG82]****Grade 8 | Two Semesters***Prerequisite: Successful completion of Spanish 7*

Students build upon the listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills acquired in Grade 7 and expand their knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures in a culturally authentic context. The further study of Spanish-speaking cultures is an integral part of the course. Class is conducted primarily in Spanish. Students complete the equivalent of the first year of Spanish at the upper school level.

**UPPER SCHOOL COURSES****FRENCH I [FLG101]****Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

This course is designed for upper school students with little or no prior knowledge of French. It presents basic vocabulary and grammatical structures in an active, flexible manner. Students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with special emphasis on oral communication in a culturally authentic context. The study of Francophone culture is integral to the course. Class is conducted in French as much as possible.

**SPANISH I [FLG111]****Grade 9 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

This course is designed for upper school students with little or no prior knowledge of Spanish. It presents basic vocabulary and grammatical structures in an active, flexible manner. Students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with special emphasis on oral communication in a culturally authentic context. The study of Spanish-speaking cultures is integral to the course. Class is conducted in Spanish as much as possible.

**FRENCH II [FLG201]****Grade 9, 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: Successful completion of French I or for matriculation from French 8 to French II, students must complete French 8 with a B+ or above*

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed level I in French. Students expand upon their knowledge of French speaking cultures, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. Students continue to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with special emphasis on more creative oral and written communication. Class is conducted primarily in French.

## ❖ WORLD LANGUAGE ❖

### **SPANISH II [FLG211]**

**Grade 9, 10 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Successful completion of Spanish I or for matriculation from Spanish 8 to Spanish II, students must complete Spanish 8 with a B+ or above*

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed level I in Spanish. Students expand upon their knowledge of Spanish-speaking cultures, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. Students continue to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with special emphasis on more creative oral and written communication. Class is conducted primarily in Spanish.

### **FRENCH III [FLG301]**

**Grade 10, 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Successful completion of French II, passion for and interest in the language and culture*

Designed for students who have successfully completed French II, this course reviews and expands upon the material presented at previous levels and completes the study of most major grammatical concepts while expanding vocabulary in an authentic cultural context. More emphasis is placed on reading comprehension, oral communication, and the development of advanced written compositions. The study of Francophone culture is integral to the course. Class is conducted in French.

### **SPANISH III [FLG311]**

**Grade 10, 11 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: Successful completion of Spanish II, passion for and interest in the language and culture*

Designed for students who have successfully completed Spanish II, this course reviews and expands upon the material presented at previous levels and completes the study of most major grammatical concepts while expanding vocabulary in an authentic cultural context. More emphasis is placed on reading comprehension, oral communication, and the development of advanced written compositions. The study of all Spanish-speaking cultures is integral to the course. Class is conducted in Spanish.

### **ACC HONORS FRENCH IV [FLG402]**

**Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit**

*Prerequisites: B or above in French III, passion for and interest in the language, or teacher recommendation*

This specialized course reviews and continues the study of grammar with particular emphasis on culture. It is a college-level course and may be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program (6 credit hours). Upon completion of Honors French IV, students should be able to communicate effectively with native speakers of French in the three basic modes: interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal. Authentic media sources and literary and cultural readings form the basis for classroom discussions, presentations, and written work. Proficiency in all four language skills allows students to thoroughly explore the culture and history of French-speaking countries. Classes are conducted exclusively in French.

**ACC HONORS SPANISH IV [FLG412]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B or above in Spanish III, passion for and interest in the language, or teacher recommendation*

This specialized course reviews and continues the study of grammar with particular emphasis in culture. It is a college level course and may be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program (6 credit hours). Upon completion of Honors Spanish IV, students should be able to communicate effectively with native speakers of Spanish in the three basic modes: interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal. Authentic media sources and literary and cultural readings form the basis for classroom discussions, presentations, and written work. Proficiency in all four language skills allows students to thoroughly explore the culture and history of Spanish-speaking countries. Classes are conducted exclusively in Spanish.

**AP/ACC FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE [FLG501]****Grade 11, 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B or above in French IV or current teacher recommendation*

In this course students learn to express themselves creatively, coherently, fluently, and accurately in all three modes of communication: interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal. Authentic newspaper articles, cultural and literary texts, films, newscasts, and websites allow students to explore the French-speaking worlds past and present. This course is an Advanced Placement Class which prepares students to take the AP French Language and Culture examination in May. This course may also be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program (3 credit hours). Classes are conducted exclusively in French.

**AP/ACC SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE [FLG511]****Grade 12 | Two Semesters | 1 Credit***Prerequisites: B or above in Spanish IV or current teacher recommendation*

In this course, students learn to express themselves creatively, coherently, fluently, and accurately in all three modes of communication: interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal. Authentic newspaper articles, cultural and literary texts, films, newscasts, and websites allow students to explore the Spanish-speaking worlds past and present. This course is an Advanced Placement Course which prepares students to take the Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture examination in May. This course may also be taken for dual credit through Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program (6 credit hours). Classes are conducted exclusively in Spanish.

## COLLEGE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

**Department Philosophy:** The College Counseling program at Villa Duchesne is a comprehensive post-secondary planning process beginning in ninth grade and addressing related themes at developmentally appropriate intervals. Through individualized meetings with advisors and college counselors, class and family events on campus, and wider collaboration with neighboring peer institutions, our students have access to exceptional resources that aid in the thoughtful navigation of their journey to college. Our counseling philosophy stems from the Goals and Criteria of the Sacred Heart Network, rooted in the belief that each student is an individual, possessing her own talents, needs, and abilities. Through the college search process, students are encouraged to self-reflect, assess their strengths and interests, and identify characteristics of institutions that will facilitate continued growth. Students are expected to play the leading role in the process, while parents and counselors work closely together to support them along the way. Our goal is to provide each student with the tools necessary to make informed decisions at each stage of the process.

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### UPPER SCHOOL COURSES

**COLLEGE COUNSELING 11 [CLC403]**

**Grade 11 | One Quarter | 0.25 Credit**

Junior year College Counseling classes meet during the third quarter. These seminar-style classes are designed to generate discussion and reflection on topics integral to the college search. Students explore the wide variety of college options, learn to utilize Cialfo (Villa's online tool for college research and application tracking), begin crafting a college essay, consider ways to enhance their college applications, and participate in a career interest inventory. ACT test prep is also part of this class. These classes are held in conjunction with one-on-one meetings with the student's college counselor as well as other departmental events.

**COLLEGE COUNSELING 12 [CLC404]**

**Grade 12 | One Quarter | 0.25 Credit**

Senior year College Counseling classes meet during the first quarter of the fall semester. These sessions are designed to provide students with structured time to complete college essays, supplements, activity lists, and to finalize and submit applications with the presence and support of our experienced college counselors. College application requirements and timelines vary for each student, and thus, each individual is able to use this time to work toward the goals she and her counselor have prioritized. These classes are held in conjunction with one-on-one meetings with the student's college counselor as well as other departmental events

Villa Duchesne is an independent, Catholic school in the Sacred Heart tradition for boys and girls age 3-grade 5 and young women grades 6-12.

Head of School

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Director of Enrollment Management

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