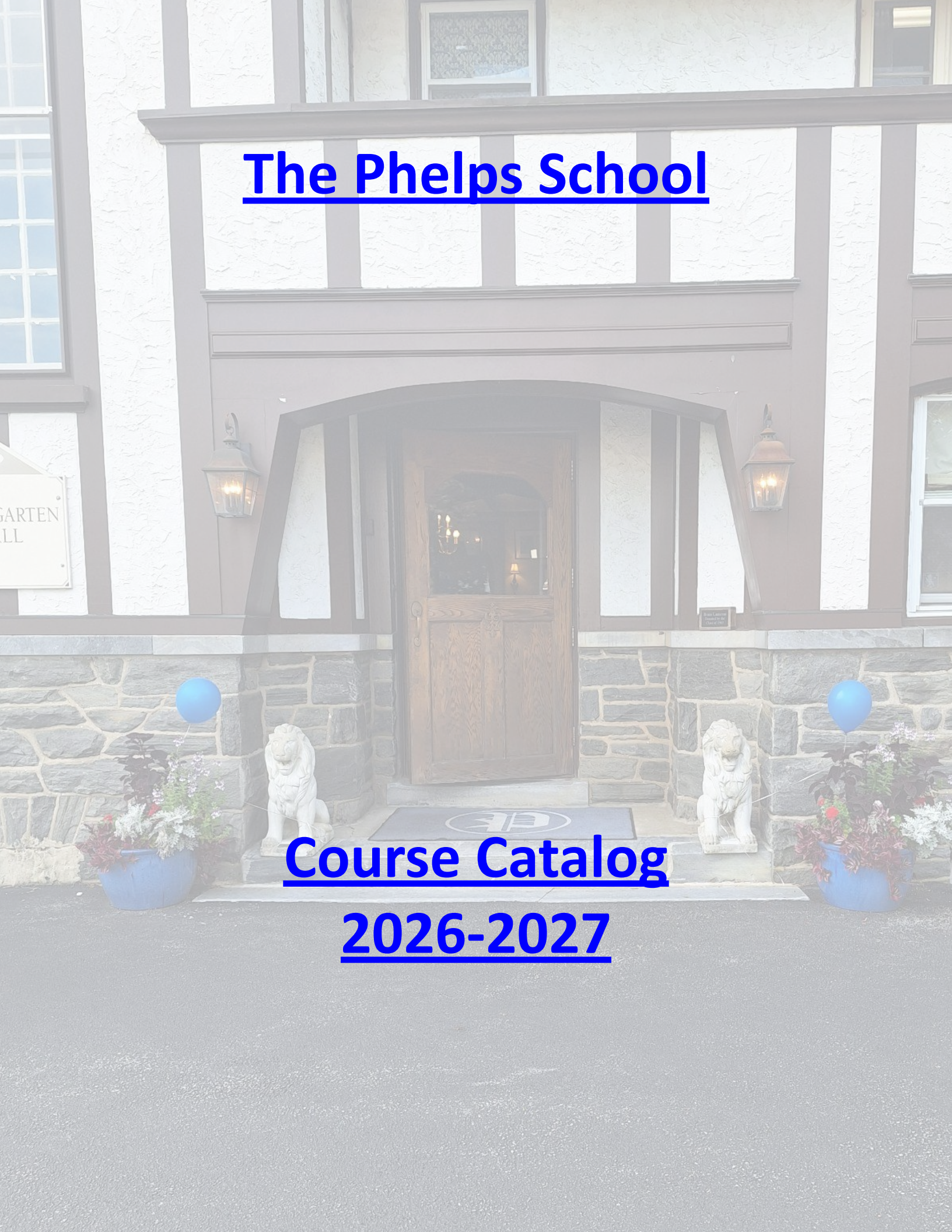


# **The Phelps School**

## **Course Catalog** **2026-2027**



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The Phelps School's curriculum is designed to help boys succeed academically, personally, and socially in a positive and caring environment. Each student's course plan is tailored to his own educational needs, goals, and interests. Small classes, a disciplined atmosphere, and regular tutorial sessions provide consistent structure and support.

Beyond the classroom, social-emotional education is pre-eminent. School-wide assemblies, grade-level meetings, and special presentations focus on character and leadership development. Faculty advisors provide personal counseling, encouragement, and help with organizational skills and study habits. Through it all, Phelps boys learn how to learn, how to live lives of purpose and meaning, and how to become better men.

Our curriculum is complemented outside of class time with tutorials (similar to office hours) and evening study hall in the dorms. Homework, a proven pedagogical tool for the reinforcement and retention of topics studied in class, is assigned for all academic courses. For students that benefit from a more structured environment in which to complete homework assignments, we also offer Evening Proctored Study Hall with a faculty member four days a week.



## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must earn at least 28 credits beginning in 9th grade.<sup>1</sup> Students must also:

- Complete four credits each of Language Arts and Mathematics and three each of Science and Social Studies.
- Take two years of a language
- Take one year of fine arts.
- Take at least one course in U.S. History.
- Complete ten hours of community service per year.
- Deliver their Senior Speech to the Phelps community.

Students must participate in after school Health and Physical Education each year they are enrolled at Phelps. Two of the three semesters must include a physical sport. Physical Education for Middle School students and Lion's Training in the Upper School are available to complement these afternoon activities but do not award academic credit.

| Department           | Credits |
|----------------------|---------|
| Electives            | 7       |
| Language Arts or ESL | 4       |
| Mathematics          | 4       |
| Science              | 3       |
| Social Studies       | 3       |
| World Languages      | 2       |
| Fine Arts            | 1       |

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<sup>1</sup> Students who attended Phelps prior to the 2025-2026 school year will have the expected number of credits adjusted for the different schedule and expectations.

## GRADING SCALE

The following "grade scale" is generally used to convert 100-point scores into letter grades. AP and Dual Credit courses receive a 0.3 enhancement to their semester grade. For example, a student earning a B in an AP course would have a GPA of 3.3 rather than 3.0 for GPA calculation purposes.

The Student-Parent Handbook outlines policies and procedures for students who require additional support in achieving strong grades. These tools include a schedule of tutorials, Evening Proctored Study Hall (EPS), Student Support Team Meetings, and referrals to our Academic Support Program (ASP). Please see the Handbook for more information.

| Letter | Numerical  | GPA |
|--------|------------|-----|
| A      | 93-100     | 4.0 |
| A-     | 90-92      | 3.7 |
| B+     | 87-89      | 3.3 |
| B      | 83-86      | 3.0 |
| B-     | 80-82      | 2.7 |
| C+     | 77-79      | 2.3 |
| C      | 73-76      | 2.0 |
| C-     | 70-72      | 1.7 |
| D+     | 67-69      | 1.3 |
| D      | 63-66      | 1.0 |
| D-     | 60-62      | 0.7 |
| F      | 59 & below | 0.0 |

## 2026-2027 COURSE OFFERINGS

| Department                                     | Grade 6 -7                                      | Grade 8   | Grade 9                                        | Grade 10                | Grade 11                      | Grade 12                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language Arts and English as a Second Language | Middle School English A, B, and C (in rotation) |           | Introduction to Genre 1                        | Introduction to Genre 2 | Literature and Composition I  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Literature and Composition II</li><li>College Composition (DC)</li></ul>                                                                                    |
|                                                |                                                 |           |                                                |                         | AP Language and Composition   |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Social Studies                                 | Ancient History                                 |           | World Cultures                                 | Civics                  | US History                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sociology</li><li>International Relations (DC)</li><li>AP European History</li><li>Moral &amp; Contemporary Issues (Fall)</li><li>Ethics (Spring)</li></ul> |
| World Languages                                |                                                 |           | Spanish 1                                      | Spanish 2               | Spanish 3                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spanish 4</li><li>Spanish 5</li></ul>                                                                                                                       |
| Mathematics                                    | Pre-Algebra                                     | Algebra 1 | Geometry                                       | Algebra 2               | Pre-Calculus                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Statistics (DC)</li><li>AP Calculus (DC)</li><li>Calculus</li></ul>                                                                                         |
| Science                                        | Earth Science                                   |           | Biology                                        | Chemistry               | Physics                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Environmental Science (DC)</li><li>AP Chemistry</li><li>Anatomy (Fall)</li><li>Health and Nutrition (Spring)</li></ul>                                      |
| Fine Arts                                      | Middle School Art                               |           | Studio Art 1                                   | Studio Art 2            |                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3D Art (Spring)</li><li>Painting and Drawing (Fall)</li><li>Visual Storytelling (Spring)</li><li>Yearbook and Journalism (Fall)</li></ul>                   |
| Health and Physical Education                  | Middle School PE                                |           | Lion’s Training (Only for year-round athletes) |                         |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Other Graduation Requirements                  |                                                 |           |                                                |                         | College Explorations (Spring) | Transitions to College (Fall)                                                                                                                                                                     |

## TYPICAL COURSE PROGRESSION

| Department                                     | Grade 6 -7                                                 | Grade 8   | Grade 9                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Grade 10                | Grade 11                                                     | Grade 12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language Arts and English as a Second Language | Middle School English A, B, and C (in rotation)            |           | Introduction to Genre 1                                                                                                                                                                                     | Introduction to Genre 2 | Literature and Composition I                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Literature and Composition II</li><li>College Composition (DC)</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                |                                                            |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         | AP Language and Composition<br>AP Literature and Composition |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Social Studies                                 | Geography, Ancient History, World History (in rotation)    |           | World Cultures                                                                                                                                                                                              | Civics                  | US History                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>AP Psychology (alternate year)</li><li>Sociology (alternate year)</li><li>International Relations (DC)</li><li>Economics</li><li>Leadership and Ethics</li><li>Public Speaking</li><li>Personal Finance</li><li>AP European History</li></ul> |
| World Languages                                |                                                            |           | Spanish 1                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Spanish 2               | Spanish 3                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spanish 4</li><li>Spanish 5</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Mathematics                                    | Pre-Algebra                                                | Algebra 1 | Geometry                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Algebra 2               | Pre-Calculus                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>AP Statistics (DC)</li><li>AP Calculus (DC)</li><li>Calculus</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Computer Science                               |                                                            |           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>AP Introduction to Computer Science with Java</li><li>Web Design and Development</li><li>Computer Architecture and Logic</li><li>Web Design and Development</li></ul> |                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Science                                        | General Science, Life Science, Earth Science (in rotation) |           | Physical Science                                                                                                                                                                                            | Biology                 | Chemistry                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Physics</li><li>Environmental Science</li><li>Zoology</li><li>Health and Nutrition</li><li>AP Biology</li></ul>                                                                                                                               |
| Fine Arts                                      | Studio Art 1                                               |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Studio Art 2            |                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>AP Art and Design</li><li>3D Art</li><li>Painting and Drawing</li><li>Visual Storytelling</li><li>Yearbook and Journalism</li></ul>                                                                                                           |
| Health and Physical Education                  | MS PE                                                      |           | Lion’s Training (For year-round athletes only)                                                                                                                                                              |                         |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Other Graduation Requirements                  |                                                            |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         | College Explorations                                         | Transitions to College                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Please note that grade levels here and throughout this document are meant only as a guide. Students may be placed in courses above or below their grade level as needed. DC next to a course denotes a Dual-Credit eligible course. Classes may not be offered due to the rotation, interest, and/or availability of faculty.

## SEMESTER COURSES

Most courses are year-long and require students to remain in that class for the entire year to receive full credit. However, a number of courses marked in the description as “*Semester Only*” are open to juniors and seniors.

In the Spring, juniors must take College Explorations to prepare for the college application process. Likewise, in the Fall, seniors must take Transitions to College. Juniors and seniors may choose between the other electives for the fall or spring semester. Each semester course is worth one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of a credit.

| Fall Semester                        | Spring Semester                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yearbook and Journalism              | 3D Art                             |
| Moral and Contemporary Issues        | Ethics                             |
| Painting and Drawing                 | Visual Storytelling                |
| Anatomy and Physiology               | Health and Nutrition               |
| Transitions to College (all seniors) | College Explorations (all juniors) |

## DUAL CREDIT COURSES

The Dual Credit Program was created to benefit post-graduate students but is also open to juniors and seniors with the instructor's permission. Dual Credit courses may earn college credit through an agreement with one of our partner institutions. Dual credit courses are designed to have the same rigor and expectations as introductory-level undergraduate courses at major colleges or universities, although their pacing is adjusted.

Students should expect:

- To have approximately 30-45 minutes of homework per night.
- To have final exams and/or essays that will count for a significant portion of their grade.
- To actively participate in class discussions in a seminar-style format.
- To do a substantial amount of reading and writing.
- To be graded in accordance with the standards established by the partner institution.



All Dual Credit Program courses require an additional fee (approximately \$250-\$400) per course to complete dual enrollment. The additional fee is charged directly by our university partners and is paid through their registration system, though Phelps teachers and administrators support students through the registration process.

- College Composition I (Immaculata University)
- International Relations (University of Pittsburgh)
- Statistics and Data Analysis (University of Pittsburgh)
- Calculus (Immaculata University)
- Advanced Calculus (Immaculata University)

Students must be approved to enroll in Dual Credit courses. These courses move at a faster pace than other Phelps courses, and students can expect to have more homework.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES

Phelps offers a rotating selection of AP-designated courses in every core area that adhere to the College Board's high standards and prepare students to take the appropriate AP Exam in May. These rigorous courses use a nationally recognized curriculum, and many colleges award college credit for strong performance on AP Exams.

Phelps Offers:

### **2026-2027 School Year**

- AP Language and Composition
- AP Calculus
- AP Chemistry
- AP European History

### **2027-2028 School Year**

- AP Literature and Composition
- AP Calculus
- AP Biology
- AP Psychology

Students who wish to take AP courses should express their interest during the Course Request Meeting with the DA. Students must have earned grades of 83 (B) or above in related courses, and submit a recommendation from the teacher of related courses. Students enrolled in an AP course are required to take the AP Exam in May with an additional fee.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

In our Language Arts courses (English Literature and Composition as well as English as a Second Language), our aim is to cultivate confident communicators. Our curriculum is thoughtfully crafted to empower students in various aspects of effective expression.

Through a blend of grammar lessons, vocabulary studies, research papers, creative writing, and oral presentations, students are equipped with the tools to articulate their thoughts and ideas with clarity and precision. Moreover, our emphasis on reading strategies goes beyond mere comprehension; it fosters a deeper understanding of texts and encourages critical thinking. By engaging with a diverse range of literature, students are invited to participate in the essential conversations that shape our world.

Our Language Arts courses are more than just academic pursuits; they are comprehensive journeys that empower students to navigate the complexities of language and communication with confidence and proficiency.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH A, B, and C

#### *Middle School*

The Middle School English Language Arts curriculum is designed to integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students will engage in the study of grammar usage, mechanics, vocabulary, and spelling skills. Novels, short stories, non-fiction articles, and poems, organized into themed units, will be used to engage students in word recognition, fluency, and metacognition. Emphasis in writing will be placed on understanding the writing process and composing different types of texts. Students will focus on improving their writing technique by implementing a variety of sentence structures and word choices, providing strong supporting details, identifying the purpose, understanding the audience, and demonstrating proper mechanics and grammar.

### INTRODUCTION TO GENRE 1

#### *9th Grade*

Reading, writing, and oral communication are an integral part of our everyday lives. This course focuses on the concept of genre and the characteristics of different genres. This comprehensive English course enables students to develop their language skills by introducing new strategies and concepts. In this year long course, students will examine works of non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama. To expedite the study, the class will also build vocabulary and improve grammar. They will develop their writing skills through a dedicated unit that introduces the MLA style, proper in-text citations, and works cited page formatting, while integrating these concepts into writing assignments throughout the semester. Course content is meant to strengthen oral communication through class discussions and presentations.



### INTRODUCTION TO GENRE 2

#### *10th Grade*

Building on the knowledge gained from Introduction to Genre I, this course is designed to develop students' critical thinking about various forms of literature, including prose, fiction, drama, poetry, and novels. Throughout the year, students will read selected works of literature, focusing on how literary devices create meaning for readers through plot, word choice, characterization, irony, and figurative language. Students will further develop their knowledge of and ability to use the writing process. They will practice different genres of

writing through narrative, literary analysis, and argumentative essays. Additionally, listening and speaking skills are developed through class discussions and project-based activities.

## **LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION I**

### *11th Grade*

This course guides students in becoming more confident and skilled readers and writers through an exploration of American and other English-language literature. Students will develop a deeper appreciation for the diverse techniques authors use to create meaning. Through active reading, thoughtful annotation, and close examination of literary elements—such as structure, style, imagery, and symbolism—students will engage in critical analysis of themes within their cultural and historical contexts. Short and long-form writing assignments will develop students' technical writing skills and encourage organized critical thinking. The course also emphasizes vocabulary development, collaborative discussion, effective presentation and listening skills, and the practice of writing as a multi-step process.

## **LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION II**

### *12th Grade*

Through themed units, students in this course will explore important and complex ideas expressed in literature from around the world. Close reading of challenging literature will lead students to analyze the connections between themes and texts, defend opinions and evaluations, and create original literary works. Readings will also facilitate discussion and debate of issues in philosophy, psychology, science, and politics. Other focuses include building and applying a sophisticated vocabulary with accuracy, continuing to develop both analytical and technical writing skills, and ultimately understanding how the study of literature is useful in the search for universal and personal truths.

## **AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**

### *12th Grade*

AP Literature and Composition is a study of literary analysis and critical thinking through works of fiction, poetry, and drama. This course is preparation for advanced studies in English, communications, education, and other humanities-based fields. It is designed for those students who have taken English courses and who wish to further develop their skills in reading, writing, and interpretation. Students learn about major literary movements; close reading techniques; analysis of literary elements such as theme, character, and style; and strategies for writing analytical essays. Emphasis is placed on thoughtful discussion, clear written expression, and preparation for the AP Literature and Composition Exam.

## **COLLEGE COMPOSITION**

### *12th Grade, Dual Credit Eligible*

In the College Composition course, students will study and rigorously practice the various modes of writing they will encounter in college and the professional world, all while exploring one central question: What makes writing valuable? Writing skills such as complex grammar and construction, thoughtful word choice, and intentional revision will be developed and applied across all forms of writing. Conventions and concepts unique to each form, such as journalistic writing, independent research, and personal reflection, will also be explored deeply and practiced thoroughly, culminating in a portfolio of written work that reflects a student's growth as a writer and their understanding of the value of writing beyond the high school setting. *This course is eligible for dual credit from Immaculata University.*

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Students are placed in ESL classes based on their TOEFL, ITEP, or Duolingo tests and an assessment conducted by the Director of ESL. Students can eventually transfer into mainstream English classes upon meeting the ESL Program's exit requirements: demonstrating a well-balanced skill set and a composite score of 80 or more on a TOEFL taken on a single test date or as a MyBest Score combination. After leaving the ESL program, students are encouraged but not required to study another foreign language, such as Spanish. After placement, students are expected to move up one level each year. Students in the first two levels have two courses on their schedules. The third year of ESL is a single course and is repeatable until the ESL program graduation requirements are met.

|                          |                                                                                              |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Level 1:<br>Foundations  | English Language: Starting / Emerging<br><br>Literature and Composition: Starting / Emerging |
| Level 2:<br>Intermediate | English Language: Developing<br><br>Literature and Composition: Developing                   |
| Level 3:<br>Transition   | Advanced English as a Second Language                                                        |

*Please note that courses in English as a Second Language can only be taken as part of our English as a Second Language program. Enrollment in this program is subject to an additional fee. Please contact Admissions at [admis@thephelpsschool.org](mailto:admis@thephelpsschool.org) for more information.*

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE: STARTING AND EMERGING

At this early stage, focus is on basic vocabulary, grammatical structures, and reading comprehension to build a strong foundation as international students advance through the ESL program. The Oxford Q: Skills for Success series includes eight units with relevant contemporary themes. Workbooks and online components provide reading and writing practice. Students learn to write sentences and paragraphs of increasing complexity and create theme-based projects to demonstrate mastery.



### ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION: STARTING AND EMERGING

This course emphasizes reading comprehension, academic writing, and analysis. Students begin their transition from textbook-based coursework to direct engagement with literary works, progressing from short stories to plays and novels. Explorations into literature encourage students to “think big” about the world and themselves. They build their vocabulary and work on creative and analytical writing, exploring various genres and creating theme-based projects to demonstrate mastery. Class discussions and reading aloud reinforce speaking and listening skills.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE: DEVELOPING

Students develop their English-speaking skills by answering questions, listening and responding to classmates, and making oral presentations. Emphasis is on spoken delivery, including

pronunciation, eye contact, and body language. Students improve their auditory processing skills and their English comprehension by listening to lectures, conversations, music, and videos. The Oxford Q: Skills for Success text series provides speaking and listening practice, with text and online components.

### **LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION: DEVELOPING**

Students read novels, plays, and poetry of increasing length and complexity, using comprehension strategies presented at the start of the course. Literature studies continue to improve students' English vocabulary by broadening their perspectives and understanding. Class discussions and reading aloud continue to improve speaking and listening skills.

### **ADVANCED ESL**

Students develop skills in extemporaneous speaking and in presenting logical, coherent arguments. They practice basic public-speaking strategies for various situations and purposes; craft position papers to develop skills in research, writing, and citation; and learn to avoid logical fallacies and other weak argumentation. In various debate formats, they present prepared statements and extemporaneous rebuttals. Exploring contemporary issues and long-standing philosophical questions helps them better understand themselves and their world. This course focuses on students improving their comprehension of English.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

In our Social Studies courses, students embark on a journey of inquiry into the rich tapestry of history and the complexities of human nature. Our curriculum is carefully designed to foster analytical and critical thinking skills while nurturing multicultural perspectives. With an overarching goal of cultivating engaged and informed citizens in a democratic society, our

courses delve into various aspects of historical literacy, including world events, traditions, patterns, and changes. Our Social Studies courses are more than academic endeavors; they are transformative experiences that empower students to navigate the complexities of our world with empathy, understanding, and a commitment to positive change.



### **WORLD GEOGRAPHY**

*Middle School (Offered 2027-2028)*

This course examines the physical aspects of various continents and regions as well as human culture, government, politics, economics, and conflicts around the world. Students explore physical and climate characteristics, demographics, historical changes, economic activity, and land use. Students learn to question, read, analyze, interpret, and evaluate different forms of information.

### **ANCIENT HISTORY**

*Middle School (Offered 2026-2027)*

This course examines ancient civilizations from 2000 BCE to 1500 CE, their impact on one another, the reasons for their rise and fall, and the traces of their history and traditions that continue today, as seen through a discussion of selected current events. Higher-order thinking is developed and assessed in various formats: tests, quizzes, essays, oral presentations, notebook checks, research projects, and reaction papers.

## **WORLD CULTURES**

### *9th Grade*

This course examines diverse cultures and the conditions that gave rise to them. Students use a variety of resources to develop their understanding of civilizations throughout history, including their present-day family life and structure, social and community organizations, approaches to education, religious beliefs and institutions, political movements, economic trends, and the intellectual and artistic achievements of people within their cultures.

## **CIVICS AND ECONOMICS**

### *10th Grade*

This course explores the growth of American democracy, federalism, the Bill of Rights, separation of powers, and checks and balances. Students discuss current events, government's impact on everyday life, the Constitution, the Presidency, the Supreme Court, Congress, the making of domestic and foreign policy, state and local government, and federal branches. This course also includes a basic introduction to economics, including supply and demand, taxation, and individual utility. Coursework develops students' ability to read, question, analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate information.

## **U.S. HISTORY**

### *11th Grade*

This course begins with a comprehensive view of America from colonization through the Civil War. Focus begins with the relationships between colonies and with how life, society, and culture evolved in different regions. It then turns to how the colonies reconciled their stark differences, gained collective independence, formed a sovereign nation, and quickly began to impact the world. Next, it examines the nation's cultural and political evolution and its development as a world leader from the Civil War through the present. Assignments and projects entail significant research, analysis, and

writing, thereby developing higher-order thinking skills.



## **SOCIOLOGY**

### *11th-12th Grade, Offered in Alternating Years with Psychology, Next Offered in 2026-2027*

This course introduces students to the discipline of sociology; readings, projects, and assignments reveal how societal groups interact, impact one another, and influence everyday life. Students develop the capacity to view and understand their world from a sociological perspective.

## **ECONOMICS**

### *11th-12th Grade*

Beyond bear and bull markets, gross national product, and fiscal policy, economics addresses basic societal issues: the root causes of unemployment and the rising costs of healthcare, tuition, and housing. This course's flipped-classroom approach facilitates discussion and collaborative projects, such as film skits that demonstrate economic concepts. Assessments focus on 21st-century skills, teamwork, collaboration, creative projects, and classroom discourse.

## **ETHICS**

### *12th Grade, Semester Only*

Students read traditional fables, discuss current events, and conduct historical research to consider universal ideas and timeless ethical questions. Assessment is based on class participation, research, vocabulary, and

thoughtful attention to questions presented in classroom discussions.

## AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

*11th-12th Grade*

This course serves as an introductory course to college-level historical thinking. The course aims to bolster both historical argumentative skills and content knowledge in major areas of European history. Through nine distinct units, students will engage with historical events and philosophies from 1450 through to the modern day, including the Renaissance, Industrial Revolution, and the Cold War. This course will critically examine both the ideological causes and effects of these eras to equip students with the tools to craft historical arguments in preparation for the College Board's AP European History exam.

## AP PSYCHOLOGY

*11th-12th Grade, Offered in Alternating Years with Sociology, Next Offered in 2027-2028*

This course introduces students to the history, major principles, and various types of psychology: clinical, abnormal, adolescent, developmental, environmental, experimental, forensic, community, counseling, and organizational. Topics include human development, abnormal behavior, research and development, perception, consciousness, cognition, motivation, and emotion.

## AP COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

*11th-12th Grade*

This course introduces students to the rich diversity of political life outside the United States. The course uses a comparative approach to examine the political structures, policies, and political, economic, and social challenges among six selected countries: Great Britain, Mexico, Russia, Iran, China, and Nigeria. Additionally, students examine how different governments address similar problems by comparing the effectiveness of their approaches to various global issues. *Students enrolled in the course*

*may select to take the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam.*

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

*11th-12th Grade, Dual Credit Eligible*

International Relations is the study of how countries interact with one another. Many of its subfields include the study of war, international political economy, institutions and organizations, foreign aid, and terrorism. This class considers theories developed by major scholars and applies them to real world cases from the last 150 years of world politics. We augment the textbook with readings by International Relations scholars that showcase important, recent research in the field. Students will be challenged with problem sets that introduce game theory, quantitative and qualitative research methods, and persuasive essay writing. This seminar style course mirrors first-year college courses in size, instruction, and expectations. *This course is eligible for dual credit from the University of Pittsburgh.*



## MATHEMATICS

The math department at Phelps believes in the power of self-discovery for optimal learning. Our instruction is carefully crafted to foster both independent and collaborative work. With scaffolded lessons and assessments tailored to individual learning needs, students receive personalized support. Hands-on projects provide real-world relevance, while technology and online resources enhance the learning experience. In embracing a dynamic approach

to mathematics education, our goal is to empower students to become confident problem solvers equipped with the skills they need for success in an ever-evolving world.

## **PRE-ALGEBRA**

### *6th-7th Grade*

Students will learn the basics of modeling sentences with algebraic expressions. Students will also be able to manipulate simple equations and inequalities and solve for a single variable. Basic number theory will be covered, distinguishing among integers, rational numbers, and real numbers. Students will study basic geometric concepts, including plane figures and solid calculations. Finally, students will study ratios, percentages, and probability.

## **ALGEBRA 1**

### *8th-9th Grade*

Students learn to represent linear functions graphically, algebraically, and numerically. Other topics include linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, exponential functions, polynomials, factoring, and probability.

## **GEOMETRY**

### *9th-10th Grade*

Students learn to apply inductive and deductive reasoning to a variety of mathematical applications, including informal and formal proofs. Other topics include properties of triangles, including basic trigonometry, angle relationships, segment lengths in circles involving tangents and chords, perimeter, circumference, area, and similarity in a variety of plane figures leading into surface area, volume, and similarity for three-dimensional solids. Algebraic concepts are included in all geometric applications.

## **ALGEBRA 2**

### *10th-11th Grade*

Algebra 2 focuses on the concepts of functions and relations with emphasis on linear, quadratic, exponential, logarithmic, radical, and rational functions. Students apply algebraic

concepts to a variety of real-world situations that can be modeled mathematically. All topics are approached through an exploration of numerical, algebraic, and graphical methods using a TI-84 graphing calculator.

## **PRE-CALCULUS**

### *11th-12th Grade*

The course focuses on mastery of critical skills and exposure to new skills necessary for success in subsequent math courses. Topics include fundamental concepts of algebra; functions and graphs; polynomials and rational functions; exponential and logarithmic functions; trigonometric functions; analytic trigonometry; systems of equations and inequalities; matrices and determinants; conic sections and parametric equations; polar coordinates; sequences and series; and an introduction to limits.

## **CALCULUS**

### *12th Grade*

Calculus is the study of mathematical concepts and techniques used in business, economics, and the social sciences. It is designed for those students who have completed Algebra and wish to further their study of mathematics in Calculus without the expectation of an Advanced Placement exam. Students learn about functions; limits and continuity; derivatives and their applications to business problems; optimization; marginal analysis; and basic integration. Emphasis is placed on problem-solving, modeling real-world scenarios, and interpreting mathematical results in a business context.

## **AP CALCULUS**

### *12th Grade, Dual Credit Eligible*

Major topics include limits and continuity, derivatives, integrals, and functions (logarithmic, exponential, logistic, trigonometric, and inverse trigonometric). Applications of derivatives include optimization, related rates, movement (position, velocity, acceleration). Applications of integration include

slope fields, volume (cross-sectional area, disk, washer), and the accumulated rate of change. Students explore numerical, algebraic, and graphical methods. *Students enrolled in the course may select to take the AP Calculus AB Exam.*

### **ADVANCED CALCULUS AND OTHER TOPICS**

*12th Grade, Dual Credit Eligible*

This course is designed for students who have completed our Calculus course or its equivalent and are looking to expand their understanding of mathematics. The course will be paced to the students in it and will explore advanced topics from Calculus 2 and, potentially, Linear Algebra curricula. *Students enrolled in the course may select to take an AP Calculus Exam.*

### **STATISTICS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

*11th-12th Grade, Dual Credit Eligible*

Major topics include experiments and observational studies, descriptive statistics, probability, hypothesis testing for binary, categorical, and numeric data, linear regressions, and nonlinear models. The course introduces students to the R programming language, which is widely used in academia and in data analysis and data science roles. This seminar style course mirrors first-year college courses in size, instruction, and expectations. *This course is eligible for dual credit from the University of Pittsburgh.*

## **COMPUTER SCIENCE**

### **AP COMPUTER SCIENCE AND CODING IN JAVA**

*10th-12th Grade, Offered Based on Interest*

Designed for students with some previous experience in computer programming, this course is a rigorous introduction to the Java coding language. The course incorporates data types, algorithms, class architecture, loops, inheritance, and recursion. *Students enrolled in the course may select to take the AP Computer Science A Exam.*

### **COMPUTER ARCHITECTURE**

*11th-12th Grade, Semester Only*

Students in this class will take apart computers to understand their hardware. They will be invited to work as a class to build their own desktop computer by researching and ordering parts online. Students also learn about basic bit representations and logic gates. Students will also get the opportunity to code Arduino boards using C++.

### **WEB DESIGN WITH JAVASCRIPT**

*10th-12th Grade, Semester Only*

Students learn the basics of HTML and CSS coding, allowing them to build their own websites. They also receive a primer on JavaScript that they then incorporate into their CSS. Students learn how to incorporate animations, user interface options, and data storage.

## **SCIENCE**

Courses explore scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies that explain the natural world. Students learn to conduct experiments, collect and analyze data, make calculations, interpret information, hypothesize and test predictions, and draw well-reasoned conclusions. Teachers scaffold lessons based on each student's needs, abilities, and interests. Projects address real-world scientific issues and challenge students to find possible solutions and assess relative risks. Courses incorporate laboratory work and inquiry-based field investigations to develop 21st-century skills such as collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking.

### **EARTH SCIENCE**

*6th-8th Grade, (offered 2028-2029)*

This survey course introduces younger students to the disciplines of earth and space science, as well as basic aspects of physics and chemistry. The course prioritizes individual inquiry and hands-on activities to develop skills

for laboratory investigations. *Offered in alternating years with Life and Physical Science.*

### **LIFE SCIENCE**

*6th-8th Grade (offered 2026-2027)*

This survey course introduces topics in biology: cells, genetics, plant and animal diversity, and human systems. The course prioritizes individual inquiry and hands-on activities to develop skills for laboratory investigations. *Offered in alternating years with Physical and Earth Science.*

### **PHYSICAL SCIENCE**

*6th-8th Grade, (offered 2027-2028)*

This introductory course integrates physics and chemistry to study the hydrosphere, exosphere, geosphere, and atmosphere. Students investigate how these “spheres” interact and how the laws of physics and the intricacies of chemistry help us understand our planet and its systems. Coursework includes hands-on lab activities, discussions of current events in science and research, and written responses, all of which help develop organizational skills. *Offered in alternating years with Earth and Life Science.*

### **BIOLOGY**

*9th Grade*

This required course prepares students for higher-level life science courses by considering several themes: science as a way of knowing; continuity and change; how advances in technology influence our world and our understanding of the biosphere; the diversity and interdependence of living things; and the organization of living things.

### **CHEMISTRY**

*10th Grade*

In this required course (for students who have completed Algebra I), students learn about the classification and properties of matter, mixtures and pure substances, the scientific method, and fundamental concepts of energy, mass, mathematics of counting, and the “mole.”

Students learn about the periodic table; how elements are classified and named; the structure of the atom; and chemical equations, reaction rates, and chemical equilibrium. Significant laboratory work includes formal lab reports and inquiry-based assessments.

### **PHYSICS**

*11th-12th Grade*

In this elective course (for students who have completed Algebra 2), students begin by studying the mathematical definitions and applications of position, velocity, acceleration, force, energy, work, and momentum in describing linear and rotational motion. They learn about wave mechanics and electromagnetism.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**

*11th-12th Grade, Dual Credit Eligible*

In this elective course, students learn to identify and analyze environmental problems, both natural and man-made. Environmental science is interdisciplinary, encompassing a wide range of topics across different areas of study. The curriculum draws upon biology, earth science, and physical science.

### **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

*11th-12th Grade, Semester Only, Offered Based on Interest (offered 2027-2028)*

Health and Nutrition is a one-semester elective designed to help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about their personal health and well-being. Students explore topics such as nutrition, physical fitness, stress management, mental and emotional wellness, sleep, substance abuse prevention, disease prevention, and healthy lifestyle choices.

### **ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY**

*11th-12th Grade, Semester Only, Offered Based on Interest*

Anatomy and Physiology is a comprehensive, laboratory-based science course that explores the structure and function of the human body.

Students investigate how the body's systems work independently and interact to maintain homeostasis. Major topics include cellular organization and tissues, as well as the skeletal, muscular, nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, urinary, immune, and reproductive systems.

## **FORENSICS**

*11th-12th Grade, Offered Based on Interest*

Forensic Science is a laboratory-based science class designed for students who are interested in forensic science. The purpose of this course is for students to gain experience with major investigative techniques used by forensic scientists and crime scene investigators and to develop an understanding of the scientific concepts that underlie these techniques. Topics include collecting evidence, fingerprinting, blood typing, ballistics, trace evidence, anthropology, and DNA.

## **AP BIOLOGY**

*11th-12th Grade, Offered Based on Interest (offered 2027-2028)*

AP Biology is a study of the core principles that govern living organisms and biological systems. This course is preparation for advanced studies in biological sciences, medicine, research, and other science-based careers. It is designed for those students who have taken biology and who wish to deepen and expand their understanding of the subject. Students learn about the chemistry of life; cell structure and function; genetics and evolution; biological diversity; plant and animal physiology; and ecology. Emphasis is placed on scientific inquiry, laboratory investigations, and real-world applications of biological concepts.

## **AP CHEMISTRY**

*11th-12th Grade, Offered Based on Interest (offered 2026-2027)*

AP Chemistry is a rigorous, college-level course designed to provide students with a deep, conceptual understanding of the foundational principles of chemistry. This course aligns with

the College Board framework and prepares students to take the AP Chemistry Exam in May, potentially earning them college credit. Students will dive into the core mechanics of how matter interacts, moves, and transforms. Through extensive inquiry-based laboratory investigations, students will cultivate advanced skills in data analysis, scientific modeling, mathematical problem-solving, and collaborative laboratory techniques. Expect a fast-paced, challenging, and rewarding environment that bridges theoretical concepts with real-world chemical phenomena. Prerequisites: completion of Chemistry (Honors level highly recommended) with a grade of "B" or higher. Students should already have a solid grasp of basic nomenclature, stoichiometry, gas laws, and balancing chemical equations. Successful completion of Algebra II with a grade of "B" or higher. AP Chemistry relies heavily on rapid algebraic manipulation, logarithms (for pH calculations), and data analysis. Students are required to take the AP Exam and pay the accompanying fee.

A Note on Course Expectations: AP Chemistry requires a high level of independent study, critical thinking, and a strong work ethic. Students should expect a demanding workload consisting of rigorous problem sets, formal lab reports, and conceptual writing.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES**

### **SPANISH 1**

*Students are advised to start Spanish by their 10th-grade year*

Students learn the basics of the Spanish language and the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. Through interactive activities focused on listening, speaking, reading, and writing, students will develop foundational vocabulary and grammar skills, enabling them to communicate in everyday situations and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives.

## SPANISH 2

Students continue building their linguistic skills and vocabulary, learning advanced tenses, syntactic constructions, and idioms. They write short paragraphs and essays to develop their presentation skills while applying Spanish-specific concepts. Spanish 2 emphasizes and requires more translation and aural/oral practice in class.

## SPANISH 3

Development of vocabulary and grammar continues. Students engage in higher level analytical work in Spanish. Varied texts, media, and native sources provide real-life application. Emphasis is on students' speaking and thinking in Spanish, in and out of class. Students conduct research in Spanish to prepare for the rigors of the college classroom.

## SPANISH 4

This rigorous course is taught almost exclusively in Spanish. Students are also encouraged to engage in conversation with native Spanish speakers outside of class. Modes of communication include interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Studies include literary and non-literary texts as well as Spanish newscasts, podcasts, movies, and music.

## SPANISH 5

This rigorous course is available to students who have completed Spanish 4. The course is designed around the needs of the enrolled student(s) and is repeatable over multiple years.

## FINE ARTS

*Offerings in the art department are dependent on student interest and instructor availability.*

## STUDIO ART 1 AND 2

*All Grades*

Students experience a diverse genre of creative art, working in a variety of media such as clay,

paint, collage, and colored pencils. They explore the fundamentals of artwork by designing projects that emphasize self-expression, incorporating elements of Graphic Design, and using programs such as Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator to edit photographs, produce magazines, design logos, and create their own marketing brand identity. Studio Art 2 further develops the artistic skills and techniques learned in Studio Art 1, challenging students to create a portfolio demonstrating competence across various art forms.

## 3D ART

*All Grades, Semester Only*

Students will explore the principles and techniques of creating three-dimensional art forms using various media such as clay, wire, paper, and found objects. Emphasizing creativity and craftsmanship, the course will guide students through projects that develop their skills in sculpture, modeling, and spatial design, culminating in unique, tangible artworks.

## PAINTING AND DRAWING

*All Grades, Semester Only*

Students will master fundamental techniques in various media, including pencil, charcoal, ink, watercolor, and acrylics. Focusing on both representational and abstract styles, the course will encourage individual expression and creative exploration through guided projects and open studio work.



## **YEARBOOK AND JOURNALISM**

*All Grades, Semester Only*

Students will develop skills in writing, photography, design, and layout as they collaboratively produce the school's yearbook. Emphasizing journalistic principles and creative storytelling, the course will provide hands-on experience in capturing the essence of the school year through compelling narratives and visually engaging pages.

## **VISUAL STORYTELLING**

*All Grades, Semester Only*

Students learn about, read, and create their own visual stories, including comic books, short stories, fairytales, graphic novels, illustrated poems, and more. The purpose of this class is to reflect on how visual and written language can work together to form an engaging story that allows you to form deeper connections with multiple meanings. Creating their own visual stories allows students to improve both their writing and artistic skills while investing in their characters, artworks, and plotlines.

## **AP ART AND DESIGN**

*11th-12th Grade*

This course allows students to develop their skills in inquiry-based artmaking through practice, experimentation, and revision. Students create a portfolio of work that demonstrates purposeful artistic investigation and personal voice. The course emphasizes developing original ideas through sustained investigation, with a focus on 2-D or 3-D design or drawing. Students submit a final portfolio to the College Board for AP evaluation.

# **HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

*Middle School*

Students learn the basics of living a healthy lifestyle, how to design their own workouts, gym safety, and the rules of various sports.

## **LION'S TRAINING**

*Placement by the Athletic Director.*

Students learn about and engage in physical conditioning, plyometrics, basic weight and circuit training, and cardiovascular and overall body fitness. This course is designed for students in year-round athletic programs and placed by the Athletic Director.

# **ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP)**

ASP helps students face learning challenges by providing more than modifications and accommodations suggested by IEPs or 504 Plans. The academic learning support specialist provides instruction and learning activities tailored to each learner's unique needs. ASP helps students develop practices in time management, organization, concentration, and active listening. Students work with the learning specialist to become more successful, confident learners who better understand their own learning strengths and needs.

ASP is added to a student's schedule as a regular class period, replacing one of their academic courses. The class is pass/fail and repeatable for multiple years.

*Please note that the Academic Support Program is subject to an additional fee. Please contact Admissions at [admis@thephelpsschool.org](mailto:admis@thephelpsschool.org) for more information.*

## COLLEGE COUNSELING

The college counseling program is designed to guide students and families through every stage of the college search, application, and transition process. Through individualized support, structured coursework, and ongoing communication, students are encouraged to explore their interests, identify colleges that match their goals, and develop the academic and personal skills necessary for success beyond high school. The program emphasizes thoughtful planning, self-reflection, and preparation for the opportunities and responsibilities of college life.

### The Junior Year - COLLEGE EXPLORATIONS

During the junior year, students participate in *College Explorations*, a semester-long course that introduces and guides them through the college admissions process. The course provides students with a foundation for understanding college options and preparing for the application journey ahead.

Students learn how to research colleges effectively, evaluate academic programs and campus environments, understand admissions requirements, and build a balanced college list. Additional topics include standardized testing, resume development, extracurricular involvement, essay preparation, and strategies for presenting themselves authentically throughout the admissions process. Students also begin meaningful conversations about personal goals, future pathways, and the factors that contribute to finding a strong college fit.

By the conclusion of the course, students are equipped with the tools and confidence needed to begin the college application process with purpose and direction.

### The Senior Year - TRANSITIONS TO COLLEGE

In their senior year, students enroll in *Transitions to College*, a semester-long course designed to support them through the college application process and prepare them for success after high school graduation.

Students receive structured guidance on completing applications, writing and revising college essays, requesting recommendations, managing deadlines, and navigating financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Beyond the application process, the course emphasizes the practical and personal skills necessary for a successful transition to college life.

Key areas of focus include college-level study habits, time management, financial literacy, campus navigation, self-advocacy, communication with professors and advisors, and strategies for maintaining academic and personal wellness. Through discussion, reflection, and practical exercises, students gain a clearer understanding of the expectations and independence associated with college life.

The course aims to ensure that graduates leave not only prepared to enroll in college, but also equipped to thrive within a college community and confidently manage the challenges and opportunities of adulthood.



