



**Upper School
Course Catalog**

2025-26

Dawson Mission Statement

Dawson School is dedicated to excellence of mind, body, and character. We prepare students, through challenging and relevant learning, to become creative, resilient problem-solvers who bring their best to the world.

Dawson Virtues

Dawson is committed to the development of character. We foster this personal growth with focus on these four adopted virtues as points of emphasis: respect, compassion, courage, and integrity.

Dawson Diversity Statement

Dawson actively promotes and embraces the exchange of diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds through curricular design, community involvement, and the integration of our four virtues – respect, compassion, courage, and integrity – into every aspect of our community life. It is our responsibility to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for all members of our community, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, or religion, as well as to cultivate in each student the ability to make empathetic, socially responsible decisions.

Upper School Graduation Requirements

Arts	2 credits
English	4 credits (students must always be enrolled in English)
Innovation & Technology	1 credit
Mathematics	3 credits (must have completed Geometry and Algebra II)
Science	2 credits (including Biology and Chemistry or Physics)
Social Studies	2 credits (including Ancient World (up to and including the Class of 2028) or Modern World (Class of 2029 and beyond) and US History)
World Language	2 credits
<u>Other</u>	<u>7 additional credits</u> (inc. Human Development if the student attended Dawson in 9th)
Total	23 credits

Dawson Protocol Regarding Advanced Courses

- Dawson School encourages qualified students to enroll in AP courses and recommends two as a maximum per year. If enrolling in more than 2 AP courses, students should expect a conversation with their advisor and/or Academic Dean.
- Please refer to each department description in the course catalog to see the requirements for the department's advanced courses.
- **All** students who enroll in AP courses at Dawson are responsible for registering, paying for, and taking all AP examinations while earning at least a C in each AP course in order to receive the 1.0 additional GPA weighting.

Additional Graduation Requirements and Information

- Cocurricular credit: Students in 9th and 10th grade must complete a minimum of *two* activities each year. At least one activity each year must be a sport. Students in 11th and 12th grade must complete *three* total activities over the course of two years. At least one must be a sport.
- Each year that a student is enrolled at Dawson they must participate in Winterim and class trips. Students are required to complete College Counseling in their 11th and 12th grade years, as well as a Senior Project at the end of the 12th grade year.
- All students in 9th –11th grades are required to carry at least *six* credit bearing courses each semester.
- All students in 12th grade are required to carry at least *five* credit bearing courses each semester. Students in 11th grade and in the first-semester 12th grade may opt to take an online course or a Semester Internship for a pass/fail elective credit. This must be approved by the academic dean one month prior to the beginning of the semester.

Descriptions for Additional Graduation Requirements

Class Trips (all grades)

Every August, Upper School students begin the year with a class trip. Each trip is designed to focus students on their assigned Dawson Virtue for the year as well as providing time to bond with each other and with some of their teachers. This is a vital element of the Dawson Experiential Education program and has been a valued tradition for decades.

Winterim (all grades)

Winterim, a unique program that sets Dawson apart from other schools, is an integral part of the Dawson curriculum. Faculty design 6-day programs that support the mission of the school by requiring students to stretch themselves in mind, body, and character while exploring their education from an active, experiential perspective. Winterim programs take many forms, engaging students in the arts, technology, the outdoors, culture, science, history, and fitness. Winterim opportunities include local, national, and international experiences. Dawson's Winterim program was developed as a means to strengthen regular classroom education by drawing students into activities and places that will help bridge the gap between theory and real life. Establishing this link is a critical component of a holistic education.

Human Development (all students in 9th grade)

Human Development is a one-semester course that meets to support and to stretch students in their growth as human beings. Throughout the course, students will do activities, read articles, watch media clips, hear speakers, visit the Challenge Course and do related group initiatives, and write in class journals in order to become more aware of their evolving identities and of the factors that go into their lives in Upper School. The goals of the course are to increase students' self-awareness and capacity for self-reflection, to build students' inter- and intrapersonal and communication skills, and to empower students to make decisions based on their understanding of their authentic selves, their family and personal values, and their cultural milieu.

College Counseling (all students in 11th and 12th grade)

The spring-semester College Counseling course for 11th grade is taught by the college counseling staff and covers essential topics in the college admission process. This includes self-reflection exercises designed to help students find the best college fit, i.e., the schools that best meet their unique academic, social, financial, health and other needs. Students take personality assessments and learn how to use tools like SCOIR, college rep visits, and evening programs to maximize their knowledge about schools. Practical goals of the class are that students will have filled out the Common Application, written a college essay, and started a rough list of prospective colleges. Students will also be prepared to navigate the standard testing process.

The fall-semester course for 12th grade guides applicants through the practical elements of the admission process. The class meets at least once per week until December. The course is a continuation of the spring 11th grade class during which students put what they've learned into practice.

Senior Projects (all students in 12th grade)

The Dawson School recognizes that knowledge gained outside the classroom is a valuable complement to academic learning. Over the course of their educational tenure at Dawson, students participate in a number of experiential education events: class trips, Winterims, etc. The culminating piece of the senior year continues this emphasis on experience as a learning tool. 12th grade students will finish their studies at Dawson by spending the last weeks of their high school careers in projects of their own design that will expose them to career and community service possibilities for the future. The senior project allows students to pursue a passion, a field of interest, a dream not yet realized. It is an opportunity for students to exert their independence and to celebrate the passage from Dawson to the rest of the world. We have designed this experience to help our seniors complete high school with a renewed sense of personal growth and of connection to a broader social context. Successful participation in Senior Projects is a requirement for graduation at the Dawson School.

Co-Curricular Activities

It is a graduation requirement for Dawson students to participate in co-curricular activities. Students in 9th and 10th grade must complete a minimum of *two* activities each year. At least one activity each year must be a sport. Students in 11th and 12th grade must complete *three* total activities over the course of two years. At least one must be a sport. The school's requirements are designed to encourage student participation in the Dawson community beyond the classroom and to promote physical activity as fundamental to healthy student growth and development.

FALL SPORTS

Boys' Golf
Boys' Soccer
Boys' Tennis
Cross Country
Cyclocross
Volleyball

WINTER SPORTS

Boys' Basketball
Girls' Basketball
Yoga

SPRING SPORTS

Baseball
Boys' Lacrosse
Canoe & Kayak
Girls' Lacrosse
Girls' Soccer
Girls' Tennis

Competitive Speech and Debate Team (Fall and Winter Commitment)

This team is for students interested in developing their self-expression, self-confidence, and public speaking abilities through competitive speech and debate. This co-curricular activity runs from September through the end of January, with the CHSAA State Speech Festival taking place on the last Friday and Saturday in January. Competitive events include public forum debate, value debate, impromptu speaking, extemporaneous speech, original oratory, creative storytelling, poetry, humor, drama interpretation, and solo and duet acting. As a two-season, multi-event activity, Speech and Debate is organized differently from other co-curriculars. All team members are required to attend at least five invitational meets plus the State Festival at the end of the season in order to gain their co-curricular credit.

Robotics (Winter)

Students can earn a winter co-curricular credit by participating in RC Dawson for at least 100 hours during the six week design/build season that begins on the first Saturday in January and goes until the Tuesday after President's Day Weekend. RC Dawson team members work together to construct large, competition robots that compete in FIRST Robotics. We are officially designated as FRC Team 2972. Students will be expected to participate in the team's official competition, even though it happens during the spring sports season.

Individual Work/Volunteer Internship (Fall, Winter, or Spring)

Students in 11th and 12th grade may complete 100 hours of work, internship, or community service as one of their three required co-curricular credits. This option is available for two of the three required co-curricular credits. Students who choose this option must have their work approved by the Upper School Academic Dean and record hours regularly. The 100 hours must be completed by the end of the school year, or by February 15 for seniors. Students wishing to take advantage of this option must apply to the Upper School Academic Dean.

Fall Theatrical Production

Participants are required to audition for parts in the Fall Play and participation is limited by the roles available in the chosen production.

Winter Musical Production

Participants are required to audition for parts in the Winter Musical and participation is limited by the roles available in the chosen production.

Internship Program

The Dawson School Internship Program is designed to help students connect their classroom learning with real-world experiences. By offering opportunities to explore passions, contribute meaningfully to the community, and acquire essential job skills, the program empowers students to see the practical relevance of their education. It fosters a deeper connection to the world beyond Dawson, equips students with valuable skills for the future, and provides a unique opportunity for them to take pride in their contributions outside the traditional classroom setting.

Starting in the summer of 2025, Dawson Upper School students will have three distinct paths to pursue internships during their time at Dawson:

1. **Summer Internships:** Students will have the opportunity to participate in internships with a selection of local organizations, facilitated by Dawson.
2. **Co-Curricular Internships:** Students may choose to pursue internships during the school year, which will be recognized as co-curricular activities, enhancing both their education and personal development.
3. **Semester Internships (11th and 12th graders):** For students who wish to immerse themselves in a more hands-on experience, Dawson will offer credit (Pass/Fail) for approved internships that take place during the school day for a semester. These internships count toward graduation requirements. Students participating in this option will receive a course release to free up half of their day, twice a week.

Note: To facilitate the semester internships, the school will make every effort to design a schedule that provides students with dedicated time in either the morning or afternoon. However, students may need to make challenging decisions regarding course selections or athletic commitments in order to participate in the internship program.

By providing these opportunities, the program offers students the chance to gain a richer understanding of the world around them and develop skills that will serve them long after graduation.

Upper School Course Offerings

F indicates fall semester and S indicates spring semester

Arts	Acting for the Stage (F) Black and White Photography (F, S) Ceramics (F, S) Combat Theater (F) Digital Art (F, S) Digital Photography (F, S) Drawing & Painting (F, S) Improvisation & One-Act Plays (S) Jewelry Making (F, S) Musical Ensembles (S) Musical Theater (S) Printmaking (S) Technical Theater (F, S) Vocal Performance (F) Woodworking (F, S) Yearbook (F, S)	Math	Algebra I Geometry & Honors Geometry Algebra II & Honors Algebra II Precalculus & Honors Precalculus Statistical Reasoning in Sports (F) Personal Finance (S) Honors Calculus AP Calculus AB AP Calculus BC AP Statistics
English	English 9 English 10 AP English Language & Composition <i>11th & 12th Seminars</i> American Autobiographies (F) Coming of Age Novels (S) Journalism Today: Writing & Reporting in the 21st Century (F, S) Advanced Journalism (F, S) Queer Literature (S) Shakespeare's Plays and Their Adaptations (S) TED Talking (F, S)	Science	Biology Chemistry Physics AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Environmental Science AP Physics C: Mechanics <i>Science Semester Courses</i> Abnormal Psychology (S) Anatomy & Physiology (F) Biopsychology (F) Oceanography & Marine Biology (S)
Innovation & Technology	3D Modeling and Digital Sculpting (S) Digital Fabrication (F) Idea Incubator + EntreX (F) Innovation & Tech Capstone (F) Introduction to Cybersecurity (S) Inventing with Technology (S) Programming: Python (F) Wearables (F, S) AP Computer Science Principles (Y)	Social Studies	The Modern World U.S. History AP U.S. History AP U.S. Government & Politics <i>Social Studies Semester Courses</i> <i>(only 2 will be taught)</i> The American Prison System Anthropology Art History Documentary Filmmaking
		World Language	French I, II, III, IV AP French Language and Culture Mandarin I, II, III, IV, V Spanish I, II, III, IV AP Spanish Language and Culture

Arts

The Alexander Dawson School is committed to the arts. Our modern facility, in combination with a faculty involved in the local arts community, provides Dawson with the unique opportunity to offer competitive, quality programs that can prepare students for continuation in the arts or that can complement their academic experiences. As art is an integral component of the academic program at Dawson, opportunities for after-school activities are also provided. The Art, Theatre, Band, Choir, and Woodworking programs provide students with the guidance to make informed, positive choices and the opportunity to recognize and reach individual goals.

Students in visual arts classes should be aware that their work might be retained by the school for exhibition on and off campus. All student work is made available for return to students by the end of the year.

Acting for the Stage

This course is for any student, seasoned or novice, who wants to improve in the art of being someone else on stage. Through scene analysis and character development, students learn what it takes to take a character off of the page, into their bodies, and onto the stage. This class will employ various classical acting techniques such as Meisner, Stanislavski, and Adler, as well as monologues, scene work with others in the class, and audition work. This class will also utilize the local artists in the area, such as at the Arvada Center, CU Boulder's Theatre Program, and Denver Center for the Performing Arts' Education Division. The end of the semester will ultimately culminate in a small showcase performance at the end of the semester for the class and invited guests.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall

Eligible: All Students

Black and White Photography

Students explore photography as a technical discipline, a creative art, and as a means of expressing themselves. Students receive basic instruction in the camera, lenses, film and film processing, paper and printing, enlargers and filters, and matting and mounting. The class explores the works of renowned photographers and archival processing. Each class member presents a portfolio. *Advanced Black and White Photography:* This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Photography. This class builds on foundational skills and takes the knowledge in essentials to the next level. Students will learn advanced darkroom and camera techniques. Emphases will be on personal assignments that push their visual intelligence and help them discover a perfect balance between the technical and creative aspects of Black and White Photography.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Black and White Photography

This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Photography. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced darkroom and camera techniques. Emphases will be on assignments that push the student's vision and understanding of new techniques. *Departmental approval is required.*

Ceramics

This class introduces the art and techniques of ceramics. The basic methods of forming clay—slab built, pinched, coiled, and wheel thrown—are included in various projects. The class studies the fundamentals of surface decoration, including texture and glaze. Students develop an understanding of the raw materials,

firing processes, and proper handling of equipment and chemicals. Class discussions explore design, presentation, vocabulary, and the historical and contemporary issues that pertain to this art form. *Advanced Ceramics*: This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Ceramics. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced ceramic techniques. Dinnerware and Hand Building will continue with the emphasis on taller and wider throwing techniques. Alternative glazing and firing will also be explored. Students will have more choice in what they will throw on the wheel.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Ceramics

This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Ceramics. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced ceramic techniques. Dinnerware and Hand Building will continue with the emphasis on taller and wider throwing techniques. Alternative glazing and firing will also be explored. Students will have more choice in what they will throw on the wheel. *Departmental approval is required.*

Combat Theater

The class breaks into ensembles who use physical theater techniques as a way of creating stories. Along with learning many new combat techniques, such as sword fighting, students will learn the fundamentals of acting, including character and scene work, as well as line memorization. Students will be required to perform at the end of the semester. The students will become intimately connected to their fellow actors and become highly sensitized and aware of the collective work of the troupe.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall

Eligible: All Students

Digital Art

This one-semester course is designed to explore the process of creating and publishing digital graphics projects. Students will work with Adobe programs and 3D modeling software to complete digital arts projects. The focus will be on enhancing the students' comfort with computers and graphic manipulation while exploring their artistic and creative side through a variety of software. *Advanced Digital Art*: This class is offered to all students who have previously taken Digital Art. This class builds on foundational skills and deeper understanding of creating art in a digital medium. Students will be given more time to explore different software and have input on where they want to go with the material. Emphasis will be placed on artistic message, larger scale projects and combining mediums.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Digital Art

This class is offered to all students who have previously taken Digital Art. This class builds on foundational skills and deeper understanding of creating art in a digital medium. Students will be given more time to explore different software and have input on where they want to go with the material. Emphasis will be placed on artistic message, larger scale projects and combining mediums. *Departmental approval is required.*

Digital Photography

This course is an introduction to digital photography. It will cover the camera, exposure, digital image processing, printing, presentation, and the history and current trends of photography. Students will be expected to understand and orchestrate the basic skills of digital photography and to recognize what constitutes good composition, aesthetic value, and the influence of personal perspective. *Advanced Digital Photography*: This class is offered to all students who have previously taken Digital Photography. This class builds on foundational skills and takes the knowledge in essentials to the next level. Students will learn

advanced editing and camera techniques. Emphases will be on more conceptual projects with a greater focus on areas of student interest.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Digital Photography

This class is offered to all students who have previously taken Digital Photography. This class builds on foundational skills and takes the knowledge in essentials to the next level. Students will learn advanced editing and camera techniques. Emphases will be on more conceptual projects with a greater focus on areas of student interest. *Departmental approval is required.*

Drawing and Painting

Drawing: The goal of this course is to develop eye-hand coordination and an understanding of methods and materials. The drawing process is taught as a method of gathering and notating information, a means of arranging and transforming ideas, and as a way to develop the students' perception of visual elements and relationships in the physical world. Students develop an understanding of basic traditional concerns and contemporary drawing vocabulary. Drawing is a key discipline of the arts, and this class encourages the development of skills and the education of the artist's eye.

Painting: This course is an introduction to the material and subject possibilities of painting. The emphasis is on construction, composition, paint handling, color, and self-expression. Both abstract and realistic subjects will be covered.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Drawing and Painting

This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Drawing and Painting. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced Drawing and Painting techniques. Students will be given more time to explore different mediums and have input on where they want to go with the material. Emphases will be placed on Oil painting, Encaustic, Acrylic and advanced Drawing techniques. *Departmental approval is required.*

Improvisation and One-Act Plays

Students will learn spontaneity, character development, storytelling, and team building—all of the essential components of great acting. Students will throw themselves into exciting improvisation performance games and keep creative journals. Be prepared to laugh. The fun atmosphere of the class encourages students to let loose and play hundreds of characters. The advanced improvisational student will learn many new techniques and games, and the new student will also be encouraged to jump right in.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Spring

Eligible: All Students

Jewelry Making

This course is an introduction to Jewelry Making and Silversmithing. Jewelry Making: Students will learn the "lost" art of wax casting: a method developed in Ancient Egypt. The lost wax casting process involves creating a wax model which is then suspended in a metal flask. A plaster-like material called investment is poured over the model. The invested flask is then placed in a kiln, and the wax model is slowly melted out until only the negative cavity, the exact shape of the original, remains. Molten metal (silver) is then vacuumed into this negative space and allowed to cool and solidify. The metal piece is removed from the plaster. Sprues (the bump at the opening where the molten metal was poured into the mold) are cut and ground. Various polishing media are used to bring the piece to its final polished state. Silversmithing Jewelry: You'll learn best practices for silversmithing jewelry: from Sawing, Filing, Metalworking (Forging, Hammering, Texturing, Dapping and Doming, etc.) and Finishing. We will cover soldering setup, heat

control, torch use, stone-setting and finishing techniques. You will discover simple techniques that deliver professional-level results and enjoy jewelry that showcases your new skills.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Jewelry Making

This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Jewelry Making. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced metalsmithing techniques. Students will learn how to lay out their designs and use advanced soldering techniques. Lapidary fundamentals and equipment will be covered, as well as stone setting (bezel, gypsy and tube setting). *Departmental approval is required.*

Musical Ensembles

In Musical Ensembles students will play, create, and perform music that they are passionate about through the exploration of a modern band ensemble. Playing guitar (acoustic & electric), electric bass, keyboard, drums and vocals will be the main focus of the class, but other instruments may be added to an ensemble if requested. All students will be encouraged to explore at least 2 different instruments throughout the semester. Emphasis will be placed on rhythmic skills, aural skills, music and chart reading, as well as good performance practices and skills. Students will suggest musical styles, pieces, and genres that they want to explore and will use these in projects where they will learn how to arrange and write music for modern band. Students will also be introduced to the art of songwriting and music production using Noteflight and Soundtrap. End of term projects will culminate with each student having their composition performed by the ensemble. Students will perform in 2 required public performances each semester. Additional performances may be added during the semester as opportunities arise.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Spring

Eligible: All Students

Musical Theater

Students will be introduced to a diverse selection of musical pieces from the musical theater repertoire, including solo, duet, and ensemble numbers. We will learn how to present, interpret, and “sell” a song. This would include dramatic movement and interpretation of text. Students would be required to learn and perform at least one solo or duet number and to participate in several large ensemble pieces that would be sung and choreographed. The class would culminate in a final cabaret performance at the end of the semester. This is a great class for actors wanting to develop singing skills and singers wanting to blend their singing skills with acting.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Spring

Eligible: All Students

Printmaking

Printmaking encompasses the creation of a master plate from which multiple images are made. Simply put, the artist chooses a surface to be the plate. This could be linoleum, Styrofoam, metal, cardboard, stone, wood, or any one of a number of materials. Then the artist prepares the printing plate by cutting, etching, or drawing an image onto the plate. Ink is applied and paper is pressed onto the plate either by hand or by way of a printing press. The finished print is pulled from the plate. *Advanced Printmaking:* This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Printmaking. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced Printmaking techniques. Students will continue to build on previous printmaking skills and also learn Intaglio, Lithography and Copper Etching. Emphases will be on multi-colored prints, scale of work and artistic impact.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Printmaking

This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Printmaking. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced Printmaking techniques. Students will continue to build on previous printmaking skills and also learn Intaglio, Lithography and copper etching. *Departmental approval is required.*

Sculpture (not offered 2025-26)

This class introduces ideas and material that facilitate response to three-dimensional form. The stress is on concepts of modeling, carving, and constructing, as well as the possibilities of more contemporary modes of expression. This sculpture class requires students to have a range of knowledge of materials and techniques. The following material will be covered: soapstone, casting, clay, wood, and metal. As students' skills in three-dimensional art improve, they will explore larger projects and work on installation around Dawson's campus.

Prerequisite: None

Term: I

Eligible: All Students

Technical Theater

In Technical Theater students are challenged with the unique problems of building sets and designing lights and sound for the Upper School productions. The student will learn the language of the technical theater and will manage the upkeep of the theater. By the end of the semester, technical theater students are familiar with the workings of the exceptional facility at Dawson.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Vocal Performance

The Vocal Performance course will focus on individual vocal performance with the possibility of singing duets and or trios at the end of the semester. Students will focus on improving their individual vocal technique, knowledge of vocal pedagogy, theory, and music history. This semester-long course will be broken down into 5 units with each unit ending in an individual performance either in class or for the Dawson community. Units of study for the course will include:

- a. Vocal Technique and Anatomy of the Voice
- b. Italian Art Song
- c. German Lieder
- d. French Song
- e. American Musical Theater

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall

Eligible: All Students

Woodworking

Woodworking is a semester-long course that can be taken during any of the four Upper School years as many times as desired. The emphasis in the woodworking class is on safe operation of tools and machines, design, and the study of materials and processes.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Woodworking

This class is offered for all students who have previously taken Woodworking. This class builds on foundational skills and covers advanced furniture designing, woodworking and finishing techniques. Students will have an individual meeting with the instructor to discuss their goals and objectives for the

class. Students will be required to design, build, finish and complete a piece of furniture. *Departmental approval is required.*

Yearbook

The purpose of the yearbook class is for students to create “The Gate,” Dawson’s yearbook. Students will become familiar with professional tools used in the publishing industry as well as with the many tasks necessary to create a publication, including photography, design, editing, and layout. This course has an emphasis on digital photography and includes techniques of organization, processing, editing, and printing digital photographs. *Advanced Yearbook:*

This class is offered to all students who have previously taken Yearbook. This class builds on the foundations of creating a publication. Students will be able to take on leadership roles as well as apply for co-curricular credit for their extra responsibilities. Students will have greater input in the theme and design of the Yearbook.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

Advanced Yearbook

This class is offered to all students who have previously taken Yearbook. This class builds on the foundations of creating a publication. Students will be able to take on leadership roles as well as apply for co-curricular credit for their extra responsibilities. Students will have greater input in the theme and design of the Yearbook. *Departmental approval is required.*

English

In the Upper School, most English courses are literature-based, and most writing is focused on thesis-driven essays and papers that demand critical thinking, close reading, textual analysis and research skills. Some courses are also team taught and take a multidisciplinary approach to world literature, our local Front Range community and human rights. The department also offers courses that allow students to explore creative writing in the context of poetry and short story courses. Students are exposed to literature ranging from classics of the ancient, medieval and early modern worlds to contemporary masterpieces. Attention is given to the cultural, aesthetic, ethical, and historical dimensions of literature. Western European literature as well as a wide range of World literature is studied. Students have opportunities to explore the creative writing of poetry, short stories and translations as well as develop their expository writing. Advanced grammatical and stylistic instruction is increasingly linked to precision of reading comprehension, analysis, and effective, attractive communication in written work. Students in the Upper School are challenged to become rigorous critical thinkers; close, careful readers; and precise, persuasive speakers and writers who see the study of literature and writing as a vehicle for self-discovery and for an empathic exploration of the world beyond the self.

Enrollment in AP English classes (AP Language & Composition as well as AP Literature) is dependent on student performance in prior classes.

Students who earned a B- or below in the first semester are NOT eligible to enroll.

Students who earned an A- or A are automatically approved to enroll if they so desire.

Students who earned a B or B+ in the first semester and wish to enroll in an AP English course are required to write a letter to the current department chair explaining their motivation for taking the class, detailing growth they’ve made this year, and identifying skills that they know will need to be further developed to be

successful in a more challenging class. This letter should serve as a representative sample of the writer's mastery of organization, expression, word choice, creativity, and mechanics.

ALL students who sign up for an AP English class will be required to attend a brief lunch meeting in which we share samples of the tests and discuss appropriate expectations for workload.

English 9

A yearlong course, English 9 seeks to build the foundation for more advanced studies in reading, writing, and critical discourse. The literature studied will range from classical drama to 21st-century fiction and include contemporary non-fiction and poetry as well. As students become more skilled and sophisticated readers, emphasis will shift from reader response to literary analysis and application of literary terms and devices. In their formal and informal essays, students will focus increasingly on argument and interpretation, practicing the essentials of the thesis-driven essay. To enrich their understanding of literature, students will study its historical and cultural context, explore universal themes, and learn how to analyze an author's purpose and style. Collaborative activities and cooperative discussions will deepen student understanding of texts and help students develop their own ideas as they engage with classmates and practice their communication skills. In all units, students will apply creative, interdisciplinary, and critical thinking to forge meaningful connections among texts, disciplines, contemporary issues, and their own personal lives.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full year

Eligible: 9th grade

English 10

English 10 is designed to help students acquire and develop language skills crucial to a successful college experience as they explore a variety of forms of literature. This course is broken into five thematic units of study that will create interdisciplinary connections with their social studies courses. During their reading of various texts, students will regularly participate in graded academic conversations called Socratic Seminars. Writing is emphasized in this course, as it is not only a skill that is practiced for its own sake but is also an important vehicle for demonstrating critical thinking. Students will write in a variety of forms including SAT- and AP-Exam-style essays to prepare them for future coursework. Students will also write at least one research paper for this course, which requires them to bring a variety of primary and secondary source materials to bear on their course reading.

Prerequisite: English 9

Term: Full year

Eligible: 10th grade

AP English Language and Composition

The AP Language and Composition course is designed to help students understand the arguments that authors make in their texts. Students will also strengthen their own ability to form and defend strong arguments in a wide variety of text types. Through this course the students will engage in reading a wide variety of texts of various lengths with a focus on the author's rhetorical style. In every unit the students will practice the writing skills necessary to be successful on the AP Exam. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: English 10,
department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

AP English Literature and Composition (not offered 2025-26)

The purpose of this course is to teach students to read, analyze, interpret, and write about British and American literature written between the 16th century and today. We will read and write about literature from several different genres, including novels, drama, essays, poetry, short stories, and imaginative non-fiction. The crucial skill we will be working on all year is close reading—the study of the craft of writing. To that end,

we will be examining rhetorical devices (such as figurative language, imagery, metaphor, symbolism, etc.), structure, style, context, theme—all the different elements of a piece of literature that affect the way a reader internalizes and interprets the work. We will also explore the ways in which each work is engendered by the particular cultural and historical environment in which it is written and how that kind of information affects interpretation differently from a close reading. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: English 10,
department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

11th and 12th Grade English Semester Seminars ~ each of these can only be taken one time.

American Autobiographies

This reading and writing intensive elective is designed to be a genre exploration; we will study a variety of American autobiographies to study the form, some of its significant examples, and its evolution. We will also practice the art of writing about oneself in various memoir and autobiographical exercises. The central questions to be addressed include:

1. What makes an autobiography “good”?
2. What patterns emerge across time and subject that reveal a particularly American character?
3. How do authors’ choices about style, form, and content influence the authenticity of their stories?
4. What are the unique challenges of writing about oneself for an audience of others?

Prerequisite: English 10

Term: Fall

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

American Bestsellers (not offered 2025-26)

The primary goal for the American Bestsellers course is for students to engage with the literature that really fires the American imagination today. The books we read will be current bestsellers and the themes we investigate in class and write about will be themes with which American society is currently grappling. Students will have lots of choice about the topics to pursue and how they choose to share what they have learned, though all students will be required to practice close reading, because that lies at the heart of sound literary analysis, strong logic, and eloquent writing. Students will also be expected to try some creative writing. By the end of the semester, students should have some sense of the current literary conversation in America and be able to articulate their thoughts about important themes our country is currently wrestling with.

Prerequisite: English 10

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

American Poetry Writing (not offered 2025-26)

This course will survey American poetry from its early periods through contemporary authors, celebrating what makes poetry a uniquely flexible and creative form and exploring connections that exist between poets of different eras, styles, and identities. We will study canonical, classic American poets such as Anne Bradstreet, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Brooks, and also contemporary poets like Layli Long Soldier and Danez Smith. Throughout our reading, we’ll ask what makes a poem “work,” what makes particular poems a part of the American literary tradition, and what we can borrow from other poets as we develop our own voices. Critical and creative writing will be required in class; close readings and analytical essays, as well as a portfolio of student-produced poems, will together demonstrate students’ understanding of technique and form. Workshops will provide opportunities for students to share their writing and receive constructive feedback, and student-led discussions will be a regular part of our class routine.

Prerequisite: English 10

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Coming-of-Age Novels

The coming-of-age novel, or *bildungsroman*, is an enduring genre in many cultures. In this course, we will examine fictional works that depict characters who occupy the fine line between childhood and adulthood or between innocence and experience. We will begin with an examination of these kinds of stories in ancient myths and legends before turning to a study of modern novels, graphic novels and short fiction. Authors we might study include Carson McCullers, Stephen Chbosky, Chetna Maroo, Norman Maclean, Jeffrey Eugenides, Louisa May Alcott, and Willa Cather.

Prerequisites: English 10 *Term:* Spring *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Contemporary Native American Literature (not offered 2025-26)

In this course, students will read Native American authors such as Sherman Alexie, Linda Hogan, N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl. We will look at contemporary Native American issues as they are depicted in works such as *Ceremony*, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*, *House Made of Dawn*, and *Solar Storms*. One of the major themes in the course would be the conscious debunking and play on Anglo American stereotypes and images of Native Americans. We spend considerable time defining the Modern Novel and comparing these works with that definition. A question this course seeks to answer is where this literature is on the continuum of Modern and Postmodern literature. The course will culminate in a major paper on an author or topic of the students' choice.

Prerequisites: English 10 *Term:* *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Great Books: *The Odyssey* (not offered 2025-26)

The Odyssey is a cornerstone of the Western literary tradition; its characters, themes, and form have set patterns for storytelling that are alluded to and reflected in countless contemporary works. This course is designed for students who wish to dive deep into the classic and to examine it through multiple lenses: literary, cultural, psychological, and more.

We will read Robert Fagles's translation of Homer's masterwork as our primary text, but will regularly engage in translation exercises that allow for opportunities to practice close reading skills, dissecting how translators' choices influence readers' understandings of the story. We'll also look at poetry, short stories, films and plays inspired by *The Odyssey*, to examine how the motifs established millennia ago remain relevant as they're applied to more modern situations and how they're adapted to reflect perspectives omitted from the original narrative.

Students will be expected to complete assigned readings with care and attention, to produce both critical and creative responses to primary and secondary texts, and to participate thoughtfully in class discussions and collaborative activities.

Prerequisite: English 10 *Term:* *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Journalism Today: Writing & Reporting in the 21st Century

"If your aim is to change the world," writer Tom Stoppard noted, "journalism is a more immediate short-term weapon." This course allows students the opportunity to change their world by creating reliable, accurate and independent news reporting. We will read current newspapers each day in order to learn about our world through the major forms of journalistic writing: investigative, news, features, columns, and reviews. In class, we will practice writing in each of these forms while honing in on what is urgent and interesting to write about in the moment. As active journalists, we will report, investigate, and interview in order to shed

light on the world for others. With each short piece of regular and timely writing, students will be building a comprehensive portfolio of their own work as part of a capstone project. Portfolios may include written assignments, audio recordings of interviews, photographs, and notes in order to reflect the accomplishments of each student during the semester.

Prerequisite: English 10

Term: Fall, Spring

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Advanced Journalism Today: Writing & Reporting in the 21st Century

This class is offered to all students who have previously taken *Journalism Today* and builds upon the foundational skills and journalistic techniques established in that class. Advanced students will be asked to report on local news beyond the campus by attending public meetings or interviewing relevant public figures. On campus, students in advanced journalism are expected to take on roles as editors and decision-makers for all publications. Advanced students will also be required to complete longer and more sophisticated forms of journalistic writing, culminating in an in-depth multi-page feature on a topic of their choice. Finally, students will take on additional reading assignments that allow them to explore seminal works in journalism to better understand the scope and history of the field. *Completion of Journalism Today and departmental approval are required.*

Latinx American Literature (not offered 2025-26)

This course gives equal attention to literature originally written in Spanish by Latin American and Caribbean authors and US authors of Spanish-speaking descent. The focus is on the cultural intersections and re-interpretations that have occurred as a result of collisions between North American cultures. The texts we'll explore consider the long-term effects of colonization, the sometimes traumatic experience of decolonization, and the experience of immigrants in the United States. Because they deal with sometimes chaotic political upheavals, these texts do include depictions of violence. After beginning with Gabriel García Márquez's novella *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, we will move onto poetry by Pablo Neruda, short stories by Jorge Luis Borges and fiction by Isabelle Allende. On the US side, we'll read essays by Richard Rodriguez, *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz, and *The House of Broken Angels* by Luis Alberto Urrea. Assessments will include graded discussions, analytical essays and creative writing.

Prerequisite: English 10

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Queer Literature

This course explores works by American authors who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. In the US, non-conforming sexualities were ostracized if not criminalized until well beyond the AIDS crisis of the 80s, so these authors are often writing against oppressive majorities. Queer literature has permeated a wide array of genres, so in this course we will take a cultural studies approach and look at everything from drama to novels to memoirs and comic strips. Through literature, film and other media, we will explore the evolution of queer representation in the U.S. We will examine well-known texts like Tony Kushner's epic play *Angels in America* as well as less popular texts such as Alison Bechdel's graphic novel *Fun Home*.

Prerequisite: English 10

Term: Spring

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Shakespeare's Plays and Their Adaptations

William Shakespeare's plays tell stories that have endured for hundreds of years. Because his plots engage with so many ideas that are fundamental to the human experience, his work has been adapted innumerable

times, often updated to emphasize the Bard's enduring relevance. In fact, many of Shakespeare's works are themselves adaptations of old stories, legends and historical events.

In this course, we will read some of Shakespeare's most popular plays in conjunction with modern adaptations. We will seek to understand and appreciate the plays in their own right, but also to explore the ways that others have altered and modernized them to reach different audiences and impart different themes.

Prerequisite: English 10

Term: Spring

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Voice and Rhetoric--Communication in the Modern Age: TED Talking

The goals for TED Talking are to give students chances to dig deeply into topics they are passionate about and to learn how to inspire and educate others through the format of a TED Talk. The course is affiliated with the TED program: we will be roughly following the TED-Ed curriculum, connecting with students around the world who are engaged in the same work, and students will end the semester by submitting their presentations to TED-Ed. Students will be able to choose their own topics for the semester. To do that, they must ask themselves what they have to say to the world and how they can make the world a better place. By creating and submitting their presentations, students will be taking important steps toward embracing their individual roles in the work of shaping the communities and cultures that they live in. The semester begins with introspection about what is important to students and why. In producing their talks, students will build and hone critical thinking skills, rhetorical strategies, and the arts of criticism, revision, and dynamic presentation. A key element of class is collaborating with other students in sharing ideas and troubleshooting with one another and with students around the world.

Prerequisite: English 10

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Innovation and Technology

Courses offered by the Innovation and Technology department are designed to give students the chance to take ownership of their learning by exploring new tools, trying out new ideas, taking risks, and iterating in their work. These courses are interdisciplinary; developing creative technology skills and bringing ideas together from a variety of subjects including art and media, math and science, and humanities. Self directed exploration, problem solving, tinkering, and collaboration are the heart of great learning and facilitate students' growth. Ever evolving technologies used in these courses may include a variety of programming languages, digital fabrication machines, electronics, a variety of printing formats (3D printers, 2D laser cutters, large format, plotters, etc.), sewing equipment, multimedia tools and more. Innovation and Technology courses allow students opportunities to bring their passion and personality into developing their ideas and working to design solutions to real world problems.

To be eligible to move from a regular course into an AP course, students must hold a 90% or higher with an average of at least 88% on major assessments in the preceding course. Students wishing to stay at an AP level must hold an 88% or higher with an average of at least 85% on major assessments in the previous course. All students must also have departmental approval.

3D Modeling and Digital Sculpting

This comprehensive course in 3D modeling and digital sculpting is designed for those eager to learn the art of three-dimensional design. The course will focus on two fundamentally different types of 3D modeling

software: Fusion 360 for solid modeling and Blender for polygonal modeling and sculpting. The goal of this course is to develop a strong foundational understanding of how these software programs work, how they can be used in combination, and how to output objects from each to create usable 3D printed objects. In Fusion 360, we will begin by understanding how to fully dimension simple 2D sketches and create multi-featured solid objects. We will then move on to creating detailed parametric models based on real-world measurements.

In Blender, we will start by learning the basics of polygonal modeling using reference images and simple shapes to block out an object. We will then learn how to convert that low-polygon object to a sculptable mesh to add details. In the final project students will incorporate both form and function by utilizing the best parts of each software. We will use the dimensional accuracy of Fusion 360 to create an enclosure for an object, and we will use Blender to design the outer shell to create a functional and attractive final product. Throughout the course, students will learn the best practices for preparing and designing 3D files for 3D printing, as well as how to run and manage different 3D printers.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Spring

Eligible: All Students

App Development (not offered 2025-26)

This class is a one-semester exploration of programming ideas in which students will learn about computer programming for iOS with Swift. Students will learn programming techniques from the foundation of simple tools to the logical organization and planning of free-standing applications (apps.). Students will use variables, functions, parameters, loops, conditional statements, and objects, and they will explore a variety of types of programs, including graphics, making calculations, and creating working systems of programs. Much of the class will involve individual time, working on program creation and debugging.

Prerequisite: US programming

Term:

Eligible: All Students

Digital Fabrication

In this hands-on, project-based course, students will learn and apply the design process to create functional end products using the digital fabrication tools available in the Dawson Center for Innovation. Over the course of the semester, students will receive a comprehensive orientation to the makerspace and wood and metal fabrication labs. This includes both CNC routers and the CNC Plasma cutter, as well as traditional wood and metal working tools. This course will develop students' creative thinking, problem solving and collaborative skills through the design and fabrication of large professional pieces. At the end of the course, students will leave with finished projects, as well as a digital portfolio with all of their design work and photos of finished products.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Fall

Eligible: All Students

Game Design (not offered 2025-26)

What makes the games we play fun? In this class, we explore the code behind some familiar games, and see how they work. We learn and play test some actual real-world games, and we plan how we could make a version of our own and how we might improve them. We work with robots to control their movement, sounds and sensors, and work with them to plan and play games that use their abilities. We also learn how to fabricate real game parts and pieces. Will you create your own physical game or code one in software? It's up to you! There's room here for people who wish to dive deeper into code, or to make real-world games that stand on their own.

Prerequisite: None

Term:

Eligible: All Students

Idea Incubator + EntreX

Students will identify challenges within their local communities (or beyond) that they have a vested interest in solving. They will explore ways to address these challenges and develop impactful solutions that can be prototyped in the Dawson Center for Innovation. Students will transform their ideas into entrepreneurial ventures designed to create value for their intended audience. With guidance and mentorship from the teacher, students will refine their project scope, make meaningful progress, learn new skills, and navigate setbacks throughout the process. The course focuses on developing skills in innovative problem-solving, project planning, iterative design and feedback cycles, and crafting a pitch to effectively share their work.

This class incorporates the EntreX curriculum developed by Horn Entrepreneurship at the University of Delaware to enrich the learning experience for Idea Incubator students. Students will explore what it means to be an entrepreneur and learn how to develop impactful solutions to meaningful problems they care about while ensuring they create, capture, and deliver value for their target audience. The course emphasizes turning ideas into action using tools like the business model canvas and customer discovery interviews to guide the entrepreneurial process.

Students also have the exclusive opportunity through the program to extend their learning and earn 3 college credits through University of Delaware. To take advantage of this follow-on opportunity, students will complete additional deliverables related to their project, which will be submitted directly to the University of Delaware. Upon successful completion, students will be eligible to request an official transcript from the university at the end of the year, allowing them to request for transfer of the credits to other institutions. The cost for this additional college credit is \$500, paid directly to the University of Delaware.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Fall

Eligible: All Students

Innovation and Technology Capstone

Students who have enjoyed their work in the Innovation and Technology Department and who are eager to deepen their learning are invited to apply to the Innovation and Technology Capstone course. This course will offer students dedicated time, space, and resources to develop and execute a large semester-long independent project. Students are encouraged to select projects of personal significance, ensuring that each endeavor is unique and tailored to their individual interests. Students will direct their own learning, determine what skills and competencies they need to develop to complete their project, identify and set project goals, document their progress in a design journal and present their work to the community at a showcase event.

Prerequisite: Capstone Proposal

Term: Fall

Eligible: 11th and 12th grade students who have successfully completed at least two semesters of coursework within the department.

Introduction to Cybersecurity

Want to learn about what threats we face online, and how to stop them? The Introduction to Cybersecurity course is designed for students with some exposure to computer science, but there are no specific course prerequisites. Students will learn foundational cybersecurity topics including digital citizenship and cyber hygiene, the basics of cryptography, software security, networking fundamentals, and basic system

administration. Students will complete projects at the end of each module, and a culminating course project where they will complete a simulated hack walkthrough. This is not a coding intensive course, but students will learn basic SQL, and will utilize basic HTML and JavaScript and will be provided support and scaffolding within those contexts.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Spring

Eligible: All Students

Inventing with Technology Inventing with Technology gives students opportunities to solve real-world problems by designing physical objects using modern technology tools, including 3D modeling and printing, laser engraving and cutting, electronics, and coding. Projects will challenge the students to consider the defining characteristics of the challenge or problem and how their design decisions impact their intended beneficiaries. Design Thinking concepts will guide the process that students will utilize in developing their projects. Students will design multiple iterations of their projects while prototyping features and improvements as well as incorporating feedback they gather throughout the course of the build cycle.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Spring

Eligible: All Students

Programming: Python

This class is a one-semester exploration of programming ideas in which students will learn the basics of computer programming with Python. Whether you've done programming before, or if it's a new interest of yours, this class will help you learn how it all works and take your skills further. We will explore the tools you need, use them to build short programs, and then grow your skills into larger scale games and activities. You will be the composer of your own code, crafting your programs using decision makers, loops, and graphics to build your creations. Learning to troubleshoot and debug your code to bring your ideas to life is a key component of the class. Completing this course will prepare you well to take any other programming courses we offer, including AP classes.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Fall

Eligible: All Students

Wearables

Wearables is a one-semester course that allows students to learn to create wearable items that are augmented with technology. Wearable items include clothing, bags, shoes, or other accessories. Students will create wearable items from scratch, integrating traditional sewing, 3D modeling/printing, laser cutting, and electronics. Students will be able to use computer software and utilize a variety of tools available in the Innovation Center to help them design and create all of the components for their projects. Students will complete a series of small projects to learn foundational skills. Each student will use those skills to develop and construct a larger final wearable textile item.

Prerequisite: None

Terms: Fall, Spring

Eligible: All Students

AP Computer Science Principles

Want to explore technology, but still feel new to coding? This course is for all students, even people who don't (yet) consider themselves technology specialists. We all work with technology every day, but if we want to understand how it all works "underneath the hood" or how to solve problems when something goes wrong, this course fills in the gaps. This class will not limit you to just coding. You will have opportunities to work on projects that use a variety of modern technology tools. Students can craft their projects based on skills that they are most interested in developing.

During the first semester, we will explore hardware, the Internet, multimedia, security, programming, and

web development. The second semester is about the art of programming, including how to think algorithmically and solve problems efficiently. We will learn how to use various languages, and then apply them in problem sets that are inspired by the arts, humanities, social studies, sciences, or fabrication. The course culminates with both a performance task and a multiple choice AP Exam section relating to themes of computing innovation. Instead of completing a free-response exam section, students will submit digital artifacts to the College Board.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full Year

Eligible: All Students

AP Computer Science A (not offered 2025-26)

This class is a full-year exploration of programming ideas in which students will learn the basics of computer programming with Java. Students will learn programming techniques, from the foundation of simple tools to the logical organization and planning of large-scale programs. Students will learn about variables, functions, parameters, loops, conditional statements, and objects, and they will explore a variety of types of programs, including drawing shapes, making calculations, and creating interactive programs. In addition, students will have regular hands-on practice with concepts and problems that reflect the content of the AP Computer Science exam, which we will prepare them to take in May. Much of the class will involve in-class program creation and debugging. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: US coding class and
department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: 10th, 11th, 12th
grade

Mathematics

Although the mastery of basic facts and concepts in the upper levels of secondary mathematics will always remain important, Dawson math also values the creative application of these concepts and the development of real world problem-solving skills. Dawson math is filled with conceptualization, abstraction, development of number sense, the discovery and analysis of patterns, rigorous proof, logical play, and puzzling. [Here is a link to an overview of the options in the math program at Dawson.](#)

In Upper School math classrooms teachers encourage students to question, investigate, and construct problem-solving techniques. Teachers build tasks for their students that require them to take responsibility for their own learning process. Students leverage their own strengths and those of their peers to increase access to opportunities to learn for all. Students and teachers are partners in learning to help build both confidence and humility, independence and collaboration. The use of technology, student colleagues, and discovery methods are also part of a student's learning process.

To be eligible to move from a regular course into an advanced course, students must hold a 90% or higher with an average of at least 88% on major assessments in the preceding course. Students wishing to stay at an advanced level must hold an 88% or higher with an average of at least 85% on major assessments in the previous course. All students must also have departmental approval.

Algebra I

The Algebra 1 course is designed for students to engage in deep and meaningful learning of the algebraic concepts essential to their success in upper-level mathematics. Both conceptual and procedural mastery of skills are expected, as is the continued development of consistent study habits, organized written work, proper use of mathematical language and clarity in verbal articulation of thought processes. Students will tackle ambiguous problems using mathematical strategies that make sense to them, discuss and compare

their reasoning with peers, and then construct generalizations that lead to more formalized algorithms and mathematical connections. Following this process, students will then apply their understanding to conduct error analysis on various approaches and solutions presented in class as a means to deepen their mastery.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

Geometry and Honors Geometry

The main objective of Geometry/Honors Geometry is to engage students in the process of having ideas, struggling to have ideas, discovering patterns, generalizing those patterns, making conjectures, constructing examples and counterexamples, devising arguments, and critiquing their own and each other's work, all within the framework of the notation, technique, and development of a Geometry knowledge base. Students in the honors section are challenged with more in-depth problem solving.

Prerequisites: Algebra I, dept. approval
for Honors

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

Algebra II and Honors Algebra II

The main objective of Algebra II/Honors Algebra II is to engage students in the process of having ideas, struggling to have ideas, discovering patterns, generalizing those patterns, making conjectures, constructing examples and counterexamples, devising arguments, and critiquing their own and each other's work, all within the framework of the notation, technique, and development of an Algebra II knowledge base.

Prerequisites: Algebra I, dept. approval
for Honors

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

Precalculus and Honors Precalculus

The main objective of Precalculus/Honors Precalculus is to engage students in the process of having ideas, struggling to have ideas, discovering patterns, generalizing those patterns, making conjectures, constructing examples and counterexamples, devising arguments, and critiquing their own and each other's work, all within the framework of the notation, technique, and development of a Precalculus knowledge base. Units of study include Trigonometry, Polynomial Functions, Rational Functions, Exponential and Logarithmic Functions, and an introduction to Calculus.

Prerequisites: Geometry and Algebra II,
dept. approval for Honors

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

Statistical Reasoning in Sports

This one-semester statistics course is meant to teach the principles of statistical reasoning through the lens of sports. This does not take the same approach as a standard statistics course, but aims to give students a big picture of statistical problem-solving right from the start. This investigative process will involve formulating questions, collecting data, analyzing data, and interpreting results, all related to a new, motivating sports question each chapter. The course will also use simulation-based inference methods as opposed to traditional methods, so as to assure that students can understand and use the entire process from the start. I am also hoping that a sports topic will increase interest in the class and provide some fun experiments like shooting free throws while people are yelling or kicking a warm football versus a cold football to see which travels farther. However, each chapter will also include a section that is not related to sports just to show some other relevant applications.

Prerequisites: Algebra II

Terms: Fall

Eligible: All students

Personal Finance

The realm of personal finance is one of the most explicit applications of math to our daily lives. This one-semester course is designed to familiarize students with money and its many roles in a personal (as opposed to business) context. From savings and checking accounts to credit cards, insurance to taxes, budgeting to preparing for college, students will develop strategies for becoming economically safe and independent.

Because discussions around money can sometimes be difficult, extra attention is given to the creation and enforcement of student-built norms. The goal is that everyone learns best practices, regardless of their preexisting financial background.

Prerequisite: Algebra II

Term: Spring

Eligible: All students

Honors Calculus

Calculus is the study of change and accumulation. The purpose of this class is to introduce students to the bigger picture of calculus and its applications in various fields of study. It is not intended to prepare them for any standardized tests such as the AP exam. We will first review many of the topics covered in Precalculus, study the concept of the limit and apply the limit process to each in order to look at these changes in a new and dynamic way. In addition, students will be encouraged to adopt a growth mindset, to help deepen their problem solving skills, and to practice being creative thinkers. These skills will help them apply their newfound knowledge to problems in several fields of education and research.

Prerequisite: Precalculus

Terms: Full year

Eligible: All students

AP Calculus AB

Calculus is the study of change and accumulation. Although we will study many of the same topics as we did in Algebra and Precalculus, we will apply the limit process to each in order to look at these changes in a new and dynamic way. Specific emphasis is placed on the use of multiple representations: graphs, equations, data representations, and even written descriptions. Students will be required to present problems to the class each week to build their communication skills and generate discussion. In addition, students will be encouraged to adopt a growth mindset to help deepen their problem solving skills and to practice being creative thinkers. These skills will help them apply their newfound knowledge to many different situations. Throughout the year, we will take time each chapter to analyze and complete AP problems from previous exams. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Precalculus, dept.
approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

AP Calculus BC

Calculus is the study of change and accumulation. Although we will study many of the same topics as we did in Algebra and Precalculus, we will apply the limit process to each in order to look at these changes in a new and dynamic way. BC Calculus overlaps AB Calculus and additionally covers the material one would see in a second semester of college Calculus. Specific emphasis is placed on the use of multiple representations: graphs, equations, data representations, and even written descriptions. Students will be required to present problems to the class each week to build their communication skills and generate discussion. In addition, students will be encouraged to adopt a growth mindset to help deepen their problem solving skills and to practice being creative thinkers. These skills will help them apply their newfound knowledge to many different situations. Throughout the year, we will take time each chapter to analyze and complete AP problems from previous exams. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Calculus AB, dept.
approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

AP Statistics

AP Statistics is the high school equivalent of a one-semester, introductory college statistics course. In this course, students develop strategies for designing experiments and surveys, organizing and analyzing, and communicating data. Students design, administer, and tabulate results from surveys and experiments, and critique data analysis we find in popular and scientific literature. Sampling distributions provide the logical structure for confidence intervals and hypothesis tests. Students use a TI-84/89 graphing calculator, spreadsheets, the R coding language, and R Studio. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Algebra II, dept. approval *Term:* Full year *Eligible:* All students

Multivariable Calculus (not offered 2025-26)

Multivariable calculus covers the material one would see in a third semester of college Calculus. This class extends the concepts learned in previous calculus courses to functions of multiple variables in three dimensions; looking at partial differentiation and iterated integration of these functions along the way. We will also spend a lot of time developing the use of vector and parametric representations of these functions. Emphasis is placed on the use of multiple representations for each topic: graphical, analytical, and even written descriptions. Students will be required to present problems to the class each week to build their communication skills and generate discussion. In addition, students will be encouraged to adopt a growth mindset, to help deepen their problem solving skills, and to practice being creative thinkers. These skills will help them apply their newfound knowledge to myriad different situations.

Prerequisites: Calculus BC, department approval *Term:* Full year *Eligible:* All students

Science

The goal of the Upper School Science curriculum is to increase the students' awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the world around them. Students learn the fundamental principles of science and the processes by which they can acquire scientific knowledge. Laboratory investigations promote students' ability to think critically and to communicate effectively. The Science Department believes that all students should have a foundation in each of the sciences and therefore requires students to take courses—biology, as well as chemistry or physics—as minimal preparation for college. We also encourage students to go beyond the minimum by taking all of the introductory courses and AP courses in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, as well as electives such as Astronomy, Biotechnology, and Food Chemistry.

To be eligible to move from a regular course into an AP course, students must hold a 90% or higher with an average of at least 88% on major assessments in the preceding course. Students wishing to stay at an AP level must hold an 88% or higher with an average of at least 85% on major assessments in the previous course. All students must also have departmental approval.

Biology

This required course, primarily for 9th grade, focuses on the process of science. Our first goal is to provide experiences that allow students to develop questions about the biological world and answer those questions through observations and experiments. All students will integrate critical thinking with the scientific process, learning how to design experiments, draw conclusions from those experiments, and communicate findings in a sophisticated manner. The second goal is to build a foundation of knowledge and develop curiosity about the natural world.

Prerequisite: None *Term:* Full year *Eligible:* All students

Chemistry

This course is designed to give students an overall view of the world of chemistry. Chemistry is not a body of facts to be learned and digested. Rather, chemistry is much more like a scientific expedition. Chemistry provides the link between the mysteries of the atomic world and the realities of our existence. Like all science, it has a strong foundation in both theory and experiment. The course emphasizes a strong conceptual understanding of chemistry, correct laboratory techniques, quantitative problem solving, and critical thinking.

Prerequisite: Biology

Term: Full year

Eligible: All students

Physics

Students learn to be better problem solvers through a focused study of process and method. Physics topics covered include kinematics, dynamics, work, energy, power, momentum, rotation, oscillations and waves, electricity and magnetism, electromagnetism, light optics, quantum mechanics, radioactivity, relativity, and other topics in modern physics. In-class activities as well as a laboratory program support regular reading assignments and interactive problems. This class prepares students to take AP Physics.

Prerequisites: Biology, Algebra II,
department approval
for 10th grade

Term: Full year

Eligible: *10th, 11th, 12th
grade

AP Biology

Per the College Board Curriculum Guidelines, AP Biology is designed around “Four Big Ideas”:

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

Through exploring these Big Ideas, students will have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and advance their use and implementation of the scientific method in preparation for the AP Biology exam in May. Students will study many important concepts of biology beyond the scope of the traditional high school curriculum and will be expected to rise to the level of work that is associated with an introductory college level course. The nature of the course requires a great deal of independent study and preparation time. Class discussion, activities, and laboratory exercises will supplement lecture and textbook assignments. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Biology, Chemistry,
department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

AP Chemistry

AP Chemistry is designed to be equivalent to a first-year college chemistry course, while preparing students to take the AP Chemistry exam. Students study important concepts of chemistry, such as atomic theory, chemical kinetics, thermodynamics, and equilibrium. The nature of the course requires a great deal of independent study and preparation time, and students will be held to a higher standard than they may have experienced in the past. The nature of the course requires a great deal of independent study and preparation time. Class discussion, activities, and laboratory exercises will supplement lecture and textbook assignments. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Chemistry, Algebra II,
department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

AP Environmental Science

AP Environmental Science is a college-level course that aims to develop citizens who can make informed, knowledgeable decisions concerning environmental issues. This requires a broad understanding of how the natural world works and how human activities impact its systems. By its nature, environmental science is interdisciplinary, incorporating topics in biology, chemistry, economics, political science, geography, geology, and ethics. This course includes regular field and laboratory investigations, as well as occasional field trips, speakers, and independent projects. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Biology, Chemistry, department approval *Terms:* Full year *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

AP Physics C: Mechanics

AP Physics with Calculus replicates the first semester of a college-level physics sequence for science and engineering majors. The curriculum focuses on flexible approaches to complex physics problems with a rigorous program of homework and classwork. The lab component of the class is designed to emphasize both creative experimental design with real-life open-ended challenges and rigorous data analysis with online lab simulations. Persistence, motivation, and collaboration will help students successfully navigate the class. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Physics, Calculus or concurrent enrollment in Calculus, dept approval *Term:* Full year *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Science Semester Courses

Abnormal Psychology

While psychology is defined as the study of the mind and behavior, the semester elective course takes a deeper dive into types of psychological disorders and the various treatment options available. This course exposes students to psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with abnormal psychology through the ethical and methodological lens that psychologists use in their science and practice.

Prerequisites: Biology *Term:* Spring *Eligible:* 10th, 11th, 12th grade

Anatomy and Physiology

Anatomy and Physiology are the study of the human body and its functions. In this course we will tackle this subject matter specifically through the lens of the health sciences. While exploring the topics of anatomy and physiology we will learn basic medical techniques, investigate medical conditions, and research diverse careers in the health sciences. Critical thinking skills, basic medical techniques, research/library skills, and recent biomedical breakthroughs will all be emphasized. Human evolution will be a recurring theme throughout the curriculum. This will be a great class for students contemplating a career in the health sciences. The course will include a field trip to a cadaver lab and in-class dissection.

Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry *Term:* Fall *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Biopsychology

While psychology is defined as the study of the mind and behavior, the semester elective course takes a deeper dive into the biological base of behavior including the function of the nervous system, states of consciousness, sensation, perception, and memory. This course exposes students to psychological facts, principles, and phenomena of each area of study through the ethical and methodological lens that psychologists use in their science and practice.

Prerequisites: Biology *Term:* Fall *Eligible:* 10th, 11th, 12th grade

Biotechnology (not offered 2025-26)

This course explores current trends in biotechnology. During the first half of the course, laboratory investigations will help students develop the skills used in the field of biotechnology. The second half of the course will focus on individual student research into areas of biotechnology that spark the students' interest. Students will be encouraged to make connections with local experts in biotechnology as part of their work. Required activities in this course will include laboratory work focusing on biotechnology skills and concepts, research projects, and a final independent project and presentation. Much of the work in this course requires students to be present in the classroom laboratory. There will be no tests or exams.

Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Food Chemistry (not offered 2025-26)

The course is intended to give students an overview of the chemical and physical properties of the major and minor food components and their changes during processing, handling, and storage. We will connect the composition and break down to the nutritional values present in the various foods and additives. There will be an emphasis on the applied aspects of food chemistry with the help of real-world examples, and lab experiments. Problem-based learning, group work, and lab experiments will be integrated into the course to help students apply scientific principles to understanding the chemical properties of foods.

Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Oceanography & Marine Biology

We will begin with a dive into oceanography, including planetary and oceanic formation, thermohaline and nutrient cycling, ocean currents and their effect on climate, plate tectonics and island formation, and natural disasters. Our marine biology unit will include an exploration of the ecology of ocean biomes, the life cycles and evolution of major marine taxa, and an in-depth look at the ecology of the intertidal zone. We will conclude with a unit on human impacts on the ocean, including marine acidification, overfishing, trace pollutants, and plastics, with an emphasis on creative solutions for conservation.

Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry

Term: Spring

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Social Studies

The Upper School social studies program has an overarching goal of educating its students to become historically and contextually minded citizens. We recognize that acquiring knowledge and learning how to think is a process of building and layering, a process that grows subtly and develops depth as individuals progress through the different levels of our curriculum. At each level of instruction our teachers operate with a common set of goals and language that are woven into the fabric of our program. Our goal is to provide students with the ability to acquire knowledge that is relevant to their lives and help them develop into a culturally literate individual with a passion for and a love of history. We strive to inculcate in our students the ability to think critically, understanding that knowledge is an important prerequisite to critical thinking. In addition, we educate students who can function as effective citizens in a democracy. The social studies faculty encourages student citizens to discover and embrace those qualities that will enable them to serve as effective leaders. In helping our students become active citizens and leaders we attempt to help them understand that effective citizens and leaders follow ethical convictions and that the evolution in their developing ethical convictions can happen through the study of ethical dilemmas in their social studies classes.

To be eligible to move from a regular course into an AP course, students must hold a 90% or higher with an average of at least 88% on major assessments in the preceding course. Students wishing to stay at an AP

level must hold an 88% or higher with an average of at least 85% on major assessments in the previous course. All students must also have departmental approval.

Modern World History

Modern World History is a required survey course for students in ninth grade (and transfer students who did not have an equivalent at another school). This course serves as a means of offering a deeper understanding of modern and contemporary issues, interconnected societies, and the roots of current global challenges. Contemporary and historical world events and problems are the focus of this course, with an emphasis on globalization throughout the centuries. After a recap of the Ancient World, topics include the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution, the rise of the nation state, World Wars, and the political and social development of modern-day Africa, China, and the Middle East. In addition, the course will stress the development of historical skills: close reading of primary and secondary sources, logical thinking and critical analysis, the research process, and clear expression of ideas in speaking and writing.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full year

Eligible: 9th, 10th grade

U.S. History

Students will examine the major trends, patterns, and events in American history to better understand the country in which they live. The primary goal of the course is to gain a sophisticated understanding of United States history. Throughout the course, students will study the multicultural history of the United States and the contributions made by Americans from a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Particular emphasis will be placed on the evolution of American national identity and the ways that different understandings of American national identity have shaped the country's history. Additionally, students will develop the critical thinking skills necessary for the successful study of history. These skills include evaluating and constructing arguments, assessing change and continuity over time, analyzing primary sources, and interpreting events in historical context. Students will also develop and improve communication skills through a variety of writing assignments, graded class discussions, and class presentations. Finally, students will employ various forms of technology to research, collaborate, and present their work in class.

Prerequisite: Pre-Modern or Modern
World

Term: Full year

Eligible: 10th, 11th grade

AP U.S. History

The purpose of the AP United States History course is to give students an in-depth study of the political, social, cultural, economic, environmental, and demographic history of the United States. It is also designed to prepare students for the AP exam at the end of the year. The course will cover material from pre-Columbian North America (1491) to the contemporary United States. The course is broken up into nine historical periods, each covering significant events and figures of U.S. history. The course will trace the development of the following themes throughout U.S. history: American identity; work, exchange, and technology; migration and settlement; politics and power; America's place in the world; environment and geography; and culture and society. Within each unit, the major topics of study will be related to these themes with the goal of assessing how the themes have developed and changed over time. Additionally, the course will emphasize historical thinking skills, including how to assess causation, analyzing change and continuity over time, comparison, contextualization, historical argumentation and the appropriate use of historical evidence to support original arguments. Students will also develop their ability to comprehend and interpret primary and secondary documents, write analytical essays, and engage in productive civil discourse. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May. **This class is NOT open to students who have previously completed U.S. History.**

Prerequisite: department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: 10th, 11th grade

AP Human Geography (not offered 2025-26)

AP Human Geography is a yearlong course taught to sophomores, juniors, and seniors. We take a deep dive into the relationship between people, place, and space. How do people shape their places, and how do their places shape them in turn? How did things come to be the way they are, and how could things have been otherwise? We seek to answer these questions by examining them through a wide array of lenses, including: public health, migration, race and gender, religion, language, urbanization, politics, economics, and global climate change. Students will hone an ability to think spatially, critically, and interdisciplinarily as they identify and analyze contemporary concerns and problems on scales ranging from the entire world to a single human body. The hard skills this course emphasizes include critical reading, interpreting and analyzing spatial data, writing and speaking clearly and coherently about complex topics, and applying abstract theoretical concepts to real-world situations. Students who thrive in this class will be those who come ready to ask big questions, expand their thinking, and learn to see the world in an entirely new way. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisites: Modern World, *Term:* Full year *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade
department approval

AP US Government and Politics

This course introduces the American political process at the national level. Students develop an understanding of the policy-making processes, institutions, and theory behind national politics, including the study of the presidency, the Congress, the media, the Federal Bureaucracy, civil rights, civil liberties, and the federal court system. In addition, the origins of the American constitutional government will be studied. Students will investigate the important issues in American politics today, keeping current with the contemporary political situation. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisite: U.S. History, *Term:* Full Year *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade
department approval

11th, 12th Grade Social Studies Semester Courses

The American Prison System

One of the most consequential decisions a society makes is how it should respond to social wrongdoing. When a community member makes a mistake or does something bad, how should the community respond? This semester-length course will introduce you to how the United States responds to that question by shining a bright light on the American incarceration system. The goal of this course is to help you reckon with how a system we too often take for granted could be otherwise, and whether the problems the system attempts (and too often fails) to solve could be solved by other means.

Prerequisite: None *Term:* *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Anthropology

Anthropology is a semester-long course. This class will explore the four main disciplines of Anthropology: cultural, linguistic, archaeological, and biological. Students will examine the field's origins, key figures, and career paths while engaging in hands-on projects that highlight anthropology's relevance in everyday life. The course fosters critical thinking, cultural awareness, and analytical skills through activities such as archaeological simulations, language pattern studies, and professional connections. Students will be guided in discovering their own interests through an anthropological lens, deepening their understanding of human history and diversity.

Prerequisite: None *Term:* *Eligible:* 11th, 12th grade

Art History

This course explores the major artistic traditions of the world from prehistory to the present, examining diverse visual cultures across Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania. Students will analyze key works of art and architecture in their historical, cultural, and social contexts. We will also consider themes such as The Art of Power (Politics, Persuasion, and Propaganda); The Art of Spirit (Religious Movements and Spiritual Expression); The Art of Empire (Athenian, Habsburg, Chinese, and Mughal dominance); The Art of Resistance (Protest and Revolution); The Art of Exchange (Trade and Cross-Cultural Influences), to name a few. Through lectures, discussions, and critical analysis, students will gain a broad understanding of global artistic movements and their significance in shaping visual culture.

Prerequisites: None

Terms:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Documentary Filmmaking: A Critical Lens

Take a deep dive into the fascinating world of documentary film. The goal of this course is three-fold: 1) learn about pressing social issues such as war, race, gender, fame, and more, by watching and critiquing socially-engaged documentaries every week; 2) engage with the role that social, cultural, and political commentary (of varying degrees of trustworthiness) plays in the emergence of social realities; and 3) learn the basic skills and knowledge necessary to produce your own short documentaries as the cumulative project for the semester.

Prerequisite: None

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

Global Monuments: History, Culture, and Interpretations (not offered 2025-26)

Some of humanity's greatest marvels are monuments created for function, religion, and grandeur. In this class we will study feats of engineering and architecture that are indicative of the ages, but also defy time. We will study great monuments - their creation, structure, and cultural significance- and the history of the societies that built them. What were the needs and desires of the society that imagined and built these great structures? How were they built? There are thousands of architectural achievements around the world, both ancient and modern, which can teach us about the history and evolution of architecture and humanity, as well as the societies that built them. The study of these feats can inform our understanding of humanity's interaction with the natural world, as well as the way architecture fulfills the changing needs of society. Students will engage in conversations about history, society, architecture, and culture, as well as practice research and presentation skills.

Prerequisite: None

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

The Misinformation Effect (not offered 2025-26)

Within a single day in America in the 21st century, an average of 500 million Tweets are sent. Over 95 million photos are posted on Instagram and over 65 billion messages are sent over WhatsApp. The world's information lies at our fingertips and with this convenience comes great risk. *The Misinformation Effect* is a class intended to slow us down, take stock of the information at our disposal, and ask basic questions such as: *how can we tell if something is true? What makes something trustworthy? Is our love of free speech out of step with the current information technology landscape?* We'll tackle these questions through reading the work of contemporary scholars and journalists. By watching, listening, reading, and discussing, we'll seek to develop our own metrics for assessing truth and how to navigate a world that is increasingly filled with misinformation. Students can expect to complete weekly readings, writing assignments, and will be expected to be active participants in class activities and projects.

Prerequisite: None

Term:

Eligible: 11th, 12th grade

World Language

Dawson's World Languages Department provides students with language skills and understanding needed to communicate and thrive in today's interconnected world. By encouraging students to stretch their comfort zones, achieve proficiency in a chosen world language, and develop a deep appreciation for diverse cultures, Dawson's language teachers aspire to motivate curious and compassionate global citizens.

Students wishing to skip a level of any world language should meet the following criteria:

1. Have a teacher recommendation
2. Have a minimum of a 93% (letter grade of A) for all classwork
3. Take a placement test with written and oral components
 - a. pass/fail determined by the ad hoc placement committee
4. Notify of intention to skip at course registration with testing taking place in early/mid August

To be eligible to proceed into an Advanced Placement course, students must hold a 90% or higher with an average of at least 88% on major assessments in the preceding course. All students must also have departmental approval.

French I

In French I, students acquire foundational language skills and an appreciation of Francophone cultures. Students engage in all modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and develop vocabulary for common situations. Per national guidelines, the goal is for both students and teacher to maintain French during 90% of class time. Students demonstrate their learning through performance-based assessments in real-world contexts. By the end of French I, students will exhibit Novice-Mid to Novice-High level proficiency (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines).

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

French II

In French II, students continue to develop their communication skills, with a particular focus on speaking proficiency. Students reinforce the foundation built in French I, and engage with new real-life situations and authentic materials. Per national guidelines, the goal is for both students and teacher to maintain French during 90% of class time. As in French I, French II students demonstrate their learning with performance-based assessments. By the end of French II, students will exhibit Novice-High to Intermediate-Low level proficiency (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines).

Prerequisite: French I

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

French III

French III rounds out the introduction to all major communicative time frames (past, present, future). Students continue to interact with authentic resources in real-life contexts and expand their knowledge and understanding of Francophone cultures and history. Per national guidelines, the goal is for both students and teacher to maintain French during 90% of class time. As in previous years, students demonstrate their learning via performance-based assessments. By the end of French III, students will exhibit solid Intermediate-Low level proficiency or above (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines).

Prerequisite: French II

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

French IV

In French IV, students transition from concrete topics of study to working to express abstract levels of thought. Writing and speaking skills include the ability to summarize, narrate, and defend, as well as to express opinions and feelings. Students engage with advanced grammar concepts and use them in context.

Per national guidelines, the goal is for both students and teacher to maintain French during 90% of class time. As in previous years, students demonstrate their learning via performance-based assessments. By the end of French IV, students will exhibit Intermediate-Low-Mid level proficiency (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines).

Prerequisite: French III

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

AP French Language and Culture

AP French Language and Culture is a college-level course intended for students in the culminating year of their study of French. The three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational) defined in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* are foundational to this course. Coursework provides students with opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency in each of the three modes in the intermediate to pre-advanced range as described in ACTFL's *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*.

Students who enroll in this course should already have a good command of the grammar and considerable competence in listening, reading, speaking, and writing French. In addition to fine-tuning these skills, students will examine the products, practices, and perspectives of Francophone countries, while making comparisons and connections through interdisciplinary topics across languages and cultures, both within and beyond their classroom and community. French is used exclusively in the classroom by both teacher and students. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisite: Fr IV, department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Mandarin I

Mandarin I is intended for students who have little to no prior knowledge of Chinese. Through work in this course, the student will begin to develop skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Mandarin Chinese, and will acquire knowledge of vocabulary and grammar necessary to handle simple, practical situations. By year's end, students will be able to interpret highly contextualized messages that use approximately 325 high-frequency words and extract targeted phrase-length information from real world texts. They will also be able to speak and write in highly formulaic language and in simple, sentence length utterances. Students will also gain exposure to the day-to-day practices of Chinese speakers and the richness of culture throughout the Chinese-speaking world.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Mandarin II

Mandarin II further develops students' ability to speak and write on topics relevant to student life and to handle practical situations. Students will interpret a variety of spoken and written Mandarin texts, including real world examples. By year's end, students will be able to interpret short, multi-sentence messages that use approximately 625 high-frequency words. They will also be able to extract targeted phrase-length information from real world texts of growing complexity. Students will be able to speak and write in utterances composed of several logically coherent sentences. Lastly, the course explores attitudes and conventions common in the Chinese-speaking world.

Prerequisite: Mandarin I

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Mandarin III

Mandarin III further develops students' ability to speak and write on topics relevant to student life and to deal with practical situations, with the goal that students will be entering intermediate/low proficiency level by year's end. Students will interpret a variety of spoken and written Mandarin texts, including real world

examples. By year's end, students will be able to interpret multi-sentence messages that use approximately 1,060 high-frequency words and extract targeted phrase-length information from increasingly complex real world texts. Students will be able to speak in straightforward social situations and write on concrete topics. Their short, paragraph-length statements and written texts will exhibit growing coherence with intermittent use of connective and transitional elements. The course also explores attitudes and conventions common in the Chinese-speaking world.

Prerequisite: Mandarin II

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Mandarin IV

Mandarin IV further develops students' ability to speak and write on topics relevant to student life and to deal with practical situations, with the goal that students will be transitioning into intermediate/mid proficiency level by year's end. Students will be able to interpret multi-sentence messages that use approximately 1,520 high-frequency words and extract targeted information from increasingly complex real world texts. Students will be able to speak in straightforward social situations and write on concrete topics. Their short, paragraph-length statements and written texts will exhibit growing coherence with intermittent use of connective and transitional elements. The course also explores attitudes and conventions common in the Chinese-speaking world.

Prerequisite: Mandarin III

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Mandarin V

Culture Through Language is designed to provide learning experiences that expand beyond topics rooted firmly in the basic needs of a foreign speaker in China. Students will interpret increasingly complicated written and aural texts, such as short stories, non-fiction articles, and expository essays, TV advertisements, recorded interviews, spoken word performances, and music videos. Course materials, whether textbook-based or authentic, will present students with language of increasing structural complexity and sophisticated use of rhetorical devices and tone. Students will also speak and write extensively, with attention to thematic development, cohesion, and richness of expression. This will lead to substantial growth toward intermediate high proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing.

Through this class, students will continue to build factual knowledge of the target culture, recognizing cultural differences represented by cultural products (art, literature, etc.) and practices (festivals, politics, etc.). Emphasis will increasingly shift toward a deep appreciation that human beliefs and values all exist in cultural contexts. This understanding is developed through careful analysis of cultural products and practices, with an emphasis on the underlying perspectives that inform them. This project will also enrich the student's understanding of their own cultural identity.

Prerequisite: Mandarin IV

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Spanish I

The Spanish I program is designed to build a solid foundation in the Spanish Language with an early focus on pronunciation and oral interaction. This course develops skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students are introduced to basic vocabulary and grammatical elements and the use of the language for everyday communication. Vocabulary building activities will be constant throughout the year. Students develop the skills required to read simple texts as well as write simple passages. They also learn to appreciate and respect the cultural traditions and differences of Spanish-speaking countries.

Prerequisite: None

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Spanish II

Spanish II is an intensive course designed to further develop the students' basic knowledge of the Spanish language, particularly their vocabulary. Students continue to expand their skills in reading, writing, grammar, and listening, with a special focus on oral communication. Students reinforce their foundation in the language and are introduced to various new tenses and more complicated points of grammar. The class is conducted in Spanish 90% of the time, and students are required to speak to the teacher and to each other in Spanish. Students also study numerous cultural aspects of the Spanish-speaking world.

Prerequisite: Spanish I

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Spanish III

The Spanish III course combines all the skills, vocabulary, and cultural information studied in Spanish I and II, and it completes the initial cycle of essential grammar needed for oral and written communication. The course begins with an emphasis placed upon conversational skills. All students are expected to be able to carry on a normal conversation in Spanish. Students should be able to use proficiency-based language and ask basic informational questions. The students also begin reading selected works in Spanish and creating more extensive written expressions via e-mail and essay production.

Prerequisite: Spanish II

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

Spanish IV

The Spanish IV program will begin with an extensive review of pronunciation. Great emphasis will be placed upon conversational skills. All students will be expected to be able to carry on a normal conversation in Spanish. Students should be able to use proficiency-based language and ask basic informational questions. We will be using *Breaking the Spanish Barrier* Text, and *Los Cuentos de Eva Luna*. We will also be reading selected works in Spanish and begin more extensive written expression via e-mail and essay production. Bi-weekly oral presentations will be standard, and a debating series will investigate Castro and Cuba, Pinochet and Chile, and Franco and Spain.

Prerequisite: Spanish III

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students

AP Spanish Language and Culture

The AP Spanish Language and Culture course stresses various modes of communication and encourages students to explore culture in engaging thematic contexts, all in preparation for the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam. Students are encouraged to demonstrate spoken and written proficiency in a variety of situations, employing the Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational modes of communication. Students also demonstrate an understanding of the culture and an awareness and appreciation of cultural products. Additionally, advanced grammar and literature are studied in depth. Students read a variety of Spanish and Latin American literature that includes several short stories. All students enrolled in the course must take the AP exam in May.

Prerequisite: Sp IV, department approval

Term: Full year

Eligible: All Students