



2021-2022 SECOND SEMESTER COURSE OFFERINGS

COLLEGE WRITING - GRADE 12

Credit: .50 or 1.0

A semester or year-long course that is designed to bridge the gap in students' literacy skills between the senior year of high school and the freshman year in college. This remedial, support class provides students with the skills they need to be successful on their college writing assignments. The curriculum includes instruction in writing short and long essays, in research skills, and in the skills of studentship necessary for success in a collegiate environment. The curriculum parallels the work in English 12 and provides support for the long-term assignments in that course.

DC HISTORY

Credit .50

This course on the history of Washington, D.C. will be focused primarily on the political and cultural developments that helped shape the nation's capital. Starting with Native American civilizations that pre-dated European settlement, the founding of the Capital, and its early years as a federal municipality, students will examine how Washington, D.C. is both similar to and unique among American cities. Students will critically examine the role of the federal government in the development of various sections of the city, and how the Founding Fathers' conception of what the city should be continues to influence government and politics today. Students will study historical events surrounding Home Rule in D.C. in conjunction with current events to better understand the city they live in.

DINOSAUR PHILOSOPHY

Credit .50

Learn about history's great ideas by learning the latest about terrible lizards! This course introduces students to basic philosophical concepts by showing how philosophy applies to recent developments in dinosaur research. Distinguish fact and opinion to critique artistic reconstructions of dinosaurs; examine philosophical logic to assess the evidence for feathers on tyrannosaurs; develop theories of knowledge to debate whether or not paleontologists know the colors of dinosaur scales; understand causation to answer the question of why dinosaurs disappeared 66 million years ago. All this plus the reason why birds are the most interesting animals in the world!

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Credit: .25

Financial Literacy is a course designed to introduce students to the concept of money management and personal finance. Upon completion, students will be equipped with the basic tools and knowledge that will allow them to create and manage a budget, set and achieve financial goals, save and spend wisely, understand credit and investing, and consider college and career planning.

GENERAL MUSIC

Credit: .50

What is music? How is it important to humanity? Is it just a nice thing to have around or is it as Yo-Yo Ma put it, "... one of the ways we can achieve a kind of shorthand to understand each other?" The goal of General Music is to give each student a broader and deeper understanding of music. The course is divided into four distinct sections: theory, history, appreciation, and application. By the end of the semester, each student will be able to: identify and explain the four fundamental components of music; appreciate varied styles of music, and identify major pieces of work; be able to identify by ear, the differences between the four major musical instrument groups and time periods; and have a deeper knowledge of the origin of western music. Students will also be provided the opportunity to create an original piece of music using MIDI equipment and computer programming. General Music will be taught using a collection of readings from an assortment of books and articles.

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HEALTH

Credit: .50

This course is designed to promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of the individual. Areas of study include structure and function of body systems, physical fitness, communicable and noncommunicable diseases, nutrition, environmental health, mental health, stress, first aid, sexual education, alcohol and tobacco, and other drugs. Students are also given opportunities to explore their own feelings and values with an emphasis on making responsible, healthy choices now and in the future.

HISTORY OF JERUSALEM

Credit: .50

Jerusalem has been a center for religious and secular life since the time of King David (~1050 BC). It has also been a satellite of major empires since before the time of Jesus. This is a place where religious and secular cultures from East and West have intersected for thousands of years. In his book on the history of the city, Simon Goldhill says: "Above all, this whole area is a place where...stories are irrevocably mixed together—in time and in space... It is increasingly filled with people who insist on the impossible demand that this complex interweaving should be simple, clear, and separate." This course will seek to trace the different stories of this city. We will examine Jerusalem and its role in the classical and modern world and explore how different communities have lived, and continue to live, in unity and in division.

INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES

Credit: .50

Are you open-minded about viewing films you've never seen before? And wouldn't you like to strengthen your scholarly vocabulary for ways to analyze these films? This semester-long course could do just that. Class time will be focused on viewing excerpts and full films together as a community, providing opportunities to participate in complex, critical discussions. You'll also screen some films independently, typically with at least three choices. By the end of the semester, students will be able to: write film analyses that demonstrate an understanding of the elements of film; explain many American film genres; and compare multiple films by a single director in order to analyze that director's stylistic choices. Film choices will include a wide variety of respected titles, and our readings are borrowed from an assortment of film studies textbooks.

INTRODUCTION TO NATURALIST STUDIES

Credit: .25

Are you interested in exploring the natural world around you, or do you wish you knew more about the plants and animals that make up your world - how to identify them, or how they differ, change, grow, live, and interact? Intro to Naturalist Studies is a new course designed to guide you in exploring the local, natural world. We will spend one 90-minute period per week in Rock Creek Park, observing, paying careful attention to, and wondering about the local biosphere, and using writing, art, and measurement to record our observations in field journals. The hoped for result is both a deeper understanding of and deeper connection to the local, natural world. This course is outdoors, hands-on, and driven by your curiosity: your learning will be based not on memorizing information but on developing your own habits of attention, observation, and wonder. If interested, please complete this [Google Form](#).

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS I: THE ABRAHAMIC FAITHS

Credit: .50

In these classes, we will consider questions that are essential to beginning to understand different major world religions. What matters most to members of major world faith traditions and religious institutions? How do moral and ethical issues appear when viewed from different religious perspectives? What do people who follow these religions practice and believe? How did each religion change and evolve over time? The religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam each evolved, at different times, in the shadows of major political and military powers in the Middle East. How did they come to be? How did each survive and grow as communities of belief and ritual, rather than be overwhelmed by nearby empires? What beliefs and practices are fundamental to each? They all claim to worship the same God, but why -- what are the similarities between them, and what are the differences? If they all worship the same God, what are the sources of the historical and present day conflicts that have marked the relationships of members of these faith traditions with each other?

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MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Credit: .25

This class will meet twice a week to learn the basics of meditation and its applications in our lives. The course seeks to provide a tool for grounding ourselves against the fluctuations and challenges in life. Much of the class period will be dedicated to practicing meditation, and the rest will be on understanding the brain. This focus will result in strategies and techniques for managing stress, anxiety, reactivity, sleep, and sharpening concentration. The Pass/Fail class will be held two times per week.

PERFORMANCE STUDIES IN THEATER

Credit: .50

Using Aristotle's *Poetics* as a jumping-off point, this course will explore theater from page to stage as a live performing art. The class will focus on contemporary American Theater and explore topics ranging from the relationship between theater and society (historical and contemporary), dramatic structure, theatrical representation, and the crafts of acting and playwriting. Students will rehearse and perform scenes from a wide range of theatrical traditions, engage with live performances and video archives of past performances, and write their own short works for the stage.

STUDIO ART I

Credit: .50

As a foundational course, the assignments in Drawing and Design will first focus on realism with an emphasis on learning to see with a more critical eye and on discovering individual interests. In the second half of the course, students will turn their attention to color and painting. The focus will be on color theory, color mixing, value in color, painting skills, and how materials affect the image. As we move from skill building to painting and pastel drawing as a creative process, students will begin to explore their ideas as they make increasingly more of the decisions regarding the size, materials, techniques and styles of their work. Students will also make introductory explorations into abstraction. Curiosity and willingness to take risks will be encouraged as students build their skills with both wet and dry media, and as they learn to navigate the creative process.

STUDIO ART II

Credit: .50

This semester-long course is designed to further develop the concepts and skills learned in Art I and is available for second level art students. Students will use the skills and techniques learned previously to enhance artwork in two and three-dimensional design using a variety of different media. Media includes drawing, painting, plaster sculpture, and printmaking. Students will be asked to solve more complex problems and will develop an ability to make effective choices concerning media, techniques, subject matter, and compositional design. There will be weekly art journal and digital photography assignments. Students will also create an online blog and portfolio documenting their work over the semester. This course is a prerequisite for Art III.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Credit: .50

The primary focus of this semester course is to introduce students to the functions and purpose of the United States government. Students examine who exercises power in this country, both formally and informally, and the historical reasons for these structures. Students also analyze what it means to be an active and engaged citizen in a democratic society and the importance of a participatory citizenry in American democracy today. Students come away with an understanding of the institutions of the U.S. government, the benefits and consequences of these structures, an appreciation for the legislative process, and a deeper understanding of the historical background in which the U.S. government was formed and has functioned.

Students begin the year by examining the Constitutional underpinnings of the U.S. government, including the considerations that influenced the formation and adoption of the Constitution, separation of powers, federalism, and theories of democratic government. Students then study the role of political parties, interest groups, and the mass media in American democracy, as they distinguish platforms of major political parties, assess the role and impact of interest groups on the decision making process, and examine the role of the American media in the political realm. Students also spend a significant portion of the year studying the institutions of national government: the Congress, the Presidency, and the Federal Courts. They examine the major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power, as well as the benefits and consequences of the system of checks and balances. Students conclude the year by studying public policy, including a critique of the process of policy development and the role of institutions in the enactment of policy. Lastly, students explore civil rights and civil liberties in the United States, including an examination of civil rights legislation of the 1960s and a review of landmark Supreme Court cases.

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YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SEMINAR

Credit: .50

Youth Empowerment Seminar is a semester elective for 9th graders. It is meant to be a space where students study, reflect, and take action to better their communities and themselves, and to understand how those two processes are connected. Students regularly do journaling, play team-building games, have group discussions, and plan and do acts of service around the school and community. Students also study various topics related to personal and global issues. All of this is meant to help students develop their "powers of perception" to see the possibilities around them, their "powers of expression" to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, a personal "code of ethics", and ultimately, their "power of action" to reflect on their actions and efforts.