

ARCHER

2025-2026 COURSE CATALOG

Upper School

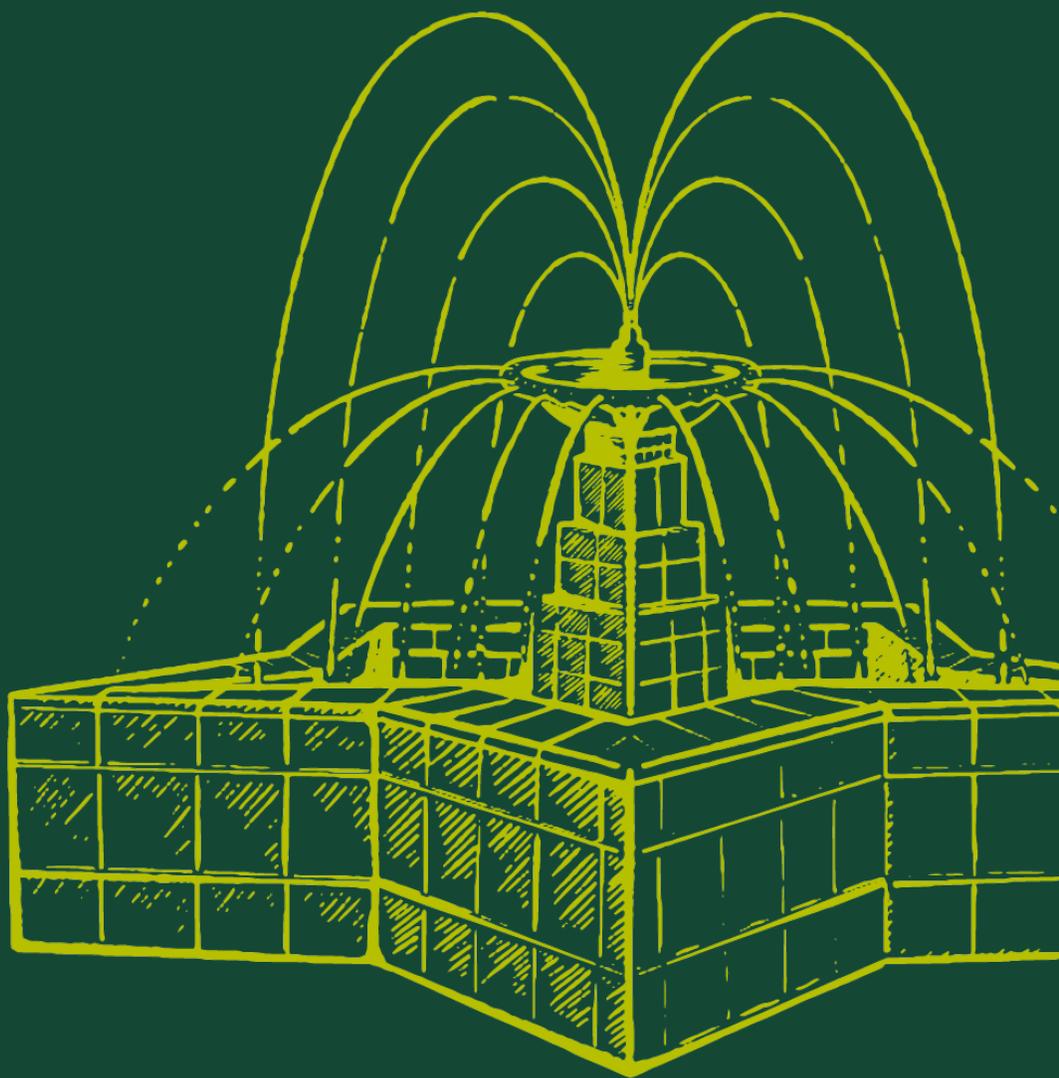




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The Archer School for Girls nurtures the fearlessness, compassion, and resilience girls need to pursue their brilliance.

Archer's Mission

The Archer School for Girls empowers young women to discover their passions and realize their true potential in an environment that is both ambitious and joyful.

- We sustain a collaborative, student-centered teaching and learning community that explores and contributes to the research on how girls learn and thrive.
- We engage girls in a purposeful, inquiry-driven curriculum that fosters critical thinking and life-long intellectual curiosity.
- We inspire girls to become confident, ethical leaders, strengthening their voices and capacity to contribute positively to their communities.
- We promote challenge-seeking, encourage creative risk-taking, and embrace each girl's unique possibility.
- We support girls to develop meaningful relationships in a diverse and inclusive community rooted in empathy, integrity, and responsibility.
- We graduate courageous, resilient young women who take responsibility for their own physical, financial, and emotional well-being.

Upper School Graduation Requirements

To graduate, all students in 9th through 12th grade must satisfactorily complete at least the minimum number of courses indicated below. While in the Upper School, each student is strongly encouraged to take full advantage of the curriculum and to challenge herself academically by going beyond the stated minimums. All students must be enrolled in a minimum of five courses each semester.

- English - 4 years
- History/Social Science - 3 years, including United States History
- Mathematics - 3 years
- Science - 3 years, including Biology and Chemistry
- World Languages - 3 years
- Fitness & Wellness - 2 years
- Human Development - 4 years
- Elective Courses - 4 year-long courses (or equivalent) including:
 - Performing & Visual Arts - 1 year

The Course Catalog is subject to change by Archer at any time throughout the year, in the School's sole discretion and with or without notice. The School will strive to make reasonable efforts to inform students of any changes on a periodic basis.

Course Selection Process

Student schedules are designed from student-generated course requests submitted to Archer. All courses listed in the course catalog are dependent upon sufficient enrollment and faculty availability. Students will be notified when schedules are complete and available on Archer's website.

Registrar: Mindy Stone, mstone@archer.org

Course Changes

ADDING OR DROPPING A CLASS – Add and drop requests are only permitted during the first two rotations of the school year. During this period, the Registrar, Director of Academic Operations, and the Director of Upper School will be available to discuss requested changes as needed.

In special circumstances, as determined by the Director of Upper School in their sole discretion, a student may be permitted to drop a full-year or a fall semester course without notation on the transcript if the request is made prior to the end of the first quarter. Any course dropped after the first quarter (done only in extraordinary circumstances) will be noted on the transcript as a "W" and a numeric grade at the time of withdrawal will be entered into the course gradebook. The same applies to a semester-long course dropped in the spring.

Core Courses

SUBJECT Years Required	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
ENGLISH 4 years	English 9 - Defy the Stars	English 10 - A Closer Look at Identity in Western Literature	English 11 - Rhetoric of the American Self English 11 - Rhetoric of the American Self: Advanced Study	English Seminars (semester courses) <i>The Artist and the Machine*</i> <i>Happiness*</i> <i>Hyperreal*</i> <i>Literature of Fairy Tale & Fantasy*</i>
HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCE 3 years	History 9 - Understanding the Contemporary World	History 10 - World History	History 11 - U.S. History History 11 - U.S. History: Advanced Study	History Seminars (semester courses) <i>American History through Architecture</i> <i>Art, Death, and the Afterlife*</i> <i>Bearing Witness*</i> <i>Becoming Modern*</i> <i>Ethics & Social Justice*</i> <i>Gender Studies*</i> <i>Intro to International Relations*</i> <i>Mapping a Changing World*</i> <i>Modern Spain*</i> <i>Voice of Democracy*</i>
MATH 3 years	Integrated Math II Integrated Math III*	Integrated Math III* Integrated Math III & Precalculus Accelerated Precalculus*	Precalculus* Calculus Calculus AB: Advanced Study Data Science: Advanced Study Financial Algebra (semester) Statistics (semester)	Calculus Calculus AB: Advanced Study Calculus BC: Advanced Study Data Science: Advanced Study Financial Algebra (semester) Statistics (semester)

*Advanced Study or Accelerated option available

Core Courses

SUBJECT Years Required	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
SCIENCE 3 years <i>** As of 2024-2025, the sequence of required Science courses has changed to Biology in 9th grade. Physics will be offered in 11th grade starting in 2026-2027.</i>	Biology 9 *	Chemistry*	Biology 11 Biology: Advanced Study Chemistry: Advanced Study Physics: Advanced Study Research in Science I: Advanced Study Engineering I: Advanced Study <i>Physics**</i>	Chemistry: Advanced Study Physics: Advanced Study Evolutionary Biology of the Female Body: Advanced Study Research in Science I: Advanced Study Engineering I: Advanced Study Research in Science II: Advanced Study Engineering II: Advanced Study Comparative Anatomy Sustainability
COMPUTER SCIENCE	<i>Computer Science options for 9th grade are available under Elective Courses.</i>	Computer Science 2A - iOS App Development: Advanced Study (offered next 2026-2027) Computer Science 2B - Java Programming: Advanced Study	Computer Science 2A - iOS App Development: Advanced Study (offered next 2026-2027) Computer Science 2B - Java Programming: Advanced Study	Computer Science 2A - iOS App Development: Advanced Study (offered next 2026-2027) Computer Science 2B - Java Programming: Advanced Study

*Advanced Study or Accelerated option available

Core Courses

SUBJECT Years Required	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
WORLD LANGUAGES 3 years <i>(typical grade level shown, although all are available 9 - 12 if prerequisite met)</i>	Chinese 2* French 1 French 2* Spanish 1 Spanish 2*	Chinese 3* French 2* French 3* Spanish 2* Spanish 3*	Chinese 4* French 3* French 4* Spanish 3* Spanish 4*	Chinese Language & Culture: Advanced Study French 4* French Language & Culture: Advanced Study Spanish 4* Spanish Language & Culture: Advanced Study Senior Seminars <i>French Language & Culture through Cinema</i> <i>Spanish Language & Culture through Cinema</i> Language Immersion Intensives: Chinese, French, and Spanish
FITNESS & WELLNESS 2 years	Fitness & Wellness 9	Fitness & Wellness 10		
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 4 years	Human Development 9	Human Development 10	Human Development 11	Human Development 12

*Advanced Study or Accelerated option available

Elective Courses

SUBJECT	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
ENGLISH	Journalism: Introduction	Journalism: Introduction Multimedia Journalism Creative Writing	Journalism: Introduction & Advanced Journalism: Advanced Study Multimedia Journalism Creative Writing Creative Writing: Advanced	Journalism: Introduction & Advanced Journalism: Advanced Study Multimedia Journalism Creative Writing Creative Writing: Advanced
SCIENCE	Engineering Arts: Introduction	Engineering Arts: Introduction	Engineering Arts: Introduction	Engineering Arts: Introduction
COMPUTER SCIENCE	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence Art & Computer Science	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence Art & Computer Science	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence Art & Computer Science	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence Art & Computer Science

Elective Courses

SUBJECT	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
PERFORMING ARTS *An Upper School Dance Performance Company class satisfies the requirement for one Fitness class.	Dance Company I* Music Made Visceral Music Tech Songwriting: Introduction Upper School Rock Band Upper School Strings Theatre Arts: Introduction	Dance Company I & II* Music Made Visceral Music Tech Songwriting: Introduction & Advanced Upper School Rock Band Upper School Strings Theatre Arts: Introduction & Intermediate	Dance Company I, II, & III Music Made Visceral Music Tech Songwriting: Introduction & Advanced Upper School Rock Band Upper School Strings Theatre Arts: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Dance Company I, II, & III Dance: Advanced Study Music Made Visceral Music Tech Songwriting: Introduction & Advanced Upper School Rock Band Upper School Strings Theatre Arts: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced Theatre: Advanced Study

Elective Courses

SUBJECT	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
VISUAL & MEDIA ARTS	Ceramics: Introduction	Ceramics: Introduction & Intermediate	Ceramics: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Ceramics: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced
	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence	Ceramics: Advanced Study
	Art & Computer Science	Art & Computer Science	Art & Computer Science	Computer Science 1: Python & Artificial Intelligence
	Art of Design	Art of Design	Art of Design	Art & Computer Science
	Filmmaking: Introduction	Filmmaking: Introduction & Intermediate	Filmmaking: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Art of Design
	Photography: Introduction	Photography: Introduction & Intermediate	Screenwriting	Filmmaking: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced
	Studio Art: Introduction	Studio Art: Introduction & Intermediate	Photography: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Filmmaking: Advanced Study
	Yearbook Journalism: Introduction	Yearbook Journalism: Introduction & Intermediate	Yearbook Journalism: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Screenwriting
			Studio Art: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Photography: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced
			Yearbook Journalism: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	Photography: Advanced Study
		Yearbook Journalism: Advanced Study	Studio Art: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	
			Studio Art: Advanced Study	
			Yearbook Journalism: Introduction, Intermediate, & Advanced	
			Yearbook Journalism: Advanced Study	

English

English 9 - Defy the Stars

“Defy the Stars” shows how art can expose the strengths and fault lines within the human experience, shake us from complacency, and galvanize us to build a better world. Literature is our vehicle to greater awareness, understanding, and activism. Each unit focuses on a text that speaks, either directly or indirectly, to contemporary challenges, while Socratic-based discussions and group projects engage students in meaningful discovery. Students are given the tools to empower their voices, develop informed opinions, take creative risks, and construct thought-provoking analyses. The course culminates with a deeper appreciation of the complexity of current challenges along with the writing and communication skills to lean into making a difference. Potential texts include *Purple Hibiscus*, *The Lord of the Flies*, *The Book of Unknown Americans*, and *Macbeth*.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9

English 10 - A Closer Look at Identity in Western Literature

How does our understanding of class, race, and gender enhance our critical evaluation of literature? Paired with History 10, this course examines how Western thinking resonates within literary texts, and then flips that figurative coin to also reflect on the effects of Western ideologies themselves, both on members of Western cultures and on those considered “other” or “foreign” to a Western perspective. These explorations lead to thought-provoking questions like: How do systems beyond our control determine our actions? How does the potential reality of socially constructed identity affect our ethical beliefs? How do various cultures reply to the terms and expectations of Western social structures? Such questions shed light on our own individual identities and how they are shaped by class, race, and gender. To assist with such complex, critical thinking, students undertake various writing assignments that require them to explicate plays, poetry, and novels with close attention to diction, syntax, and thematic patterns. The course also challenges students to bring their creativity and personal experiences to bear and collaborate effectively through a variety of digital tools. Potential texts include *Klara and the Sun*, *Things Fall Apart*, *The Odyssey*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and *The Stranger*, among others.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10

English 11 - Rhetoric of the American Self

Walt Whitman's 1860 joyful poem celebrates the hardworking voices of the young country, saying, "I hear America singing." But whose songs are truly heard? In 1925, Langston Hughes replied, "I, too, sing America. // I am the darker brother." This junior English seminar introduces students to key authors, poets, and playwrights whose works capture the complexity of American identity and experience suggested by these two quotes. Students engage in an exploration of the relationship between the writer and the reader, considering those basic human desires to express, connect, and persuade. Texts reflect distinct eras and genres that overlap with the cultural studies of the U.S. History course and explore the American mythos—what it means to be "American" and how that definition has changed over time. Students build on their reading and writing skills to develop confident and insightful voices. In addition to writing analytically and continuing to build vocabulary, students visualize concepts of beauty and racial identity in *The Bluest Eye* through an art project, develop a TED Talk, and engage in script analysis, comparing Williams' original play with the 1951 film adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Texts may include *The Bluest Eye*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Malcolm X*, and short story, poetry, and nonfiction essay selections.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11

English 11 - Rhetoric of the American Self: Advanced Study

This course, centered on the American literary tradition and the concept of American identity, offers training in prose analysis as well as creative and argumentative writing. The crux of the course is an exploration of the relationship between the writer and the reader, considering those basic human desires to express, connect, and persuade. To do so, students look closely at varied writing styles and rhetorical choices. Central questions for exploration include: How do we ask dynamic questions and follow original paths of inquiry? What choices do writers make as they seek to construct meaning and influence the audience? How can we hone our personal voice and adjust our prose for varied purposes? Central thematic questions include: What tensions arise between the personal and the communal? How do power dynamics play out in society? Why do we perform? What do we perform? Who are we performing for? Some of the writers that may be covered include Walt Whitman, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Claudia Rankine, Tennessee Williams, Margaret Atwood, Cathy Park Hong, Mary Oliver, Susan Sontag, Meena Alexander, and Malcolm X. Reading assignments are substantial, as are written assignments, and lively student discussions further understanding and creative interpretation.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11

Prerequisite: Self-Reflection Survey, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

SENIOR ENGLISH SEMESTER-LONG SEMINARS

Seniors must enroll in 2 semester-long seminars in order to meet graduation requirements. The courses offered rotate based on student interest. Students may take single-semester seminars as electives.

Core Course (when taken in conjunction with another semester-long seminar) or Elective Standard and Advanced Study options available

Grade Level: 12

Advanced Study Option for Senior English Seminars

Advanced Study courses challenge students to deepen their knowledge, participate in independent research, and expand on the seminar's texts, themes, and thinking. This program involves additional research, reading, writing, and presentations outside of seminar course expectations. Independent work will be approved, monitored, and assessed by the teacher. Advanced Study courses allow students with a passion for literature to challenge themselves and explore their literary interests as English academics. Students will also have extended criteria for some of their seminar coursework, apply literary theory to texts, do additional reading—including an additional summer text—and have direct instruction on research approaches. Please note: The Advanced Study option for English seminars is available yearlong only and requires enrollment in two English Seminars.

Prerequisite: Self-Reflection Survey, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

The Artist and the Machine: Reactions to Innovation

Worrying about scientific inventions overtaking humanity has classically been the stuff of science fiction, but, increasingly, it's also the stuff of the 21st century. With the breakneck pace of technological advances in computing, automation, medicine, and artificial intelligence, the Digital Revolution has forever altered the social and economic practices of our world. But this isn't the first time that our way of life has been upended by rapid change. About 200 years ago, people were grappling with similar concerns as the Industrial Revolution catalyzed a major economic shift. In response, a group of writers, artists, and poets advocated for an escape from machinery and a return to simplicity—to the natural world, to the imagination—all the while warning that the working conditions of an industrial society would "blunt the discriminating powers of the mind" (Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*). In our modern world, there are myriad echoes of these words. Where is the separation between the man and the machine when AI programs can emulate human creativity, when our phones become an extension of our bodies, and when the internet has been "chipping away our capacity for concentration and contemplation" (Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows*)? This course explores questions such as: How can we use literature to evaluate the drawbacks and benefits of technological changes? How can literature and art provide us with wisdom and ethical frameworks? How can we learn to work with and against the machine? Potential texts include *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, 19th century Romantic poetry, Pre-Raphaelite and Mingei art, and selected excerpts from *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Happiness - The Language, Literature, and Legacy of Well-Being

"Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions." — Dalai Lama XIV

"If only we'd stop trying to be happy we could have a pretty good time." — Edith Wharton

This course offers an opportunity to examine the tension between current expectations of happiness and the reality of how it actually manifests in humans' lives. To start, students will consider their own definition of happiness as well as those from across cultures and time. Through Francois Le Lord's satirical novel *Hector and the Search for Happiness* students will grapple with questions like: What makes us happy? Unhappy? Is this subjective? How does culture impact individual happiness? What is the rhetoric of happiness? Podcasts, film, poetry, and psychological research will further illuminate contemporary complexities of happiness. Students will use critical lenses, from Marxist to psychological, to understand how gender, race, wealth, and other factors of identity impact experiences of contentment. This college seminar-style class is designed to build on close-reading, discussion, critical thinking, and writing skills. The course fine-tunes these skills by using diverse texts to investigate something we all value and seek to better understand: happiness. An intentional bonus of our deep-dive is discovering, trying on, and evaluating the efficacy of wellness practices.

Hyperreal - Comparative Studies of Contemporary Literature and Film

This course explores the institutions and systems that emerged in the 20th and 21st centuries and how they have constructed, for better and for worse, our shared existence. Potential works we will read will range from classic modernist texts (such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*) to postmodern theory (Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema") and nightmarish cinematic odysseys (such as David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*). The course discusses how totalitarian regimes now employ more subtly insidious tactics, no longer requiring a boot to stamp on a human face; how capitalism is both a force of good and a driver of stark economic inequities and climate catastrophes; how the entertainment industry and social media have revealed the tensions between who we want to be and who we truly are. Students' journeys will culminate in a paper that seeks to critically analyze a text, cultural event, or movement through a theoretical lens.

Literature of Fairy Tale & Fantasy

What happens to children when they read and immerse themselves in other worlds? How do fairy tales and the literature of fantasy convey truths about being human? This course offers a rich environment to explore questions about adult and child psychology, the uses of story, and aspects of artistic and literary styles and traditions. An early focus is on classic folklore and fairy tales from varied cultures, as well as Victorian England and literary fairy tales. The seminar also explores the nature of fantasy and the relationship between the real and the fantastic, with forays into the genres of magical realism, surrealism, postmodernism, and the theory of the uncanny. Potential readings include *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, analyses by Bruno Bettelheim and Jack Zipes, stories by N.K Jemisin, and works by Robert Coover, J.M. Barrie, Salman Rushdie, Anne Sexton, Neil Gaiman, George MacDonald, Helen Oyeyemi, Guillermo del Toro, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The course includes substantial reading of published criticism. Some lenses through which the course examines the texts include postmodern, psychoanalytic, feminist, stylistic, historical, and cultural.

English Electives

Introduction to Journalism

This full-year elective is for students who are curious critical thinkers who want to seek truth and amplify marginalized voices in school and the larger global community. After learning journalism fundamentals, including a close look at First Amendment law and journalistic ethics, students will begin producing their own work under the guidance of trained student editors and the faculty adviser. Students will write articles, conduct interviews, take pictures, craft multimedia pieces, and chase down elusive leads as they maintain Archer's award-winning digital news site, [The Oracle](#).

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Multimedia Journalism

This full-year course builds on students' work in the introductory journalism course and focuses on visual and multimedia elements in the student-run digital newspaper, [The Oracle](#). Students will revisit fundamentals in photography, from basic photo composition to using DSLR cameras in manual mode, and hone their photojournalism skills. They will work on the news podcast, learning how to record and edit audio in Adobe Audition, and create multimedia photo essays and video broadcasts for articles in the paper. Although they have a multimedia audio/visual focus, students will also continue to report and write for the paper. *This course is the only Oracle class that fulfills the UC art requirement.*

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Introduction to Journalism

Advanced Journalism

Students in Advanced Journalism have completed two years of journalism and are building on those fundamental skills to take their reporting to the next level. The course, open to juniors and seniors, encompasses all aspects of producing the newspaper, and the majority of course activities revolve around reporting, writing, editing, taking photographs and creating multimedia journalism. Although students are not in official leadership roles, they are valued coaches for intro students and take on greater responsibilities on staff.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Multimedia Journalism

Journalism: Advanced Study

Students enrolled in Journalism: Advanced Study have completed the introductory and multimedia and/or intermediate journalism courses and developed their skills to the point that they have applied to and been approved for editorial or other major leadership roles on [The Oracle](#), overseeing all aspects of the student-run publication. The course, open to juniors and seniors by application, encompasses all aspects of producing the newspaper, and the majority of course activities revolve around writing, editing, photography, social media management, and leadership of the paper's staff writers. Editors bear final responsibility for the quality, timeliness, relevance, and professionalism of the paper. Advanced Study students will also have summer work and prepare a personal portfolio of their design and journalism work from the year as a summative assessment.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Advanced Journalism or Multimedia Journalism with Teacher Recommendation

Creative Writing

This class focuses on poetry, fiction, personal narrative, and screenwriting, with an emphasis on developing a personal process and voice. Students in this course embrace storytelling and play with language. Close readings of seminal works are featured, and students have an opportunity to apprentice their skills through imitation of masters. Students workshop and become “editors” who sharpen their understanding of what constitutes good writing. Revisions follow, and at the end of each unit, students gather their best work for a digital portfolio. Twice a year, students also solicit and edit work by their peers for submission to *Pillars of Salt*, the Upper School digital and print literary magazine.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Creative Writing: Advanced

This class is open to students who have taken the Creative Writing class and are ready for more challenges and responsibilities as class leaders and editors of the literary magazine, *Pillars of Salt*. Students complete additional readings and assignments as well as attend some off-campus events and performances. As editors, students work with the instructor to lead activities, discussions, and workshops. Other duties include laying out and preparing the literary magazine.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 - 12

Prerequisite: Creative Writing

History & Social Science

History 9 - Understanding the Contemporary World

How do budding scholars and citizens cultivate understandings, identities, and affiliations that foster active participation in contemporary global society? This course trains students with the tools of the social sciences to answer questions facing the planet and its people today. Through political, social, and economic analysis of contemporary problems, students develop the ability to contextualize, analyze, and empathize. Emphasizing alignment with texts and themes studied in English 9, students explore political philosophies, culture, religion, the environment, gender, race, and the media through a social justice lens that helps them make sense of themselves and their world. Students continue to hone reading comprehension, analytical thinking, note-taking skills, source evaluation, and critical media literacy skills. Special attention is given to current global issues where students recognize both the power of the individual and the importance of movements in creating social change within their local and global communities. Students participate in service learning field trips through their coursework to discover their philanthropic passion and purpose. The course marks students' transition into the Upper School and young adulthood by focusing on the skills and knowledge of the social sciences that are necessary to participate actively as scholars and citizens.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9

History 10 - World History

The 10th grade History course comprises four modules on modern world history. In the first semester, students study modules on the French Revolution and the First World War. In the second semester, students study the Second World War. This module includes units of study on the rise of Nazism in Germany, the Holocaust, and the origins of the Cold War. A fourth module looks at the Global South, examining key historical developments and events taking place there. These include Indian Independence and Partition, the Chinese Communist Revolution, the Iranian Revolution, and African decolonization. These events are contextualized against the backdrop of the events studied in modules two and three. One of the core aims of the course is for students to reach as comprehensive an understanding as possible of how the contemporary world has been shaped by recent history. An additional goal is to further students' awareness and sense of global citizenship. In relation to this, the course aims to build on and to develop students' knowledge of the nature of historical interpretation, that is, to understand that history is viewed and related from a variety of perspectives that are not always in harmony with one another.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10

History 11 - United States History

Does our national history suggest that our founding ideals are best achieved by a greater expansion of the social safety net or a reduction in government power? Does it suggest that the United States should respond vigorously to events like the Russian invasion of Ukraine, or that we should keep our distance? Does it suggest that the Black Lives Matter movement represents progress toward achieving greater racial justice, or the intractability of white supremacy? How one answers questions like these often depends on the broad story one tells about American history as a whole. Nations, like people, bind the events of their past together into narratives, and these narratives also shape how we see current events. But there is not just one national narrative. In this course, students examine American history thematically and through the lens of national narratives. Students compare and critique multiple narratives relating to American ideals, foreign policy, race, and other themes. In the process, students develop a rich understanding not only of U.S. history, but also of the fault lines that animate political and cultural disagreements in our own time.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11

History 11 - United States History: Advanced Study

This course uses the same thematic approach as its standard counterpart. However, the Advanced Study course is a Harkness-based class that places the student-centered, student-led discussion at the heart of the course. Therefore, Advanced Study students undertake considerably more reading, of both primary and secondary sources; are expected to master more content on their own so as to spend class time on analysis; and, must closely read texts, analyze them independently, and come to class prepared to lead dialogues on texts and history. Advanced Study students additionally pursue more independent research and writing projects, and should expect evaluation of their participation skills.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11

Prerequisite: Self-Reflection Survey, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

HISTORY SEMESTER-LONG SEMINARS

These one-semester courses provide opportunities for students to delve deeper into a focused area of study that complements and builds on the core History requirements. Assessments include hands-on projects, traditional tests, research- and writing-based assignments, and non-traditional assignments to suit varied learning styles. Classwork and assignments will promote research, as well as critical thinking and writing skills, to prepare students to meet college expectations.

Core Course or Elective

Standard and Advanced Study options available

(Note: American History Through Architecture is offered as a standard course only.)

Grade Level: 12

Advanced Study Option for History Seminars

Advanced Study challenges students to deepen their knowledge, participate in independent study, and expand on the seminar's texts, themes, and thinking, allowing students with a passion for the study of history to explore their interests. This program involves additional research, reading, writing, and presentation outside of the seminar course's expectations. Independent work will be approved, monitored, and assessed by the teacher. Students will also have extended criteria for some of their seminar coursework, apply historical and/or social science theories to seminar content, do additional reading, and receive direct instruction on research. To support this work, students are required to make regular appointments with their seminar teacher for feedback. Please note: The Advanced Study option for History seminars is available yearlong only and requires enrollment in two History seminars. *Please note that American History Through Architecture is offered as a standard course only.*

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Self-Reflection Survey, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

American History Through Architecture

"One of the great but often unmentioned causes of both happiness and misery is the quality of our environment: the kinds of walls, chairs, buildings, and streets that surround us." - *The Architecture of Happiness* by Alain de Botton

The architectural mosaic of what would become the United States of America began with early structures such as native mound building and pueblo building in the Southwest, and took on European influences with the arrival of settlers from Spain, England, and France. From the emergence of the skyscraper in the 19th century to California's own Spanish Colonial Revival and Mid-Century Modern era, the story of American architecture can be understood through examining the pathways of immigrants, the growth of cities, and the public imagination of what architecture should tell the world about the ideals of the nation.

Essential Questions: What are the definitive characteristics of American architecture? How can we read an American building to understand a place's socio-political, economic, and cultural history as well as the ideals and values of the times? How can we apply the fundamental principles of design in our assessment of a building's aesthetics? Where is American architecture headed in an age where income inequality has made home ownership and home building out of reach for most and technology has diminished the need for public and corporate physical space?

Please note that American History Through Architecture is offered as a standard course only.

Topics in Art History - Art, Death, and the Afterlife

How does art help us grapple with death and express ideas about the afterlife, or even attempt to achieve immortality? Engaging with art-making from prehistory through Postmodernism, this course focuses on understanding artworks in the context of the cultural and historical moment in which they were created. Who made the work and why? How was it originally intended to be used or experienced? What ideas does it convey to the viewer today? Through this study, students hone their visual analysis skills and also learn to distinguish the stylistic characteristics of the art and architecture of various periods and places. To further train students' powers of observation (and to inspire their curiosity), the course includes class and individual trips to experience works of art and architecture in the Los Angeles area. Student work includes essays, art reviews, presentations, and visual projects.

Topics in Art History - Becoming Modern

The Industrial Revolution changed everything it touched—transportation, the production of goods, even the organization of time and space. Not surprisingly, it also transformed art, introducing new materials, subjects, attitudes, and a new art form: photography. This course will trace the impacts of the economic, political, and cultural revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries on art. From the Romantic movement in early 19th century Europe to the Socialist Realism of the Soviet Union, from the Surrealists' exploration of the subconscious mind to Pop Art's embrace of consumerist imagery in the 1960s, this course examines the ways in which visual artists around the globe responded to, critiqued, and shaped their times. Through this study, students hone their visual analysis skills and also learn to distinguish the stylistic characteristics of the art and architecture of various periods and places. To further train students' powers of observation (and to inspire their curiosity), the course includes class and individual trips to experience works of art and architecture in the Los Angeles area. Student work will include essays, art reviews, presentations, and visual projects.

Bearing Witness - History of Genocide, Resistance, and the Complexity of Repair

What exactly qualifies as genocide and why? How can it be prevented? What might forgiveness and justice look like after mass atrocity? At the beginning of the course, students read James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* and explore big concepts such as identity, race, and antisemitism, as well as the impact of bias, stereotypes, and persistent myths in society. Students then take a comparative approach to genocide history, using the definition of genocide created by Raphael Lemkin and adopted by the United Nations to anchor our study of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust of the Second World War. The course culminates by examining examples of transitional and restorative justice as found in South Africa and Germany, and students research and create their own proposed plan of restorative justice or a memorial plan around a topic of their choosing. Throughout our study, students also learn about brave people who resisted extermination and stood up to help others. This course engages students' hearts, minds, and hands.

Ethics and Social Justice

This single-semester course provides a historical framework for approaching the complex ethical issues of today. Drawing upon the works of Aristotle, Bentham, Mill, Kant, Nozick, Rawls, and others, students examine writings that have consciously and unconsciously shaped our beliefs on contemporary issues. Students analyze core texts to develop lenses through which to explore competing systems and models of justice. Issues discussed include abortion, surrogacy, seat belt laws, affirmative action programs, capital punishment, stem-cell research, bioethics, reparations, assisted suicide, and many more. The complex issues of the 21st century require a nuanced understanding, and students need practice in open discourse to develop their worldviews and the

skills of active citizenship. To foster critical thinking skills, students learn how to analyze arguments in order to recognize underlying assumptions and logical fallacies. Student work includes traditional assessments, essays, roundtable discussions, debates, and presentations.

Gender Studies - An Introduction to Intersectional Feminism

What does it mean to be a feminist? This course begins with a basic introduction to intersectional feminism through the development of a common lexicon. Using feminist themes and language as a framework, students explore the broad concept of gender through disciplines like biology, politics, philosophy, history, and literature. This course celebrates the critical developments of the Women's Movement in the United States while also critiquing the ways in which modern feminism has fallen short. Topics include the historically changing representation of women, the critical role women of color played in the fight for gender equality, the gender division of labor, and sexualities. Students read *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women a Movement Forgot* by Mikki Kendall as a springboard to discuss the importance of intersectionality within feminism. Each student crafts their own meaning of feminism and develops a critical perspective on the meaning and role of gender in our society.

Topics in Human Geography - Mapping a Changing World

How do maps make us feel lost and found simultaneously? How can maps and an understanding of human geography help us explore the adventure of life ahead? How can we develop a global perspective on our dynamic and changing world? Reading, creating, and thinking critically about maps are key to unlocking the human processes that are taking place at the individual, national, and global levels and are impacting our earth. This course explores topics of population change, human migration, urbanization, economic development, and globalization to gain a better understanding of how, why, and where population demographics are changing in our modern world—and what that means for students and their adventures ahead. Students also learn to employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis as well as principles of economics, history, political science, ecology, anthropology, and other disciplines to understand human social organization and its environmental consequences. This course includes adventurous and fascinating observational walks to explore various aspects of life in Los Angeles, as well as projects to help students understand global phenomena at the local level.

Introduction to International Relations

People, individually and in groups, have interacted across borders since borders were first erected. What dynamics, systems, and rules have shaped those interactions? This course examines the historical, social, political, and economic phenomena that have given rise to the world order, past and present. It also exposes students to the approaches and tools of international relations as a field of study. Thematically, students probe phenomena such as imperialism, nationalism, colonialism, and globalization to understand how different actors both shape and succumb to the world order. Student work includes traditional assessments, essays, roundtable discussions, debates, and presentations.

Modern Spain, 1931-1982 - Civil War, Dictatorship, and Democracy

Contemporary Spain is prosperous, increasingly diverse, and forward-looking. Yet, so deep are the scars that the country's recent history has left behind, that Spain has only recently begun to confront it. This course charts that history by investigating the political turbulence and polarization that Spain experienced throughout so much of the last century. Students use primary and secondary sources to investigate a history that in many ways reflects broader historic patterns and events: from a civil war rooted in Spain's complex social and political relationships that became a global battleground between the forces of reaction and progress, to the long-lasting and often violent dictatorship of General Francisco Franco that emerged from that war, to the post-dictatorship transition towards becoming a vibrant democracy. By the end of this course, students will likely conclude that 20th century Spanish history is at once tragic, instructive, and profoundly interesting. This course is an in-depth study of Spanish history that complements Spanish courses offered by the World Languages department.

The Voice of Democracy

This single-semester course analyzes the complexity of the U.S. democratic system, with a focus on recent election cycles and the 2024 presidential race, and will equip students with the knowledge and skills to discuss political issues in the classroom and beyond. Thinking like political analysts, students will explore systems and institutions that shape the electoral process, paying particular attention to political parties, campaign tactics, gerrymandering, campaign finance systems, media and social media, interest groups, voter ID laws, and more. Students will also examine the rise in political polarization and develop the skills to engage in civil discourse. Students are challenged to answer fundamental questions, such as: Why hasn't a multi-party system arisen in the U.S., and could one work here? How does our primary system perpetuate polarization? Why is there such low voter turnout in the U.S.? How is social media changing campaign communications? Using recent campaigns as case studies, students analyze the impact of debates, campaign rallies, endorsement announcements, etc. as they investigate and assess our current system. The course will culminate in the exploration of threats to our democracy.

Mathematics

A Note about Accelerated and Advanced Study courses

Accelerated and Advanced Study Mathematics courses are intended to provide students with a more challenging, faster-paced curriculum that develops a deeper understanding than the standard course. While students are expected to take greater responsibility for their learning, they should also express an advanced level of interest in the subject matter. Courses place a greater emphasis on each student's comprehension of key concepts and their ability to apply topics to new situations. Students in these courses will have frequent assessments, which are often calculator inactive (calculators will not be allowed).

Integrated Math II

This course leverages students' pattern thinking to understand and describe the behavior of exponential and quadratic functions and their graphs. Students touch on the rudiments of statistics, and connect their understanding of statistical displays back to the three function families students are most familiar with: exponential, linear, and quadratic. Students explore and make sense of geometric diagrams on and off the coordinate plane using lines, segments, angles, triangles, quadrilaterals and other polygons. During this course, students connect the concept of mathematical proof to the skills they have built in their humanities courses, as they learn to defend mathematical claims with evidence and reasoning, structuring triangle proofs on and off the coordinate plane. This course ends with right triangle trigonometry and special right triangles, laying the foundation for the circular trigonometry to come.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9

Prerequisite: Integrated Math I or Algebra 1

Integrated Math III: Standard and Accelerated

Students in IM3 expand their library of functions as well as their knowledge of trigonometry. This is the final course in the Integrated Math series: students will apply and extend what they have learned in previous courses by focusing on finding connections between multiple representations of the entire family of functions, including absolute value, square root, cubic, and cube roots. Students compare methods of graphing and solving within these families and create mathematical models of real-world situations. Students will explore the inverse relationship between exponents and logarithms. This course prepares students for Precalculus by extending right triangle trigonometry and similar triangles to conceptualize the unit circle and periodic functions.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 & 10

Prerequisite: Integrated Math I Accelerated, Integrated Math II, or Geometry

(Note: This course has an Accelerated option. All students begin in the standard course. Accelerated placement occurs during the first quarter of the academic year. The Accelerated course includes additional content and more rigorous assessment. Department Recommendation and Agreement for Accelerated are required for Integrated Math III: Accelerated)

Integrated Math III and Precalculus Accelerated

This course encompasses two years of math—IM3 and Precalculus—in one year and does so at an accelerated pace. Students explore the quadratic, rational, absolute value, square root, polynomial, and trigonometric function families through the lens of multiple representations—graph, table, and equation—in order to understand and generalize function behavior. Students make use of structure and patterns within function behavior to make predictions about new content and mathematical situations. Additionally, this course covers topics in analytic trigonometry, including equations and identities, as well as an introduction to limits. Students are expected to form, test, revise, and defend mathematical hypotheses both independently and with collaborators. A graphing calculator is used regularly to investigate the graphical representation of functions.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10

Prerequisite: Integrated Math II or Geometry, Qualifying Grades, and Department Recommendation

Precalculus: Standard and Accelerated

This course bridges the study of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry with calculus. Students explore topics such as higher-order polynomial, trigonometric, exponential, and logarithmic functions. Students learn to use the unit circle to see physical relationships in trigonometric functions. A graphing calculator is used regularly to investigate the graphical representation of functions. Real-life applications are incorporated to encourage students as lifelong learners of mathematics. In the Accelerated course, students are introduced to calculus concepts including limits and continuity.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10 & 11

Prerequisite: Integrated Math III; Self-Reflection, Agreement for Accelerated, and Department Recommendation

Calculus

This course exposes students to the concepts and themes covered in a college calculus class. It covers much of the same material as the Advanced Study course at a less intensive pace. Calculus concepts are approached from a graphing, numerical, and algebraic perspective to allow students to interpret and verify conclusions. Topics include a review of limits, continuity, derivatives, related rates, optimization, anti-derivatives, and volumes of solids. Students develop the ability to create clear, succinct mathematical conclusions and to communicate their thinking. A main focus of the course is to expose students to real-world applications of calculus and its connections to other disciplines.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Precalculus

Calculus AB: Advanced Study

Calculus AB: Advanced Study challenges students to deepen their knowledge and expand on the connections between content given in the previous courses. The course emphasizes a multidimensional method of study with concepts expressed graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally. Topics include limits of functions, continuity as a property of functions, derivatives, techniques, and application of anti-differentiation and integrals. Throughout the year, students are exposed to a variety of real-world applications and explore new concepts within that framework.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Precalculus or Calculus, Self-Reflection, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

Calculus BC: Advanced Study

This course reviews and extends the topics that students first encountered in Calculus AB. Students learn advanced techniques and begin working with parametric, polar, and vector functions. Applications of integrals are studied and used to model physical, biological, and real-world economic scenarios. A significant portion of the course consists of the study of sequences and series. As time allows, students may also be introduced to more advanced topics in 3-D geometry and multivariable calculus.

Core Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Calculus AB: Advanced Study, Self-Reflection, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

Data Science: Advanced Study

Data is everywhere, and this Data Science course prepares students to live in a world of data. Students have the opportunity to explore the intersection of computing and mathematics through practical applications of data analysis. Students develop their understanding of sampling, correlation/causation, bias and uncertainty, modeling with data, making and evaluating data-based arguments, and the importance of data in society. The data sets engage students with a wider world of data that fall into the “Big Data” paradigm and are relevant to students’ lives. At the end of the course, students have a portfolio of their data science work to showcase their newly developed knowledge and understanding.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Precalculus, Self-Reflection, Advanced Study Agreement, and Department Recommendation

Financial Algebra

What does it mean to become financially responsible? Is it better to have cash or assets? Can you manage your risk by building a portfolio when investing in stocks? This course offers students the unique opportunity to answer these questions and link their interests in money and wealth with a strong foundation in logical-mathematical thinking. Students in this course employ advanced algebra, probability, and statistics skills to solve financial problems occurring in everyday life. Students first have the opportunity to explore earning interest and consumption across time (investing and borrowing) while demonstrating their ability with exponents and graphing linear and exponential growth. Students further the development of function while discussing the Rule of 72, Present and Future Value, and Binomial Distribution. Learning is problem-based while students develop a financial portfolio that reflects their current financial goals. Spreadsheets and graphic calculators are key components while fusing data-driven inquiries. *Please note that this is a semester-long course.*

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Precalculus

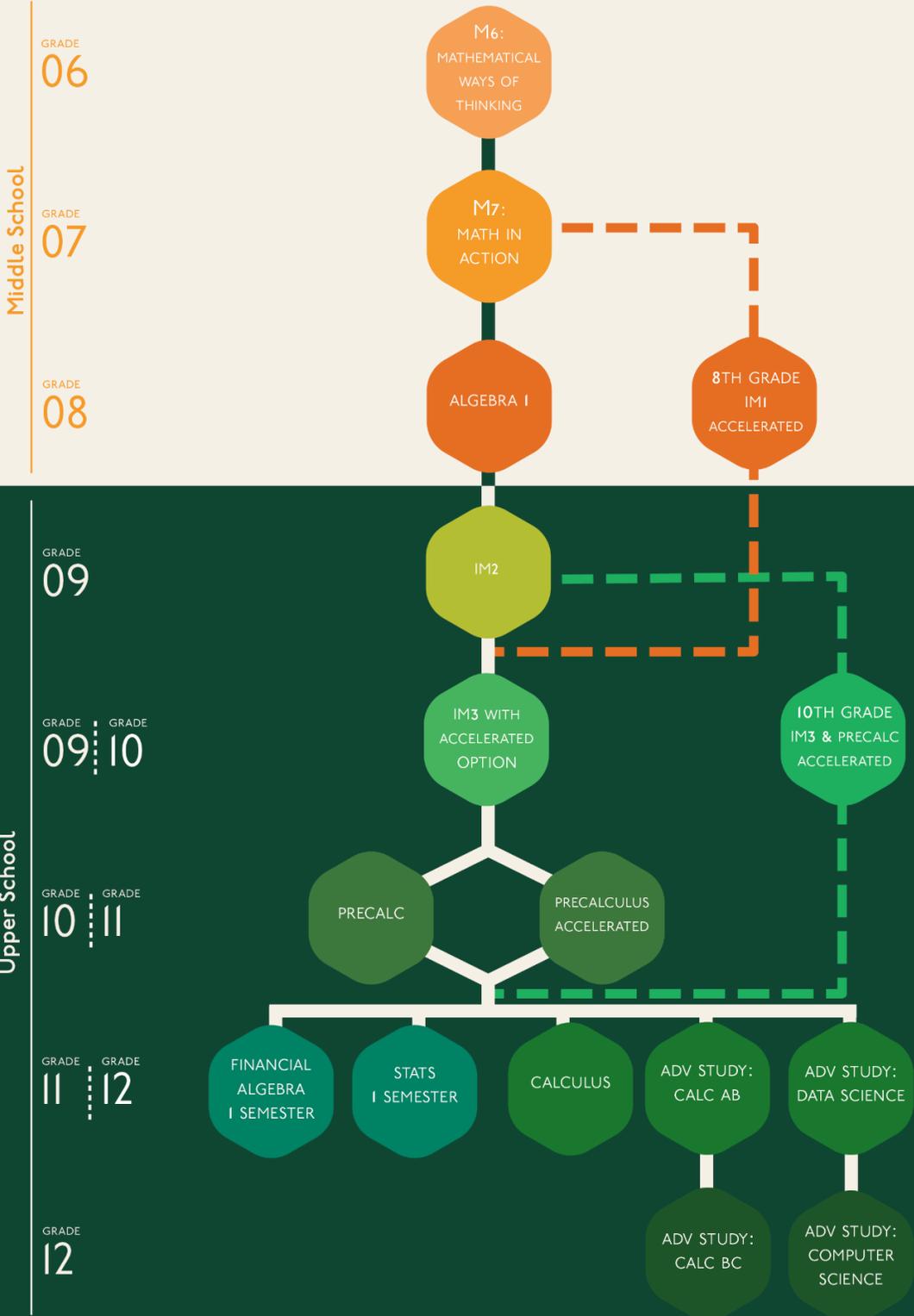
Statistics

This course introduces students to the study of data and allows them to learn practical financial applications in Excel, one of the most powerful data analysis tools that almost all small and big businesses use in their day-to-day functioning. Along with exploring the functions of Excel, students look at several ways to represent data and how to create a bias-resistant experience with accurate sampling methods. The course analyzes statistics as represented in the media and talks about the validity of conclusions drawn from that data. This course is ideal for those students who are interested in pursuing a career in the social sciences and students who are looking for a math elective that has direct applications to real life. *Please note that this is a semester-long course.*

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Precalculus



Science

Differentiating Between Standard, Accelerated, and Advanced Study Science Courses

Archer's Accelerated and Advanced Study Science courses challenge students who are deeply interested and excel in the process of science. These courses are designed to be substantively more challenging than a standard course with:

- Quicker pacing
- Less in-class processing time and review of concepts
- Greater expectations for independence and initiative
- More challenging assessments (tests, quizzes, and writing assignments)

Note About Science Sequence Change

The sequence of required Science courses has changed from Conceptual Physics in 9th grade to Biology in 9th grade, as of 2024-2025. Chemistry will remain a 10th grade course and Physics will be offered in 11th grade starting in 2026-2027.

Biology 9: Standard and Accelerated

In this 9th grade inquiry-based course, students engage in the process of science to make sense of how the natural world works. Course units are designed around real-world biological phenomena that explore the connections across topics such as ecology, genetics, cellular biology, anatomy, and evolution. Throughout each coherent unit, students are challenged to construct their own understanding of these biological phenomena and ideas by engaging in activities that involve figuring things out rather than simply learning about them (active learning rather than passive learning), student-driven questioning, collaborative problem-solving, higher-level critical thinking, and productive struggle. In order for students to build their understanding of biological ideas, this course places a strong emphasis on scientific practice proficiency (asking questions, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, computational and mathematical thinking, constructing and supporting explanations with evidence, communicating clearly) throughout each unit.

Grade Level: 9

Core Course

Prerequisite: Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Chemistry: Standard and Accelerated

This is an inquiry-based laboratory course in which students learn about atomic and molecular structure, chemical bonding, conservation of matter, moles, gases and their properties, acids and bases, solutions, thermochemistry, kinetics, equilibrium, stoichiometry, and oxidation-reduction. The course focuses on developing problem-solving skills from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Through weekly lab activities, students develop scientific practices such as asking questions, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, and communicating their findings through scientific writing. The ability to solve and discuss problems, both individually and in groups, is emphasized. Evaluations include projects, laboratory reports, tests, and quizzes.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10

Prerequisite: Biology, Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Biology 11: Standard and Advanced Study

In this 11th grade inquiry-based biology course, students engage in the process of science and build upon the foundation of physics and chemistry to make sense of how the natural world works. Course units are designed around real-world biological phenomena that explore the connections across topics such as ecology, genetics, cellular biology, anatomy, and evolution. Throughout each coherent unit, students are challenged to construct their own understanding of these biological phenomena and ideas by engaging in activities that involve figuring things out rather than simply learning about them (active learning rather than passive learning), student-driven questioning, collaborative problem-solving, higher-level critical thinking, and productive struggle. In order for students to build their understanding of biological ideas, this course places a strong emphasis on scientific practice proficiency (asking questions, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, computational and mathematical thinking, constructing and supporting explanations with evidence, communicating clearly) throughout each unit.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11

Prerequisites: Chemistry, Department Recommendation for Advanced Study

Chemistry: Advanced Study

This advanced chemistry course is designed to prepare students for the rigors of an introductory-level college science course. The course covers a wide range of topics often addressed in college-level general chemistry, which may include atomic structure, stoichiometry, chemical reaction types, gas laws, chemical bonding, molecular geometry, properties of solutions, nuclear chemistry, kinetics, equilibrium, thermodynamics, organic chemistry, and electrochemistry. Students in this course attain a depth of understanding of fundamentals and a reasonable competence in dealing with chemical problems. The course contributes to the development of the students' abilities to think clearly and to express their ideas orally and in writing with clarity and logic. After the completion of this course, students have the tools to explain and interpret chemical phenomena in the world around them.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Chemistry and Department Recommendation

Physics: Advanced Study

This advanced physics course explores topics in forces, energy, circular motion, gravitation and orbits, rotation, and electricity and magnetism, and applies them to understand phenomena such as special relativity, star formation, and atomic structure. These topics are explored experimentally using computer-based measurement probes that facilitate the collection of highly accurate data, allowing students to derive the basic laws of motion, energy conservation, circular motion, and electric circuits from their own data analysis. In addition, we explore such laws' broader application through the use of precalculus- and calculus-based mathematical models. In the course, students keep a laboratory notebook to record data from their experiments and construct conclusions based on evidence-driven arguments. Students are also asked to bring a spirit of independent learning to the course, where learning is rooted in conversation and argumentation around experimental data and subsequent problem-solving, rather than a lecture-driven classroom model.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Conceptual Physics, Precalculus, and Department Recommendation

Research in Science I: Advanced Study

Students in this project-based course have the opportunity to design and implement an original scientific study with a focus on biological research. During the first semester, inquiry-based instruction allows students to build the scientific skills necessary to prepare them for their research experiences. Through lab activities, students learn how to perform standard laboratory techniques and gain perspective on how and where various methodologies and technologies can be applied in the field of science. Simultaneously, students learn to read scientific articles and conduct literature reviews to gain the necessary expertise to formulate and communicate an original research proposal. During the second semester, students utilize the learned skills to implement their original study, collect data, analyze their results, write a research paper describing their study, and present their findings to the community at the Student STEM Symposium.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Biology: Advanced Study (can be taken concurrently) and Department Recommendation

Research in Science II: Advanced Study

This course is a continuation of Research in Science I: Advanced Study and is designed for students who wish to continue work on their previous research project or design a new project for individual lab-based study with a focus on biological research. Students in this advanced level course take on greater independence in their research process and develop their leadership skills by serving as mentors to their peers in the first-year research level. Students start the year by creating a new or refined, original research proposal, as well as developing and leading a laboratory lesson that teaches their peers important research skills and techniques. While they continue to make progress on their research and mentor their peers, students are also able to work on submitting their previous research to science competitions of their choice. Finally, students present their research at the Student STEM Symposium in the spring.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Research in Science I: Advanced Study and Department Recommendation

Engineering I: Advanced Study

Students in this project-based course design and undertake their own original integrative engineering project, focused re-design project, or conduct experimental research into a mechanical, electronic, or bioengineering problem. During the first semester, students learn fundamental skills for defining engineering problems, managing complex projects, applying systematic problem-solving, and reading scientific/engineering journal articles. Using these skills, students formulate an individual plan for completing their project and acquiring any new technical skills required through personalized coaching and hands-on activities. During the second semester, students use these skills to complete their project, deliver a functional prototype or experimental apparatus, and present their findings to the community at the Student STEM Symposium.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Integrated Math III and Department Recommendation

Engineering II: Advanced Study

This course is a continuation of Engineering I: Advanced Study and is designed for students who wish to refine and expand their previous research project or undertake an ambitious new project. This course requires a deeper level of technical research and engineering practice commensurate with the skills developed in Engineering I: Advanced Study. Students are required to present and showcase their projects at the Student STEM Symposium in the spring.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Engineering I: Advanced Study and Department Recommendation

Evolutionary Biology of the Female Body: Advanced Study

In this senior science course, students embark on an exploration of evolutionary biology, guided by Cat Bohannon's work, *Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution*. Throughout the course, students delve into the fascinating evolutionary journey of the female mammal, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the evolution, functionality, and distinctive features of the female body. Each unit is centered around the chapters of Bohannon's book, providing students the opportunity to critically engage with the science of the topics in the context of human evolution: Milk, Womb, Perception, Legs, Tools, Brain, Voice, Menopause, and Love. Emphasizing the importance of questioning preconceptions of human evolution and critically analyzing relevant scientific evidence, the course aims to foster a profound appreciation for the complexity of the female body and the pivotal role it played in shaping the success of our species.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Biology and Department Recommendation

Comparative Anatomy

This course takes a journey through the evolution of human anatomy and physiology. Students work through eight major systems of comparative anatomy. Each system will begin with an understanding of the human body and then dive into evolution through the vertebrate classes: cartilaginous fish, bony fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and non-human mammals. This course includes multiple organ and animal dissections as a means to learn body structure and function.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Chemistry and Biology

Sustainability

What does it mean to be “sustainable?” This course takes a closer look at this question in hopes to inform and guide students to live and act in ways that foster social, economic, and environmental well-being. The year starts off with a deep dive into systems thinking and how the environment is interconnected into everything humans do. With this understanding, students are able to take a more critical and informed look at local and national policies that affect the environment, how consumer habits affect the environment, and ultimately drive the change that’s needed in order to be a more sustainable society. Second semester focuses on systems that humans are inextricably linked to: cities, fashion, and food. Students are immersed in real-world problems and are assigned the task of creating sustainable solutions. Reading, intensive writing, experimentation, and design are highlighted throughout the year to provide a well-rounded understanding of what it means to live sustainably.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Chemistry and Biology

Science Electives

Engineering Arts: Introduction

In this course, students will explore the intersection of art, design, and engineering by developing skills and techniques used by contemporary artists and problem-solving engineers. Drawing inspiration from high-tech art and design, students will create kinetic and interactive sculptures that move and respond to viewers. Using the tools in our IDEALab, students will work with digital prototyping technologies to design virtual models, produce 3D prints, and create laser-cut miniatures and full-scale sculptures. The course begins with a series of smaller, hands-on expressive projects, gradually building toward larger, collaborative works. Through this process, students will gain experience in both creative expression and technical innovation.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Integrated Math I Accelerated or Department Recommendation

Computer Science

Computer Science 1 - Python & Artificial Intelligence

Do you want to program BuzzFeed quizzes, code a chatbot, analyze novels with code, or try out ethical hacking? Learn how to program in Python and explore different areas of computer science, such as web development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, data analysis, machine learning, and natural language processing. This course is ideal for students curious about computer science and its many applications in the modern world.

Elective Course (fulfills the Arts elective requirement)

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Art & Computer Science

Learn 21st century tools and timeless design principles to make beautiful, modern websites. Students will plan and design effective websites and code them with HTML and CSS. As the course progresses, they will enhance their sites with various page layout techniques, text formatting, graphics, images, multimedia, and interactive features with the programming language JavaScript. Students will learn to express themselves through the medium of code and explore how to have a social impact through coding and the internet. No coding experience required.

Elective Course (fulfills the Arts elective requirement)

Grade Level: 9 - 12

COMPUTER SCIENCE: ADVANCED STUDY

Advanced Study Computer Science courses are run alternate years. 2B Java Programming will be offered during the 2025-2026 school year and 2A iOS App Development will be offered during the 2026-2027 school year.

Computer Science 2A - iOS App Development: Advanced Study

Want to make the next Instagram or Snapchat? In this course, students get practical experience with the tools and techniques needed to build basic iOS apps while learning foundational computer science concepts. Students explore how apps affect our society, economy, and culture and build a solid foundation in programming fundamentals with the language Swift. They go through the process of designing an app, including brainstorming, planning, prototyping, and evaluating apps of their own. Students also learn user interface design principles, which are essential to programming and app development.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisites: Computer Science 1, Art & Computer Science, Data Science: Advanced Study, or Instructor Approval

Computer Science 2B - Java Programming: Advanced Study

Advance your computer science skills by learning to code in the Java programming language. Students use Java to create games with graphics, mobile apps for Android, and more. Along the way, students learn object-oriented programming, a style of coding used in college computer science classes and the tech industry, and get experience working in teams to build software projects. This course is ideal for students with some coding experience who want to prepare for college-level computer science courses.

Core or Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisites: Computer Science 1, Art & Computer Science, Data Science: Advanced Study, or

Instructor Approval

Please note that 2A iOS App Development will next be offered during the 2026-2027 school year.

World Languages

A Note about Standard and Accelerated courses

World Language teachers set a high bar and push all students to excel in Standard, Accelerated, and non-differentiated classes; however, the following expectations of students seeking an Accelerated path should be noted. In Accelerated courses, students will speak in the target language at all times and elaborate when possible, self-diagnose weaknesses in the four competency areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and actively work to remedy these. They will seek challenges and deeper understanding on projects, homework, and writing tasks, going above and beyond expectations, seek opportunities to use language outside of class (listen, speak, and read independently), bring outside resources back to class, and actively integrate skills and concepts from the current unit, previous unit, previous years, and outside study.

CHINESE

Chinese 2: Standard and Accelerated

Students in this course are challenged to move beyond the basics of the language and realize their potential for advanced expression in Mandarin Chinese. Students learn to interpret more complex words and discover additional resources to improve writing skills and reading comprehension. At the end of Chinese 2, students are able to communicate about a variety of topics including shopping, weather, navigation, and personal interests. Authentic cultural texts and project-based assessments complement the curriculum.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Chinese 1 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Chinese 3: Standard and Accelerated

This class is designed to give students the tools necessary to function in an integrated Mandarin language environment with an increased focus on listening and speaking. Students continue to deepen their understanding of character writing and the cultural aspects of Chinese-speaking communities through greater exposure to complex vocabulary and grammar. Students practice conversation and cultural etiquette and explore authentic cultural materials while being introduced to the fundamentals of Chinese essay composition and reading comprehension. Students construct essays and other written work (dialogue, short plays, etc.), allowing them to demonstrate their skills in both written and spoken communication.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Chinese 2 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Chinese 4: Standard and Accelerated

This class focuses on developing overall Chinese proficiency through continued training in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Grammar review and vocabulary building are emphasized with a focus on community engagement, social events, festivals, films, media and technology. With a variety of print and visual media, including daily Chinese publications, students are exposed to various aspects of Chinese history, culture, and society. Several different literary genres are also introduced and oral presentations in the target language are assigned on a regular basis.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Chinese 3 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Chinese Language and Culture: Advanced Study

Mediated exclusively through authentic resources destined for native Chinese speakers, this course covers the equivalent of a third-year college course in Advanced Chinese. It proposes a thematic approach related to global competencies and focused on social and environmental justice. Through various texts and media, students engage with and celebrate the diverse voices and unique contributions that Chinese speakers bring to global challenges. Learning tasks invite students to “act upon” the world in Chinese and to engage native speakers around issues studied. This includes participating in interviews and events in Los Angeles, interacting with people in Chinese communities, blogging and posting on social media in Chinese, conducting virtual interviews with people in Chinese-speaking countries and the diaspora, virtually participating in symposia and other events abroad and presenting at Archer’s World Language Advanced Study Symposium.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Chinese 4 and Department Recommendation

FRENCH

French 1

French 1 students build the skills to communicate in various real-life situations and achieve the European Common Framework of Reference for language’s (ECFR) A1 proficiency level. By the end of the course, students are able to convey detailed personal information regarding physical and personality descriptions, daily routines, likes and dislikes, family, home, sports, shopping, and vacations. Students can also effectively ask and answer questions, engage in conversations, and perform prepared presentations. Students contextualize language by writing situational dialogues and by reading advertisements, articles, and other realia. The class explores French and Francophone cultures through festivals, skits, mixed media, role-plays, and storytelling.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

French 2: Standard and Accelerated

Students in this course are challenged to move beyond the basics of the language and realize their potential for greater expression in French. The class introduces students to grammar and vocabulary required at the intermediate (A2 level of the ECFR) level of study. Specifically, students gain skills to fluidly operate between past, present, and future tenses. They also become able to manipulate object pronouns, relative pronouns, and markers of time/chronology. Thematically, they work to understand and express themselves around questions related to the environment, spending and consumption, hobbies and pastimes, careers and fields of study, travel, and the arts.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: French 1 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

French 3: Standard and Accelerated

At this level, students continue to improve their oral and written skills and deepen their knowledge of the French and Francophone cultures. Great emphasis is placed on building reading skills and expanding vocabulary by introducing a variety of linguistically appropriate pieces. In addition, the class focuses on developing longer, more complex conversational exchanges in French at the A2/B1 level of the ECFR. Throughout the course, students are given the opportunity to significantly expand their grammatical knowledge, particularly in the areas of past, future, and hypothetical narration. Authentic cultural texts (readings, music, film) and project-based assessments complement the curriculum.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: French 2 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

French 4: Standard and Accelerated

In the first semester, this course, organized around “France, Yesterday and Today,” explores historical events and texts while relating them to monuments and vestiges that can be visited in contemporary France. In the second semester, contemporary questions related to identity and belonging, science and technology, and aesthetics are studied. Students also complete a comprehensive review of grammatical structures studied to this point, notably focusing on all verb tenses and moods. Authentic written, audio, and video texts anchor each unit of study, and students are called upon to integrate the core competencies of listening, reading, speaking, and writing at the B1 level of the ECFR.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: French 3 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Senior Seminar - French Language and Culture Through Cinema

This one-year survey course allows students to enhance oral and written skills in French while increasing their familiarity with Francophone cultures through their manifestation in cinema. Grammar and vocabulary exercises are combined with oral discussion of cultural topics. Through writing compositions, creative writing, or research-based projects, students explore representative aspects of a selection of cultural products. Certain songs and literary short stories from the French-speaking world are reviewed in coordination with the films. Students are able to connect the material in this course with other disciplines of their interest, like English, arts, and history. The course is conducted entirely in French.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: French 4

French Language and Culture: Advanced Study

Mediated exclusively through authentic resources destined for native French speakers, this course covers the equivalent of a third-year college course in Advanced French and operates at the B2/C1 level of the ECFR. It proposes a thematic approach related to global competencies and focused on social and environmental justice in the Francophone world. Through various texts and media, students engage with and celebrate the diverse voices and unique contributions that French speakers bring to global challenges. Learning tasks invite students to “act upon” the world in French and to engage native speakers around issues studied. This includes participating in interviews and events in Los Angeles, writing letters to the editor in foreign and/or non-English publications, blogging and posting on social media in French, conducting virtual interviews with people in French-speaking countries, and virtually participating in symposia and other events abroad. As a final summative task, students deliver a TED-Talk style oral presentation at Archer’s World Language Advanced Study Symposium on a social or environmental topic they have researched. Students enrolled in this course are expected to participate entirely in French.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: French 4 and Department Recommendation

SPANISH

Spanish 1

Spanish 1 students build the skills to communicate in various real-life situations. By the end of the course, students are able to convey detailed personal information regarding physical and personality descriptions, likes and dislikes, family, home, sports, food, and vacations. Students can also effectively ask and answer questions, engage in conversations, and perform prepared presentations. Students contextualize language by writing situational dialogues and by reading advertisements, articles, and other realia. The class explores Spanish and Latin American cultures through festivals, skits, mixed media, role-plays, and storytelling.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Spanish 2: Standard and Accelerated

Students in this course are challenged to move beyond the basics of the language and realize their potential for greater expression in Spanish. Their written and oral skills are significantly boosted. After a thorough review of basic language tools, the class introduces students to grammar required for the intermediate level of study, including reflexive verbs, object pronouns, and the preterite and imperfect tenses. The class places a major focus on travel. Thematic units include air travel, a trip by train, and a stay at a hotel. Authentic materials, novellas, and project-based assessments complement the curriculum.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Spanish 1 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Spanish 3: Standard and Accelerated

Students in this course continue to expand their grammatical knowledge of the language while improving their oral and written skills through regular practice. The introduction of the subjunctive mood, commands, and the present perfect tense into students' grammatical toolkit enables them to handle increasingly challenging assignments. Emphasis is placed on students' reading skills and expanding their vocabulary by introducing a variety of linguistically appropriate pieces, including excerpts of novellas. In addition, the class focuses on developing longer, more complex conversational exchanges in Spanish. Authentic cultural texts (readings, music, film) and project-based assessments complement the curriculum.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Spanish 2 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Spanish 4: Standard and Accelerated

Students continue to use Spanish in a variety of situations with ever-increasing linguistic accuracy. A thorough review of essential tenses and moods as well as the introduction of advanced grammatical structures ensures that students are competent and confident while expressing themselves at an advanced level orally and in writing. Students move beyond speaking about themselves and their own experiences to discussing a wide variety of cultural, socio-political, and environmental themes. Through exploration and research into select indigenous and afro-latino groups, students develop insights into their own language and culture as they make comparisons with and within Spanish-speaking people and their cultures. Students continue to develop sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic heritage of other groups as they understand the influence of these groups on American culture and prepare themselves to participate in a society characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity. Other topics include organization and time, consumption and its effect on the environment, publicity, history, traditions, and exemplary women.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Spanish 3 and Department Recommendation for Accelerated

Senior Seminar - Spanish Language and Culture Through Cinema

This one-year survey course allows students to enhance oral and written skills in Spanish while increasing their familiarity with Hispanic cultures through their manifestation in cinema. Grammar and vocabulary exercises are combined with oral discussion of cultural topics. Through writing compositions, creative writing, or research-based projects, students explore representative aspects of a selection of cultural products. Certain songs and literary short stories from the Spanish-speaking world are reviewed in coordination with the films. Students are able to connect the material in this course with other disciplines of their interest like English, arts, and history. The course is conducted in Spanish.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Spanish 4

Spanish Language and Culture: Advanced Study

Mediated exclusively through authentic resources destined for native Spanish speakers, this course covers the equivalent of a third-year college course in Advanced Spanish. It proposes a thematic approach related to global competencies and focused on social and environmental justice. Through various texts and media, students engage with and celebrate the diverse voices and unique contributions that Spanish speakers bring to global challenges. Learning tasks invite students to “act upon” the world in Spanish and to engage native speakers around issues studied. This includes participating in interviews and events in Los Angeles, writing letters to the editor in foreign and/or non-English publications, blogging and posting on social media in Spanish, conducting virtual interviews with people in Spanish-speaking countries, and virtually participating in symposia and other events abroad. As a final summative task, students deliver a TED-Talk style oral presentation at Archer’s World Language Advanced Study Symposium on a social or environmental topic they have researched. Students enrolled in this course are expected to participate entirely in Spanish.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Spanish 4 and Department Recommendation

Language Immersion Intensives

Language Immersion Intensives: Chinese, French, and Spanish

This program is designed for students from native speaking families of the language or students who have participated in immersion programs. Regular meetings are held in the target language and include conversations and direct instruction on discrete topics, both grammatical and thematic. Topics include identity, traditions, cultural events, influential people, human rights, and diversity. Authentic materials, such as published articles, videos and data, are included in the program. There is a focus on the review of grammatical errors common to heritage speakers or students who have participated in immersion programs. Examples of assignments include interviewing native speakers in their communities, listening and reading comprehension, writing practice, and conversations with native speakers. Students must complete a minimum number of independent assignments in addition to attending regular meetings in order for completion of the Language Immersion Intensive to be noted on their transcript.

Grade Level: 9-12

Prerequisite: Heritage Speaker or Immersion Program

Arts

PERFORMING ARTS

Dance

Dance Performance Company I

Dance Company I is designed for the dedicated dancer who is interested in continuing to develop performance and choreography skills in different dance styles. Faculty and visiting guest artists teach technique classes in ballet, contemporary, hip hop, and jazz as well as create repertoire for the company. In-class journal writing, videos, and dance articles are components for developing creative and critical-thinking skills for exploring dance aesthetics, history, criticism, and production. Students are expected to perform in various dance presentations and the annual Night of Dance.

Fitness Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Department Approval or Audition

Dance Performance Company II

Dance Company II is designed for advanced dancers who are serious, motivated, and committed to developing technical, performance, and choreography skills. Faculty and guest choreographers create repertoire for the company. In-class journal writing, videos, and dance articles are components for developing creative and critical-thinking skills for exploring dance aesthetics, history, criticism, and production. Students are expected to perform in various dance presentations and the annual Night of Dance.

Fitness Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Department Approval or Audition

Dance Performance Company III

Dance Company III is the third and most advanced level of dance before Advanced Study. Students continue to hone their technical skills and creative spirit. Faculty and guest choreographers create a broad and responsive repertoire for students to perform. In-class journal writing, videos, and dance articles are components for developing creative and critical-thinking skills for exploring dance aesthetics, history, criticism, and production. Students are expected to perform in various dance presentations and the annual Night of Dance.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Department Approval or Audition

Dance: Advanced Study

Dance: Advanced Study prepares students for professional dance company and career applications. Students are assessed on mastery of advanced technical ability, performance, and choreography skills. Faculty, guests, and student choreographers create repertoire for the company. In-class journal writing, videos, and dance articles are components for developing creative and critical-thinking skills for exploring dance aesthetics, history, criticism, and production. Students are expected to perform in various dance presentations and the annual Night of Dance.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Department Approval or Audition

Music

Music Made Visceral

Music Made Visceral is an arts elective course that examines the role music plays in our lives beyond the concert stage. In this class, students explore how music impacts beliefs, experiences, outcomes, and ideals. From the subtle to the overt, this course addresses the multitude of ways that music is used to highlight, emphasize, transform, promote, heal, hypnotize, and more. Class content draws on a wide array of materials including historical documents, repertoire, scientific and medical research, music technology, festivals, celebrations, concerts, and film scores. This is a music appreciation course and does not require any musical skills or abilities.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Music Technology: Engineering, Design, & Production

In this hands-on Music Technology class, students will explore the fascinating world of sound through both scientific and creative lenses. This course includes study in sound engineering, sound design, and music production. Students will engage in experiments to capture, measure, and analyze sound, and explore the relationships between sound waves, pitch, volume, and the human ear. As students gain technical understanding, they will apply those skills to sound design and music production—experimenting with loops, multi-track recording, and mixing, while developing an understanding of the historical impact of audio technology from analog to digital. Through collaborative projects, students will also delve into music industry topics, including the evolution of digital music, the iPod's role in changing the music scene, and the ethical issues surrounding music piracy, streaming, and artificial intelligence. By the end of the course, students will be able to create their own soundscapes and songs, archive their work, and share their projects with peers.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Songwriting: Introduction

Songwriting: Introduction provides students the opportunity to develop their skills as a musician and their unique musical style. Students study song structure, chord progressions, and melodic and harmonic writing while working both independently and collaboratively to produce original compositions. This course is designed for students who want to expand their musical language and skillset beyond their ensembles; student musicians from both choir and orchestra are encouraged to enroll.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Corequisite: Choir, Orchestra, or Department Approval

Songwriting: Advanced

Songwriting: Advanced provides students the opportunity to further develop their compositional skills and repertoire by writing arrangements for ensembles on campus, as well as original, individual, and group compositions for organized performances. This is largely a student-driven performance course that focuses on the artistic areas of composition while building on foundations of theory, writing, and technology skills. A multitude of live performances showcasing students' original works and collaborations are required throughout the year.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Songwriting: Introduction or Department Approval

Upper School Rock Band

The Upper School Rock Band offers students the opportunity to engage in a dynamic, collaborative performing ensemble. Musicians of all skill levels are encouraged to participate, with the option to perform lead and background vocals, explore new instruments (guitar, bass, drums, keyboards), and refine their proficiency on an existing instrument. Students will also have the opportunity to suggest repertoire for the band to perform at a minimum of one school-sanctioned concert per semester. In the spirit of the AC/DC anthem, "It's a long way to the top if you wanna rock 'n' roll," students can embark on their musical journey and develop their stage presence through participation in this program.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Rock Band 7, Rock Band 8, Audition, or Department Approval

Upper School Strings

Upper School Strings is an opportunity for dedicated musicians to pursue their passion beyond the co-curricular orchestra rehearsals. The course is designed to give students a solid foundation in orchestral excerpts, scales, thirds, and music theory. Proper playing technique, as well as ear training, are a constant focus. Students expand their repertoire and their performance skills, honing in on their orchestral playing. In addition, students develop analytical listening skills and are encouraged to explore their own musical interpretation of the music they are learning.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Prerequisite: Audition or Department Approval

Theatre Arts

Theatre Arts: Introduction to Theatre

Theatre Arts: Introduction to Theatre is a hands-on course where students learn to take risks, investigate many aspects of the theatre, and gain confidence in performing. Students explore scene technique, monologue performance, playwriting, and devising original work. Students also learn theatrical makeup techniques with professional guest artists. Ensemble building is at the heart of this course as performers learn improv comedy skills through theatre games.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Theatre Arts: Intermediate - Acting Technique

In Theatre Arts: Intermediate, students explore a variety of acting methods, text analysis, and audition techniques. Contemporary theatre, Shakespeare, and classical theatre are examined through scene and monologue work. Students collaborate, focusing on the relationship between acting, playwriting, and directing. Students gain confidence and poise in their performing and develop the leadership skills needed to direct and create their own work.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Theatre Arts: Introduction or Department Approval

Theatre Arts: Advanced - Archer Theatre Company

Advanced Theatre is a student-led production company, commonly known as The Drama Queens. Using knowledge gathered in the Theatre Arts: Introduction and Intermediate courses and school productions, students produce and curate a season of productions and performances. During the first semester, students perform in a series of showcases for the Archer community. Second semester concentrates on rehearsals for a spring production.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Theatre Arts: Intermediate, Application, or Department Approval

Theatre: Advanced Study

Theatre: Advanced Study allows students the opportunity to pursue advanced work in the performing arts. In addition to serving as the leadership team for the Archer Theatre Company, students focus on all aspects of producing, promotion, and artistic direction. Students develop independent performance projects that demonstrate a deep understanding of theatrical storytelling. This Advanced Study course emphasizes the development, creation, and presentation of original work.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Theatre Arts: Advanced and Application or Department Approval

VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTS

Ceramics

Ceramics: Introduction

Ceramics: Introduction invites students to the art of clay. The class includes throwing on the wheel, hand-building, and sculptural projects. Students master the basic cylinder form on the wheel and use their skills to create cups, vases, bowls, and other functional forms. Sculptural projects are pursued with hand-building techniques such as slabs and modeling. High fire clay and glazes allow the students to learn a variety of surface decoration and glazing techniques. Students learn to create personally expressive pieces and are encouraged to develop visual narratives both in the forms and surfaces of their projects.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Ceramics: Intermediate

Ceramics: Intermediate builds on the throwing, hand-building, and glazing skills introduced during Ceramics: Introduction. Students learn advanced and compound forms, such as lidded jars and teapot sets, on the potter's wheel. Working with stoneware clay and high fire glazes, students experiment with surface decoration and explore glazes in more depth, testing and using their own glaze combinations. Using a variety of hand-building techniques and wheel thrown forms, students explore sculpture.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Ceramics: Introduction

Ceramics: Advanced

Advanced students continue their exploration of clay through both the potter's wheel and sculptural projects. Students are encouraged to pursue independent projects, applying their knowledge of materials and tools. Students are expected to develop their own design and glazing applications based on personal research. Studio maintenance, time management, and self/group critique are essential elements to the success of each individual student in this course.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Ceramics: Intermediate

Ceramics: Advanced Study

In Ceramics: Advanced Study, students focus on developing independent projects that demonstrate a deeper application of the techniques and design skills learned in previous ceramics courses. This course emphasizes the creation of a more refined, thoughtful, and comprehensive portfolio. Key components of success include studio maintenance, effective time management, and participation in both self and group critiques, all of which are integral to the growth and progress of each student.

Elective Course

Grade Levels: 12

Prerequisite: Ceramics: Advanced or Department Approval

Design

Art of Design

Art of Design is a year-long, comprehensive course that covers a wide range of design disciplines, including object design, model making, architectural design, fashion design, and furniture fabrication. This immersive course combines theoretical concepts with hands-on techniques, allowing students to create both digital 3D designs and tangible objects. Students will explore contemporary trends in furniture design, develop logos and graphics for various products, and learn techniques for crafting wearable jewelry and sculptures. The course also introduces essential elements of fashion design, such as pattern making and sketching, offering a well-rounded foundation in the diverse and dynamic world of design.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Filmmaking & Screenwriting

Filmmaking: Introduction - The Moving Image

In this course, students develop the essential skills to bring their creative visions to life on screens both big and small. Using industry-standard methods in pre-production, production, and post-production, they generate and produce original film projects. Students explore core filmmaking concepts such as shot composition, camera angles, depth of field, lighting techniques, editing principles like cutting on action and cross-cutting, and the integration of multiple soundtracks. Through hands-on projects, they create personal, reflective films as well as works in genres like suspense, comedy, horror, and nonfiction. Additionally, students gain a foundational understanding of film history and theory, analyzing key sequences and examining the impact of the Auteur Theory.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Filmmaking: Intermediate - Cinematic Storytelling

Filmmaking: Intermediate offers students the opportunity to further express the creative cinematic voice they began to explore in Filmmaking: Introduction. Students draw from a range of more complex resources, including a deeper awareness and understanding of film history and theory, a nuanced conception of the three-act structure, and an understanding of the “hero’s journey” established in myth. Students write in the industry’s standard screenplay format. Technical skills acquired include staging scenes according to the 180-degree rule, lens selection to vary focal length and aperture range, rack focus, and adjustment of frame rate and shutter angle. Students practice post-production techniques including match cuts, color grading, music editing, and sound mixing.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Filmmaking, Photography, Graphic Design, or Studio Art: Introduction

Filmmaking: Advanced - The Auteur

Filmmaking: Advanced encourages students to nurture their personal vision and create a body of work unified by unique content, style, and form. Students delve deeply into screenwriting technique, innovative shot composition, advanced scene staging using multiple 180-degree lines, and dialogue editing techniques such as J-cuts and L-cuts. The film history and theory component encompasses key realist, formalist, and classicist film movements, modernist/postmodernist and contemporary approaches to film analysis and criticism, and the use of film as socially conscious activism. Students apply these theoretical frameworks to their own filmmaking projects, creating work that embodies their distinct creative preferences and priorities.

Elective Course

Grade Levels: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Filmmaking: Intermediate or Department Approval

Filmmaking: Advanced Study

Filmmaking: Advanced Study is the fourth and highest level filmmaking course. Students develop a portfolio of accomplished film work as they bring their original ideas to life on the screen. Students continue to hone screenwriting, staging, shooting, and editing techniques as they engage in a self-directed program of personal cinematic expression. This course is dedicated to helping advanced filmmakers realize their big ideas and gives students the freedom to take their own projects to the next level.

Elective Course

Grade Levels: 12

Prerequisite: Filmmaking: Advanced or Department Approval

Screenwriting

Screenwriting provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the screenplay as an art form. Students explore foundational elements of storytelling, including character development, dialogue, structure, conflict, and theme, through the analysis of screenplays and film clips. The course also introduces students to the business of screenwriting—covering topics such as breaking into the industry, indie vs. studio filmmaking, fellowships, and contests—incorporating guest speakers from the field. By the end of the year, students complete a full-length screenplay and gain insight into how to navigate the professional screenwriting landscape.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Photography

Photography: Introduction

Photography: Introduction introduces students to both analog (film) and digital photography, providing a foundation in the technical and creative aspects of the medium. Students learn to operate both 35mm film SLR and DSLR cameras, developing an understanding of exposure settings, f-stops, shutter speeds, depth of field, and basic studio lighting. In the film portion of the course, students explore film development, processing, and black-and-white printing in the wet darkroom. The digital component covers proper file management, scanning, retouching techniques, and editing using Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. Through a series of hands-on projects, students study the work of historic and contemporary photographers while honing their own artistic voice. Class critiques play a central role, helping students analyze and refine their work. By the end of the course, students will have gained both technical proficiency and a deeper appreciation for photography as a form of artistic expression.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Photography: Intermediate

Through the investigation of both historical and contemporary photographers, Photography: Intermediate students find their creative voice through the communication of their visual ideas. Within this class, students further explore 35mm SLR and DSLR cameras, refining their skills and learning about photography as a fine art. Within the film portion of the class, both traditional and alternative processes are covered, such as toning, solarization, polaroid transfers, and more. The digital portion of the class deepens skills in proper file management of images, scanning, masking, and various other tools within Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. Students learn a more advanced approach to studio lighting, working to further their ideas within specific projects.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Photography: Introduction or Department Approval

Photography: Advanced

In Photography: Advanced, students deepen and refine their creative process. In addition to furthering their 35mm knowledge, students learn medium format photography and have an introduction to large format photography. This class explores both traditional and alternative means of the darkroom as well as advanced skills in Adobe Photoshop. Students are encouraged to take risks and experiment within their work while also exploring various methods for exhibition display and presentation. Students study a multitude of practices employed by contemporary photographers and incorporate these into projects completed in class. Students have to think outside the box for this course, pushing the limit of what photography is capable of.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Photography: Intermediate or Department Approval

Photography: Advanced Study

Photography: Advanced Study is an intensive course in two-dimensional design that challenges students to refine their technical skills and artistic vision while developing a strong photography portfolio. Through sustained inquiry in art and design, students explore materials, processes, and ideas, working in both film (darkroom) and digital photography to expand their creative techniques and conceptual approaches. Students engage in independent, self-directed projects that push their artistic boundaries, with an emphasis on personal voice and experimentation. Seniors have the opportunity to curate and exhibit a senior show in the spring, showcasing their work in a professional setting. Designed for serious photography students, this course demands significant time outside of class for shooting, editing, and developing projects. Students are expected to work independently and demonstrate a high level of commitment to their artistic practice.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Photography: Advanced or Department Approval

Studio Art

Studio Art: Introduction

In this course, students will work in a multitude of mediums including drawing, painting, collage, and various forms of sculpture. In the fall semester, students focus on building their foundational skills through drawing and painting. During the spring semester, these skills inform three-dimensional projects as students work with a range of sculptural techniques and ideas. Students utilize a range of materials, including plaster, found objects, fibers, wire, and paper-mache, among others. The class studies both historically important works and movements as well as contemporary work and trends. Students will investigate their subjectivity through artmaking, creating personal projects that speak to the self and the world around them.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Studio Art: Intermediate

Studio Art: Intermediate challenges serious art students to refine their perceptual skills and achieve excellence in image- and form-making. Through focused study in drawing, painting, and both two- and three-dimensional design, students work toward technical mastery while exploring new materials and developing a personal artistic style. The sketchbook serves as a vital tool for process work, creative exploration, and idea development. Students engage with the work of contemporary and historical artists, using their insights to inform and inspire their own artistic growth. This course encourages experimentation, critical thinking, and a commitment to developing a distinct visual voice.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Studio Art: Introduction or Department Approval

Studio Art: Advanced

Studio Art: Advanced is a high-level studio art course that provides students the opportunity to create a robust portfolio rooted in personal voice, quality, growth, and process. Drawing from a strong understanding of one's individual vision, advanced students apply design concepts, knowledge of art history, and material use to develop works in drawing, painting, two-dimensional design, sculpture, video, and more. Students in this course join the Advanced Study students as a single cohort and learning community, providing valuable dialogue, critique, and exchange. Course members may also use the class to support the creation of an art portfolio for college applications, and seniors have the opportunity to form a senior show.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Studio Art: Intermediate or Department Approval

Studio Art: Advanced Study

Studio Art: Advanced Study is a capstone studio art course that allows students to join an advanced cohort for serious art practice. Through studio creation, mastery of design concepts, critique skills, writing, and presentation, Advanced Study students assemble a body of artwork that demonstrates a high level of quality, depth, and personal voice. Course members may also use the class to support the creation of an art portfolio for college application, and seniors will have the opportunity to form a senior show.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 12

Prerequisite: Studio Art: Advanced or Department Approval

Yearbook Journalism

Yearbook Journalism: Introduction

Curious, creative, and dedicated students who are or would like to be intimately involved in their school community are perfect fits for this full-year elective. Staff members take and edit photographs, write text, conduct interviews, and design page layouts to document student life in the annual yearbook. Two publishing programs (InDesign and Photoshop) are used to create the book and Google Docs are utilized to track pages, assignments, and tribute contributions. Students will work both individually and as a team to meet deadlines and make sure that as much of the school culture as possible is depicted in the final product. Students are challenged at their own level; as a result, those who have mastered basic skills have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and increase their writing, design work, and editing.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Yearbook Journalism: Intermediate

Students who have completed the introductory yearbook course and developed their skills to advance to the next level tackle more complex graphic design and photojournalism work and become more independent yearbook staffers. Students will work both individually and as a team to meet deadlines and make sure that as much of the school culture as possible is depicted in the final product. The course encompasses all aspects of producing the yearbook, and the majority of course activities revolve around design, layout, reporting, editing, photography, social media management, and collaborating with other yearbook staffers and editors. This course can be repeated.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 10 - 12

Prerequisite: Yearbook Journalism: Introduction

Yearbook Journalism: Advanced

Students who have completed the introductory and intermediate yearbook courses and developed their skills to advance to the next level tackle more complex graphic design and photojournalism work. Although students are not yet editors, they act as peer leaders and coaches, taking on leadership responsibilities. The course encompasses all aspects of producing the yearbook, and the majority of course activities revolve around design, layout, reporting, editing, photography, social media management, and collaborating with other yearbook staffers and editors.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Yearbook Journalism: Intermediate

Yearbook Journalism: Advanced Study

This full-year elective, by application only, is for committed, experienced yearbook members who have taken on major leadership roles. The primary focuses of this course are implementing the yearbook's theme, creating the book's "ladder," scheduling photo shoots and interviews, as well as directing and honing other members' input. Working closely with other editors and the faculty advisor, the course requires editors to mentor new students, teaching them page design, manipulation of digital images, use of color and fonts, layouts, writing and creating, and selling the ever-important tributes section of the book. The course requires some after-school meetings and attendance at a summer retreat. Advanced Study students will also have summer work and prepare a personal portfolio of their design and journalism work from the year as a summative assessment. This course can be repeated.

Elective Course

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Prerequisite: Yearbook Journalism: Intermediate and Instructor Approval

Fitness & Wellness

Fitness 9 & Fitness 10

The Upper School Fitness and Wellness curriculum challenges students to pursue their personal fitness goals through physical activities and sports experiences. The emphasis in the Upper School program is to move students toward personal fitness for lifelong health and wellness. Students participate in the following units during their Upper School fitness experience: Health-Related Physical Fitness, Sports & Games, and Self-Defense

Health-Related Physical Fitness

Students utilize the Archer Training Center and are introduced to the basics of strength training and conditioning. Students learn proper form and technique for resistance training and weight-lifting, as well as how to use cardio machines, such as treadmills, rowers, and bikes. The skeletal and muscular systems are discussed as they relate to movement and exercise in both weight training and cardiovascular activities. In this unit, students also spend part of their time participating in general sports games as well as yoga and kickboxing.

Sports & Games

In this unit, students spend the majority of their class time outside playing traditional and non-traditional games such as flag football, Ultimate Frisbee, basketball, soccer, floor hockey, golf, softball, and volleyball. This unit focuses on developing sports-specific skills and a positive attitude around lifelong fitness and physical activity. During this section, students also spend a portion of each class focusing on improving cardiovascular and muscular strength.

Self-Defense

Students in the 10th grade fitness class complete a unit of self-defense taught by IMPACT Personal Safety instructors. The emphasis is placed on how to defend, not how to fight. The unit begins with students learning about potentially unsafe situations and how to identify and avoid them. Safety skills using observation, intuition, and communication are the initial focus. Only after learning these safety skills are students taught multiple ways to protect themselves from physical harm.

A Note about Fitness Exemptions

Students may be exempt from Fitness & Wellness class during their season of play on a Junior Varsity or Varsity athletic team. Students may also receive fitness credit by participating in the Upper School Dance classes (see the Dance section for course descriptions).

Human Development

Human Development 9

9th grade is a year of transition, emerging autonomy, and understanding of self. Students face challenges academically, socially, physically, and emotionally. Students acquire skills to help manage and reduce stress by learning and practicing various mindfulness techniques. Drug education is also a major focus, which helps girls further understand the issues surrounding legal and illegal drugs, their effects on the body, and how to make informed decisions. Human sexuality and sex education are addressed in the context of personal hygiene, sexually transmitted infections, different forms of birth control, consent, and intimacy. Discussions focus on emotional intimacy, gender identity, body image, healthy and unhealthy relationships, and informed decision making.

Core Course

Grade Level: 9

Human Development 10

10th grade is a year of increased autonomy and responsibility. This class uses Council as the primary method to explore topics like conflict resolution, change and stressful situations, friendship and love, sexuality, and body image. Students participate in a sexual assault awareness workshop as well as a drug education seminar as it relates to strategies of care for self and for others. The conflict resolution portion of the course is covered over several classes in the first semester and includes training in mediation, origins of conflict and peace, and peer presentation styles. Learning includes understanding conflict as a transformative process and how to support individuality in a community of differences.

Core Course

Grade Level: 10

Human Development 11

11th grade is a year where many new life skills are put to the test. The theme of the fall semester is control, which includes work around managing anxiety and stress, as well as mindfulness and navigating healthy relationships. Other topics include drug education, dealing with peer pressure, and financial literacy. As self-reflection is key to effective college research and planning, the class uses interactive exercises to learn and process information about the upcoming college process. Topics include research tools for the college process, developing a personalized standardized testing plan, presenting oneself in the application, and writing an authentic college essay. Topics of time and energy management, clear communication, and self-care are covered.

Core Course

Grade Level: 11

Human Development 12

12th grade marks the transition from high school to college, increased independence, rites of passage, and the culmination of a student's education at Archer. In the fall, students will have workshop time in order to complete college applications and stay on track with the process. As the year continues, students reflect back on the community in which they have evolved and grown over the past four or more years. They revisit topics of human sexuality, healthy relationships, and taking care of themselves physically and psychologically as they move into college culture. Topics include campus safety, roommates, stress management, money management, dating/party safety, and dealing with transitions. Saying goodbye is an important rite of passage in the transition from high school to college.

Core Course

Grade Level: 12

One Schoolhouse

Archer partners with One Schoolhouse (OSH), a consortium of outstanding schools that have joined together to offer exemplary online courses. OSH offers small classes that allow their students an opportunity to connect and collaborate to solve problems creatively. The partnership with OSH gives Archer students access to an expansive curriculum, exposure to blended learning, and the chance to connect with students from around the country.

Outdoor Education

Archer's Outdoor Education & Leadership Development program supports the School's mission by offering opportunities for students to embrace possibility, seek challenges, and take healthy risks. The essential components of the program are Fall Outing and the Arrow Week Outdoor Leadership Expeditions.

Arrow Week

Arrow Week is an outdoor experience that promotes self-discovery and personal growth for students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade. Arrow Week is mandatory and appears on a student's transcript. Courses serve to enhance the curriculum by providing students with opportunities to learn valuable skills outside of the classroom. Through participation in outdoor education trips, students will:

- Learn how to assume leadership in cooperative group settings
- Discover personal strengths and overcome challenges
- Deepen their awareness for sustainability through experiential learning of the natural environment
- Enhance their ability to reflect and grow as critical thinkers
- Transfer knowledge and skills from the backcountry to their lives at home and in the classroom

Service Learning

The mission of Archer's Service Learning program is to inspire students to find their passion and purpose as citizens of the world. Beginning in 9th grade, students actively engage in researching and defining their roles as agents of social change in their history curriculum. At the end of this year, students create their own mission statement and plan of action to guide them throughout their Upper School experience. Archer continues to provide opportunities for students to perform community service through school-wide projects and after-school activities. Students are encouraged to explore the meaning of their service experiences during group discussions in mentorship and class meetings. Overall, the program empowers students to enact social change within their local and global communities.

- 9th Grade: Guided exploration and creation of service goals/mission
- 10th Grade: Continued documentation/evaluation of created service goals/mission
 - Possibility for Bronze Recognition through completion of Online Portfolio
- 11th Grade: Continued work on service project
 - Possibility for Bronze Recognition through completion of Online Portfolio or Silver Recognition through participation in Service Symposium
- 12th Grade: Continuation and completion of service project
 - Possibility for Bronze Recognition through completion of Online Service Portfolio; Silver Recognition through participation in Service Symposium; or Gold Recognition through Service Capstone Leadership Project