



## Upper School Elective Courses

*Elective courses at the Upper School are semester-based courses given a half (.5) credit that are designed by Rising Tide faculty members from each of the six departments. Elective courses either introduce students to, or allow students to explore in greater depth, topics, fields, or skills in a cohesive manner. Students choose 1-2 elective courses per semester, per year. Below are descriptions of elective courses offered for at least one semester since 2022.*

### **Abstract Painting**

In this painting studio course, students explore the history of abstract painting as they develop their own conceptual and technical approach to non-representational painting, e.g., paintings that are not concerned with showing identifiable objects. Students learn about trends in abstraction from the 1950s to the present and use these movements as inspiration to develop an intentional abstract-painting “language.” This is a rigorous painting course and some familiarity with painting is recommended, but not required. Students are expected to write about the personal connections they form with their work and in response to required readings and documentaries, and they also give a fifteen-minute presentation on an abstract painter.

### **Audition Skills Technique and Readiness**

This course provides students with an in-depth exploration of the essential elements necessary for successful auditioning. Students have the opportunity to acquire and hone their skills in preparedness for a variety of audition formats and platforms, including acting, singing, and dancing, both live and for the camera. Throughout the course, students work on creating their performer portfolios, headshots, resumes, and audition-ready videos, which are crucial to securing roles in the entertainment industry. In addition to this, students explore audition safety and boundaries, which are essential aspects of the industry, while also learning how to present, interview, and interact effectively with potential employers. This skill-based course requires students to be self-directed and learn to evaluate from both sides of the audition and interview process. Through their work, students develop a thorough understanding of what it takes to be a successful performer in the entertainment industry and have the opportunity to learn from industry professionals who provide them with valuable insights and tips to help them achieve success.

### **American Sign Language and Deaf Culture**

During this course, students learn the basics of American Sign Language (ASL), one of the most expressive languages. ASL is not simply signed English; it is a whole language with its own structural grammar and culture. Students learn how to ask questions, give commands, and form simple sentences and also acquire important context from Deaf culture and the Deaf community. Students learn through visual-gestural communication techniques, visual discrimination, and visual memory exercises with no voices such that by the end of the course, students are able to hold conversations and perform presentations entirely in ASL.

## **Art History**

From Michaelangelo to Monet, Picasso to Pollock, humans have been making art for as long as they have been around. In this class, students explore the various reasons why humans have turned to art over the course of history to express themselves, convey their ideas, and enact change. Throughout three main units, Power, Faith, and Justice, students learn and utilize frameworks to understand and question art on their own. Students learn how to describe art using *ekphrasis* as well as how to construct and defend their own arguments about the meaning and purpose of works of art, culminating in a research paper focused around a work of their choosing. In class dialogues, students consider questions about what art can tell viewers about its makers and its patrons, how art can be a tool used for equity and social and political movements, and how people can use art as a primary source when looking back at history. Ultimately, students learn to appreciate art for all it can offer: its beauty, its influence, and its unmatched power to move others.

## **Astronomy**

The Astronomy course is designed for the student who is curious about the universe. To begin, students look at “classical” astronomy and describe and organize what is visible in the night sky. They then explore what is currently known about the universe, starting here on Earth and progressing outward to the solar system, the galaxy, and then to deep space, ending with some discussion about what is known today about the universe as a whole. Students are also introduced to some of the theoretical, mathematical, and experimental methods used to explore the universe. They investigate astronomical phenomena through presentations, reading, discussion, and activities. Students make observations, analyze data, conduct research, and problem solve. In addition, each student is expected to explore a topic of their choice in-depth and complete an individual research project by the end of the semester.

## **Bioethics**

This course is centered on the book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. In the book, Skloot recounts the story of Henrietta Lacks, a poor African American farmer in the American South whose cells, taken without her knowledge, were the first human cells grown in a lab and kept alive outside of the human body. This is a story of medical breakthroughs, experimentation on African Americans, and the introduction of bioethics to society. As they read the book, students are introduced to bioethics and learn how to recognize an ethical question, as well as justify their position on an ethical question. Students also examine the history of human research, the current rules and regulations of human research, and the bioethical principles that guide scientists who conduct human research. Students use what they learn to analyze Lacks’ story and form their own justifications on ethical questions presented in the text. Students are expected to come prepared to class each day, by doing the assigned reading so that they can contribute to the class. This course is discussion-driven, so active participation is mandatory.

## **Broadcast Journalism**

In this course, students work in production teams alongside the Print Journalism class to research, script, present, edit, and distribute news stories from four genres of journalism across four media platforms: on-camera, podcasting/audio, print, social media. Topics covered in this class include sports journalism, local news, interviewing/profiles, and political communication. Students have weekly tasks to complete that contribute to their group’s bi-weekly news project.

### **Broadway Dance**

In this movement-based class, dancers learn and perform choreography using the style and techniques of dance used for Broadway productions. They study advanced Jazz and Musical Theater choreography developed by renowned Broadway choreographers. Students also practice using dance to tell stories: they learn about presence and expression through disciplined practice and study while exploring ways to convey meaning, intent, and interpretation of a narrative.

### **Careers in Sports - Statistics, Communications, and Technology**

Sports are an essential part of human society. Over time, people who take part in sports and those who observe sports have experienced the many changes that connect with modern-day society. This course reinforces how students view the individual sports they are passionate about. Moreover, it brings attention to the history of sports in which students are interested. Students are expected to engage themselves in areas of interest and be willing to research many of the events over the year that have enabled their sport of interest to evolve. Students build their communication skills through reflection and writing. They also examine the mathematical component of sports by looking at different statistics and how they are computed. Students link this mathematical exploration to the software that is available in the sports marketplace, and they learn about the technology that has evolved over the years in this field.

### **Blue Heron Band (Chamber Ensemble)**

Students in this small ensemble find joy in making music together as they learn and perform several pieces in various styles and genres, including some composed by other students. Through this process, students explore rehearsal etiquette, productive practice techniques when playing individually, and effective ensemble strategies when rehearsing as a group. Pieces performed in the past have included *Star Wars Cantina Band* and *Rasputin*. The course culminates with a performance of the pieces students have learned.

*Prerequisite: Prior experience on an instrument (intermediate level) and audition.*

### **Ballroom Dance**

In this course, students learn modern ballroom dance, focusing on the technique and basic figures of a variety of ballroom dance styles, such as swing, foxtrot, waltz, rumba, cha-cha, and tango. The class also studies the history of partner dance and the music associated with it. In addition, students learn partnering skills, dance etiquette, and floorcraft, i.e. how to lead and follow and how to navigate a ballroom. Students are expected to switch partners often and to dance with everyone in the class.

### **The Business of Writing**

This class is for any student interested in making creative writing a part of their future career. Students start by learning how to write a story that sells, either in novel or short story format. From the idea to the outline to the editing process, students study how to create a final product that is ready for the shelves. The course has students delve into a review of the publishing world, receiving a tutorial of how they would pursue publication of their work. Looking at both working with agents and editors, as well as learning about the various opportunities of self publishing their work, students consider what might be the best path for them to take on their future writing journey. As a published fiction author, the instructor guides students through every step of the process and provides creative feedback from the perspective of a potential publisher. At the end of the course, students create sample work as well as documents they would be able to send to publishers to pitch their ideas.

### **Circuit Projects**

Students in Circuit Projects develop their understanding of electricity and learn how to apply that knowledge to the construction of DC circuits through hands-on work, theory, and problem solving. Students examine topics such as electricity safety, resistance, capacitance, battery design, circuit design, power, and series and parallel circuits. They also learn to build and program circuits using a microcontroller board and common circuit components including a variety of sensors and actuators. Each student has a kit of basic parts from which to work. The course culminates in individual design projects requiring students to build microcontroller projects of their own choosing using the concepts they have learned in class.

### **Commercial Dance**

Students in this course study dance as it is used in the commercial world, including concerts, live shows, videos, movies, industrials, and commercials. Utilizing online resources, students learn dances from various commercial dance choreographers who are currently working in the field. In this way, students learn a multitude of styles and examine how dance is used to excite and energize an audience by bringing the music to life in a visual way. Additionally, students learn about how this type of movement is filmed. The class culminates with a final project in which students film and present their own Public Service Announcements using their distinctive brand of movement and messaging.

### **Comparative Religion**

Why do we exist? What happens when we die? How are we to behave toward others? Can we transcend the limits of our humanity? For thousands of years, humans have turned to religion to help answer these fundamental questions. In this course, students examine and compare the way that the world's five largest religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - attempt to answer these and other questions. As students learn each religion's philosophies, they also develop an understanding of what these religions *do* for people: how they form the bases for communities, how communities perform rituals, what those rituals mean, and more. Students in this course also trace the historical development of these faiths and break down stereotypes that surround them. In order to better understand these religions, students read myths and philosophy, examine art and poetry, and compare sacred texts with cinematic interpretations. Students develop their research, debate, presentation, and reading skills through the work they complete in this course.

### **Concert Dance**

This is a research and performance-based class analyzing the elements of Concert Dance. Students focus on studying the relationship of dance to music and how they can utilize dance to illuminate the texture, nuance, shapes, and emotion of a musical score. Bridging their research and interpretation of the music to dance, students also develop choreography and staging specific to their chosen music. Dancers develop, design, and hone their own creations that culminate in a final performance. Through their work, students develop skills in realization of self-expression, deep analysis of their subjects, staking a claim, and following through with their unique vision in a way that creates community through a shared experience.

### **Current Events**

What is happening in the world today? How does the media shape our perception and understanding of events? This class works on answering these questions by practicing the lost art of reading what is in the news. Students create a purposeful space to learn about, read, and discuss current events that are happening today. Topics depend on the news as it

happens, but could include political events, climate disasters, wars overseas, medical breakthroughs, or scientific achievements. Students spend time discussing, debating, and learning how to break down and analyze large news stories in order to best understand how and why these events matter. While they read, watch, and listen to a variety of different news sources, students also explore larger topics such as the media system, the practices of journalism, different forms of news media, the influence of money in news creation, the impact of bias and perspective, and the rise of "fake news." Students develop their media literacy and are expected to engage with these topics through active daily discussion, as well as debates, group projects, visual mapping, podcasting, presentations, and short opinion and response essays.

### **Deutschland**

In this course, students explore the history, arts, culture, and language of the German-speaking world, with a particular emphasis on Germany. Through music, visual arts, film, and children's literature, students gain a rudimentary knowledge of the German language and its variations, and they also learn about the accomplishments of German-speaking artists and scientists. Students track the history of Germany, from its early mythological times through its various kingdoms and empires over the centuries to its formation as a modern nation. The course pays particular attention to the twentieth century and how the arts were affected by the country's descent into barbarism, its traumatic bifurcation, and its dramatic reunification into the nation it is today.

### **Dystopian Literature**

In this course, students read sections of all four books in *The Hunger Games Series*. Students close read, analyze, and expand on the social concepts and literary features present in this series that represent the qualities of dystopian literature as a whole. Students apply their Investigator Skills while engaging with this series and with the social issues of the generation that the series represents. They end the course by demonstrating their understanding of dystopian literature and modern societal issues by writing their own, well-researched piece. Through their work, students learn to research, analyze, infer, and create dystopian literature while examining the societal pressures that help to create and characterize this genre.

### **East Asian Thought and History**

This course uses the philosophical traditions of East Asia as a lens through which to explore Chinese, Japanese, and Korean history. Students begin with an introduction to Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian thought using primary texts drawn from the great teachers of those traditions, including Zhuangzi and Confucius. Students then look at the Ming era of China, with its origins in mystic philosophy, literary and cultural accomplishments, and unique approach to exploration. Students also study the Korean adaptation of Confucianism under Sejong the Great and encounter feudal Japan through James Clavell's fictional *Shogun*. Students end the class by evaluating China in the wake of sustained contact with Europe and by exploring how its philosophical traditions changed or endured through the turmoil that followed.

### **Educational Psychology: How People Learn**

How do people learn? How do psychology, education, education policy, and teaching for social justice relate to one another? In this course, students study theories of child development, motivation, and education to discover what makes people learn, both inside and outside of a classroom. Students study famous psychological theories and apply theories of child development to education, policy, and social justice. Through this course, students are able

to design educational tools, understand foundational principles of psychology, and critically analyze the public school system.

### **The Evolution of Feminism Through Fashion**

How is fashion employed to progress cultural movements? Is employing fashion as history an effective way to study not only fads but the ever-evolving feminist movement? Can trends of the past be used to predict the future? Throughout history, fashion has been used to tell a story and send a message. Students in this course study how fashion trends, fads, and failures often reflect the world and the people within it. They use fashion as a tool to understand the inner workings of society, trends, culture, and feminism. Through an analysis of fashion and feminism, students find answers to their questions and use them to advance their view of feminism past, present, and future.

### **Fantasy Literature**

Students in Fantasy Literature read and analyze works of fantasy literature, exploring major themes and literary devices and applying concepts common to fantasy like world-building and characterization. The course culminates with students creating their own miniature fantasy worlds and writing thematically appropriate short stories. Texts explored in this course may include J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*; C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; Patrick Rothfuss's *The Name of the Wind*; Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*; and George R.R. Martin's "Song of Ice and Fire" series.

### **Feminism in Literature**

In this course, students track and compare feminist voices in literature by following central themes and issues throughout history. Through examining gender in religion, sexuality, and societal roles, students learn to apply analytical skills to diverse schemas and conduct discussions and explorations into different forms of female written literature. Students work to form their own literary canon while exploring various genres of literature.

### **Film Studies**

Everyone loves movies, but not everyone knows exactly what makes them so compelling to watch, so effective at delivering a message, and, ultimately, so fun. While sampling many of the most important genres of film and eras of film-making, students use class discussion and writing to explore narrative storytelling, mise en scene, cinematography, editing, sound, documentaries, animation, and other aspects of film. Students connect the content of the course topics such as the ubiquity of visual media and how ads have evolved to camouflage themselves in the modern world, how film can serve as a manifesto to introduce a particular viewpoint or idea to an audience, and how visual storytelling differs from the textual and the opportunities it allots. This course equips students with the necessary skills to talk about movies like an expert—to analyze them, break them down, and, hopefully, love them even more.

### **Food Studies**

In this course, students explore how food plays an essential role in different societies, cultures, and institutions throughout history and the world. Using food as their guide, students study the cultural, social, and economic interconnectedness of the world by diving into the components of national identity, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, culture, and more. Units of study include the origins of food and food history, global food identity, food culture, and food in pop culture and media.

### **Game Design**

Venture into the intersection of computer science and the arts and discover how logic can help create interactive worlds in which to immerse an audience! In this course, students learn the basics of programming using the Javascript programming language while exploring what makes games fun. Coursework consists of coding labs, reading, writing, and discussion about the art of creating games, as well as group projects that require students to work in small teams to design and create their own original games. Topics of study include state, abstraction, animation, and experimental design.

### **Gender & Media Studies**

This course explores the ways in which American media, including television, film, music, news, and social media, portrays and constructs gendered social norms. Using feminist theory as a framework, students analyze representations of femininity and masculinity (as well as their intersections with race and class) in popular culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Students explore gendered archetypes and stereotypes in visual media, from early film noir, to 1950 sitcoms, to contemporary superhero films. They analyze how gender affects representation in news media and consider how contemporary social media can both subvert and affirm stereotypes of identity. Students complete response papers, take part in Socratic Seminars, and craft an analytical essay on gender in a piece of media of their choice.

### **Gothic Literature**

Haunted houses, vengeful ghosts, dark cemeteries, and “things that go bump in the night” are all aspects of Gothic literature. This course explores in-depth Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* alongside excerpts from other Gothic novels, short stories, and poetry. As students compare the major and supplementary texts, find and read contemporary Gothic literature, and watch excerpts of Gothic films, they determine the major characteristics of the genre and analyze the genre’s development over time. Students also learn the characteristics of major literary movements happening directly before, during, and after the Victorian Gothic movement. By the end of the course, students are able to differentiate Gothic texts from their contemporaries and ultimately use the primary elements of Gothicism to create their own horrific short stories.

### **History of Film**

In this course, students explore the history of film starting with the first moving pictures from the United States, Europe, and Asia. They learn about influential directors, films, the creation of Hollywood, the film studio system, and the rise of independent films and the film industry’s evolution into what it is today. Through their work, students develop their skills in receptive and expressive communication and develop a critical awareness of how and why the film industry has evolved in the way that it has.

### **Human Physiology & Disease**

How do systems of the human body interact with other living systems? In this course, students examine this question as they investigate the function of the human body as it relates to various diseases. The course includes a brief survey of cell biology and microbiology, but it mainly focuses on the use of medical case studies to decipher the complex interactions within human organ systems, such as the circulatory and respiratory systems, the urinary and reproductive systems, and the digestive system. Diseases and conditions discussed are based on student interest and may include topics such as hypertension, amoebic meningitis, asthma, pneumonia, HIV/AIDS, and syphilis. Students in this course develop their skills in reading and interpreting scientific literature and making observations and inferences. This course is

tailored toward motivated students with an interest in biology; it is rigorous and includes self-directed components.

### **India After Independence**

This course traces the history of postcolonial India from 1948 to present. India is the world's largest democracy and is the most successful example of a postcolonial state maintaining democratic procedures and institutions without a lengthy turn to authoritarian rule. However, in recent years, India's secular and democratic character has been threatened by rising communal tensions and religious nationalism. This course examines the complex factors at play in the past 75 years which have contributed to the tensions inherent in Indian democracy. Students take an in-depth look at the tremendous diversity of Indian languages, traditions, religions, and food. Throughout the course, they also hone their research and presentation, evidence-based argumentation, and primary source analysis skills.

### **International Relations**

Students in this course study the field of international relations, focusing on how nations cooperate, compromise, and manage conflict. Students explore the different theoretical approaches of international relations and use these approaches to analyze issues such as international trade, peacekeeping, war, and global environmental concerns. Students investigate historical and present-day case studies to understand better the roles and responsibilities of individual nations and international organizations in a global society. Case studies may involve nuclear proliferation, global terrorism, economic sanctions, and environmental treaties. To conclude the course, students conduct an original case study of an area, issue, or conflict. Through that work, they research the historical, social, and economic context, apply different theoretical approaches, and make foreign policy recommendations based on evidence.

### **Intro to Python Programming**

In this course, students learn the fundamentals of programming using Python, a language designed to help people communicate their ideas simply. This course is for all students, including those who are curious about coding but may feel intimidated by the prospect of learning a programming language. Students learn the basics of how humans can communicate with computers by organizing thoughts into variables and instructions, and students then expand that knowledge by learning how conditional logic and iteration can express more complex ideas. Whether students are interested in exploring the tech industry, making applications to help the community, or just curious about a new way of thinking, this course welcomes all learners into the wide world of programming.

### **Jane Austen in Popular Culture**

How did character archetypes prevalent in popular culture (the mean girl, the misfit, the rebel, the brooding hero, the charming villain, and the pair who hate each other... but end up falling for each other) come to be? Jane Austen, the satirical 19th century author of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Northanger Abbey*, helped create these archetypes, and her work has been influencing popular media ever since. In this course, students explore Austen's works, examine what she has to say about gender, class, romance, family, and friendship, and analyze her characters' continuing impact on contemporary media. As they read novels, view adaptations, and complete creative and analytical writing projects, students discover why Jane Austen's plots and characters remain an influential part of the popular imagination.



### **Knitting and The Science “Behind It”**

In this course, students develop a lifelong skill while learning biology and contributing to a good cause. Students learn how to knit hats, scarves, and blankets and can acquire several different stitches depending upon the level of knitter. Students make hats for premature babies and for patients receiving cancer treatment. The course also allows students to knit hats in partnership with organizations, such as one in Arizona that provides hats for Native American children who suffer from chronic ear infections. As they work to knit for a cause, students also learn the science behind what they are knitting for: why premature babies need to be kept warm, what exactly the human body goes through while receiving chemotherapy and radiation, the causes of illnesses such as ear infections, and what happens to the body’s circulation as people age. Students also learn about, and experience, how knitting has been proven to help calm the body and the mind. Students of all skill levels are welcome and encouraged to take this course, including those with no prior knitting experience.

### **Literary Magazine: Reading, Writing, and Publishing**

In this course, students survey a wide variety of prose and creative writing styles in order to ultimately write, edit, and publish their own literary magazine. Students read and write in a variety of styles, including but not limited to flash fiction, poetry, travel writing, creative nonfiction, film and literary critiques, journalism, and food writing. Students work together as a writing and publishing team to publish a literary magazine at the end of the semester. They also study the book publishing process and gain insight into what it takes to publish their own works.

### **Marine Biology**

The Oceans cover approximately 70% of the Earth’s surface and may provide as much as 50% of the atmosphere’s oxygen. These underexplored environments have a wide range of organisms that range from plankton to whales. In Marine Biology, students use laboratory exercises, readings from scientific literature, their own research, and direct instruction to explore the biology of marine organisms, their evolution, and how they interact with their environment. Lessons use local examples to study the major groups of marine organisms and their habitats.

### **Mars**

In this course, students focus on the planet Mars, looking at its characteristics, environmental factors, and the open questions that scientists hope to answer with further exploration. They participate in hands-on activities investigating various aspects of planning a Mars mission, such as getting to Mars and landing, living and working on the surface, and communicating with Earth. Students identify the key technology required for such a mission and use resources including Andy Weir’s novel *The Martian* to frame discussion about the challenges of planetary exploration. They also use their background knowledge in science and math to solve problems such as the ones encountered in the novel. Over the course of the semester, students collaborate to design their own mission to Mars.

### **Meteorology**

In this course, students learn about weather phenomena from clouds to tornadoes, and they also learn about weather forecasting. Using the tools of the trade, and having the opportunity to create their own, students learn to measure atmospheric conditions and predict upcoming weather patterns. As they acquire this knowledge, they also practice being professional meteorologists and weather forecasters and gain some insight into what a career in meteorology might look like.

### **Music in Sci-Fi Film**

Students in this course explore how music is used as part of an overall dramatic medium in science-fiction film and television. After experiencing some pre-cinematic works of science-fiction music-theater, students explore music in silent films, sound films from the 1930s through the 2000s, and television series from the 1960s to the present day. Students engage with various styles of music, such as symphonic, electronic, soundscape, and rock/pop, and they examine how music affects the emotional and theatrical aspects of filmed entertainment. Shows and films examined include *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Dr. Who*, *King Kong*, *Godzilla*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Metropolis*.

### **Musical Theater Dance**

In this movement-based course, dancers learn and perform choreography using the style and techniques of dance used for Musical Theater productions. They study advanced Jazz and Musical Theater choreography developed by renowned Broadway choreographers. Students practice using dance to tell stories: they learn about presence and expression through disciplined practice and study while exploring ways to convey meaning, intent, and interpretation of a narrative. This course culminates in a performance within the school community.

### **Musical Theater in Society**

This course investigates one of the world's most beloved and enduring forms of storytelling, Musical Theater. In addition to analyzing the thematic elements of significant musical productions, students investigate the historical context of these works to uncover how Musical Theater reflects and influences the society that surrounds it. The course culminates with an independent project in which students use their historical knowledge, as well as their analysis and research skills, to create or adapt a short musical exploring the theme of their choice. Musicals explored may include *Wicked*, *Next to Normal*, *Annie*, *Grease*, *Showboat*, *Chicago*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Please note that this course is not performance-based.

### **Neuropsychology**

Neuropsychology applies physical science to psychology and seeks to understand specifically how the brain actually causes behaviors, emotions, personality, learning, and consciousness - rather than just theorizing. Students in this course learn about why people think and do the things they do based on interactions in the brain. In this science course, students plan and carry out their own experiments, analyze their data with computational thinking, construct explanations from evidence, and communicate their findings.

### **Personal Finance**

The Personal Finance course focuses on preparing students from all math backgrounds to properly manage their funds now and in the future. Students develop core skills of creating budgets, using checking and savings accounts, managing debt and credit, developing long-term financial plans, and making responsible choices about income and expenses. Throughout this course, students analyze their personal and financial goals and decisions, creating action plans and developing self-awareness. Focal points include analyzing the costs incurred from the college process, understanding loans, and exploring students' current spending habits with a direct focus on the concepts of saving and future planning.

### **Playmaking**

In this course, students learn how to create, produce, and perform a one-act play as a group using various means and methods. Students explore their ideas through acting, improvisation,

and group brainstorming discussions. Students are given various prompts to which they must respond and develop those responses into a plot for a one-act play. They develop blocking and staging skills for their scenes and plays, and they are responsible for taking all of the group's ideas and synthesizing them into a version of a scene. After weeks of exploration and decision making, the class workshops scenes to refine the play's message and add technical aspects to bring the piece to life. At the end of the course, students in this course perform their original works for an audience.

### **Print Journalism**

Students in this course work in production teams alongside the Broadcast Journalism class to research, script, present, edit, and distribute news stories from four genres of journalism across four media platforms: on-camera, podcasting/audio, print, social media. Topics covered in this class include sports journalism, local news, interviewing/profiles, and political communication. Students have weekly tasks to complete that contribute to their group's bi-weekly news project.

### **Political Communication**

In the dynamic landscape of modern politics, effective communication plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, influencing voter behavior, and driving policy agendas. The Political Communication course offers an immersive exploration into the intricate world of persuasive discourse and messaging strategies employed in political speeches, advertisements, and various forms of public communication. Through a blend of theoretical insights and practical case studies, students unravel the art of dissecting and critiquing rhetorical techniques, narrative constructions, and visual symbolism utilized by political players. By closely examining historical and contemporary examples, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics inherent in political discourse. Guided by these insights, students apply their knowledge to craft compelling and resonant communications for their own fictitious political campaigns, honing their ability to connect with diverse audiences and convey a coherent and impactful message. This course empowers students to navigate the complex interplay of language, media, and persuasion that underpins the realm of political communication.

### **Portfolio Workshop**

Each student in this course works independently to generate a portfolio of artwork that best demonstrates their own conceptual and technical understandings. Considerable time is spent in and out of class producing technically sophisticated studio projects. With guidance from the teacher, students choose the materials with which to work and develop a strong conceptual thread throughout their portfolios. Students are expected to concisely formulate and communicate the content of their portfolios during one-on-one conversations with the teacher, to the class of their peers during group critiques, and through multiple drafts of a written artist statement. This course is ideal for students who want to explore further how and why they make art. Students should be prepared to think and write extensively about the work they make in the class.

### **Probability in Games**

Students in Probability in Games learn and practice the mathematical foundations of probability by modeling discrete events in popular games of chance such as Yahtzee, Dungeons and Dragons, and blackjack. Students develop their understanding of independent events, conditional probability, and combinatorics. They also receive exposure to advanced applications of probability, such as bet optimization strategies.

## **Public Speaking**

In this course, students develop skills that enable them to feel more comfortable and confident with speaking in public. Students learn by listening to great speakers of the past and present, and by applying the rhetorical devices that they hear to their own practice. Through individual and collaborative assignments, students learn to persuade, inform, and inspire a variety of people in a variety of settings, whether in a debate, a presentation, a speech, an interview, a board meeting, or a performance.

## **Robotics**

Students in this course explore the process of creating an independent robot capable of complex behavior. This is a hands-on, project-based course that emphasizes the scientific method and the engineering process, from ideation to sharing the final product. Students learn basic programming, logic, engineering, and design skills using the VEX Robotics system and RobotC. Students work in a team environment and thoroughly utilize their collaborative skills throughout the course. Additionally, students explore ethical issues of robotics and artificial intelligence as part of the design process.

## **Science Fiction**

While watching dystopian science fiction like *Children of Men* and space westerns like “The Mandalorian,” reading works by authors of color from the Afrofuturism and Silk Punk genres, considering how science fiction is used in video games, and even listening to The Flaming Lips’ album *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, students consider how science fiction operates in different mediums and genres. They also explore what science fiction can tell an audience about their own world by exploring imagined worlds. Students think about and discuss how science fiction can be used to portray one’s culture, promote social change, and consider broader ideas about consciousness and human nature, ultimately building a better and deeper appreciation and understanding of science fiction.

## **The Science of Food**

In this course, students explore the idea that “you are what you eat.” Students learn what chemicals go into the human body through different types of food and explore topics such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs), how and why the food pyramid has changed over the years, and the relationship between big food and big pharma. Through their work, students explore their questions while honing their research and discussion skills.

## **The Science of Sound**

Students in this course learn about the acoustics of instruments as well as vocals. Studying the science behind how instruments work and various singing techniques, students work on various projects, research assignments, and classroom performances at the end of each unit. The class then spends a unit studying the psychology of music, including the influence of music on emotions, memory, and the impacts of musical therapy. At the end of this course, students have a better understanding of how the physics of sound impacts the creation of music and how hearing it affects human lives.

## **Slavery & The Civil War**

This course is an in-depth examination of the greatest crisis of American history. Students learn about the origins and character of American slavery and ask how and why it developed as it did. The course traces the rise of American anti-slavery and how it came to challenge the South’s defining institution. Finally, students study the war itself, and just what the “new

birth of freedom” meant in its aftermath. Students should expect to engage in serious discussion of race and politicized morality.

### **Intro to Sociology**

Students in Intro to Sociology gain an understanding of social behavior and social institutions. Throughout this course, students not only learn about key sociological theories, groundbreaking social experiments, and influential theorists (from Karl Marx to Kimberlé Crenshaw), but also learn to apply the sociological perspective to the world around them. They discover and discuss how race, class, gender, sexuality, and other social identifiers impact their lives and the lives of those around them. Students examine the ways that society (social institutions, laws, ideologies, and popular media) shapes how they think about these aspects of their identities. Students also investigate the power of culture, how people learn and conform to culture, and why deviance from cultural norms occurs. Through discussions, debates, media analyses, and research projects, students develop their sociological imagination by questioning common stereotypes and debunking persistent socio-cultural myths.

### **Still Life Painting**

In this painting studio course, students explore the history and techniques of still life painting, which is a distinct genre of art production that strives to capture the beauty and variety of natural or man-made objects. The goal for each painter in the course is to represent or imitate the natural world through painting. This is a strictly observational course, so all projects are completed by looking at and painting three-dimensional objects. An ability to draw accurately from direct observation is invaluable to each student’s success in the course, but is not required. The course explores foundational-drawing skills, color theory, and painting techniques and strategies.

### **Theater: Full-Length Production**

What does it take to rehearse, produce, and perform a full-length play? In this course, students spend a semester exploring this question. The course begins with students reading a full-length play together. Then, the roles in the play are cast through auditions. During this process, students learn basic auditioning and cold-reading skills. Each student then also becomes a part of a technical team that works on all of the backstage elements of the production. Students gain an understanding of different roles in theater, both on- and off-stage, while working on those elements. Students build upon acting skills they learned in the Theater Foundation course as they work to bring the full-length text and characters to life on stage. Students spend the remainder of the course rehearsing and preparing the play for a public performance at the end of the semester.

### **Theater for Social Change**

Ever since its inception in, Theater has been used as a tool to provoke dialogue amongst audience members around social issues affecting the community. In this course, students look at how a lack of investment in education funding contributes to the system of mass incarceration in the United States and analyze how playwrights like Dominique Morisseau and Anna Deavere Smith use the medium of Theater to develop opinions and inspire action. In the second half of the semester, students each choose a social issue they are interested in discovering more about. They conduct research on that topic and create a presentation including information on that issue’s history, modern-day effects, and varying perspectives on solutions. The course will culminate in students creating a 10-minute play that examines that topic and seeks to spark conversation on addressing the issue.

### **The Tudors**

Students in this course sort truth and myth surrounding the infamously scandalous Tudor dynasty, which ruled England, Wales, and Ireland from 1485-1603. The political chaos of the Tudor age - coupled with a cultural renaissance, the Age of Exploration, and the dawn of European capitalism - make it a period whose legacy is still debated in both academic circles and popular culture. Students act as historians in this course. By breaking down historical biases, analyzing primary and secondary sources, and even putting one infamous ruler on trial, students come to a better understanding of some of history's most colorful figures. Students assess the impact and try to piece together accurate histories of historical actors such as King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Queen Mary Stuart. Students in this course develop their skills in analysis of primary and secondary sources, designing and delivering engaging presentations, debating, and writing persuasively.

### **US History Through Natural Landmarks**

In this course, students embark on a captivating journey through America's cherished landscapes. Students learn about some of the history, ecology, and cultures of the United States through the lens of the National Park System. Through extensive research, multimedia resources, and interactive lectures, students explore well known iconic parks as well as lesser-known gems across the country including National Seashores, National Historic Sites, and National Battlefields. Students gain an appreciation for the natural wonders preserved in the United States' national parks, and a thorough understanding of the environmental and historical issues at play.

### **Visual Art: Portfolio Workshop**

Each student in this course works independently to generate a portfolio of work that best demonstrates their own conceptual and technical understandings. Considerable time is spent exploring what a portfolio looks like for each individual student. With guidance from the teacher, students choose the materials with which to work and develop a strong conceptual thread throughout their portfolio. Students are expected to concisely formulate and communicate their content during one-on-one conversations with the teacher, to the class of their peers during group critiques, and through multiple drafts of a written artist statement.

### **World of Fashion Design**

Students in World of Fashion Design study what a fashion designer does and learn the history of fashion design. Students examine the work of various designers and complete projects on a favorite fashion designer as they explore Bohemian, grunge, chic, and other fashion categories. They learn about different types of fabrics and determine which type to use for the look they are trying to create and learn the various elements of a pattern and garment. The course culminates with students synthesizing their learning in order to create their own original pieces.