

MARET | UPPER SCHOOL CURRICULUM HUMANITIES

Humanities

Requirements: 7 credits

Chair: *Nicholas Michalopoulos*

The Humanities Department offers courses that explore the human condition in a variety of forms, including literature, history, art, psychology, economics, philosophy, religion, and film. Its course offerings reflect the richness of human experience and expression. At the same time, the courses demonstrate the interconnectedness of the humanities, in ways that may include interdisciplinary courses, interdepartmental courses, independent study, and varying methods and content within individual courses. The department strives to broaden and deepen each student's understanding of the universality of ideas, themes, and images, while emphasizing the uniqueness of particular works and events.

The Humanities Department offers courses that meet the needs of students with varied abilities, backgrounds, and interests. The courses have four clear goals: careful reading; crisp, clear writing; critical thinking; and articulate speaking. With these goals always in mind, students seek first to improve reading comprehension, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis. Second, students are encouraged to develop clear, persuasive, accurate, and imaginative ways of writing. Third, students engage in critical thinking, through close analysis, rigorous questioning, and lively debate. Finally, students practice public speaking through discussion, debate, speeches, and oral presentations. The department strongly emphasizes class discussion to encourage respectful dialogue and advocates creative approaches to analysis, writing and problem-solving.

Seven Humanities credits are required for graduation. Most students accrue eight and some even nine credits. Of these, English 9: Elements of Literature, History 9: Shaping of the Modern World, English 10, and U.S. History are required for every student. In addition to

these four required courses, students must take at least three electives: one elective that encompasses history/social studies, one that encompasses literature, and a third elective of their choice. In all courses, students are expected to write, frequently and at length, in the form of journals, short essays (1–2 pages), and longer analytic or interpretive essays (5–10 pages). All history electives and English 10 require at least one substantial research paper.

Analysis and imaginative response to literature and history are our highest priority. Students have individual conferences with advisors before building their schedules to ensure that courses are appropriate to students' interests and needs.

REQUIRED COURSES

English 9: Elements of Literature

Students study texts and genres composed from the Renaissance through the twentieth century, both to enjoy the works for their own richness and to gain an understanding of the elements of literature that animate great works. Through studying classical and contemporary texts by writers such as Shakespeare and Hurston, students learn to identify and appreciate elements such as setting, characterization, theme, symbolism, and the elements of style. Through close reading, analytical and creative writing, and lively class discussions, students demonstrate their growing understanding of the elements of literature and hone their own reading, writing, and speaking skills. Students refine their critical reading abilities by learning to value—and to analyze closely—textual patterns and writers' decisions about language. The course gives special attention to the development of students' writing, focusing on the development of a clear organizational structure, the effective use of evidence in analytical writing, and powerful stylistic choices. Additionally, students are encouraged to develop the interpersonal skills necessary for effective communication in the classroom. The course aims

to help students become conscious of their roles in informal discussions and debates and to work towards an inclusive environment.

Texts:

Fugard, *My Children, My Africa*
 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
 Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*
 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*
 Shaw, *Pygmalion*
 Sijie, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*
 Spiegelman, *Maus*
 Selected short stories, poems, and speeches

Summer Reading:

Marchetta, *Jellicoe Road*

History 9: Shaping of the Modern World

This survey, running from the 1400s to today, examines how the world gradually became modern. Using a global perspective, the course shows how different societies both changed internally and interacted with each other. Students analyze those developments and learn more broadly how different societies and eras propelled, adapted, and continually reshaped what it has meant to be modern. The course covers political, intellectual, social, and cultural aspects to global history. Shaping of the Modern World course also includes a major service learning component focused on hunger, poverty, and wealth. Students study these issues on both local and international levels while participating in a variety of service activities. Students study the problem of hunger and related issues on both local and international levels while participating in a variety of service activities. The curriculum addresses how wealth, poverty, and hunger have changed over the past 500 years, even though they have been continuously present in the world. Throughout the year, students use the course content to hone essential academic skills—active reading, critical thinking, historical and comparative analysis, effective research, strong oral presentation, and clear, well-organized writing. The course requires both independent and collaborative work on projects throughout the year, several of which incorporate technology-related skills.

Text:

Strayer, *The Ways of the World*, vol. 2

Summer Reading:

Kamkwamba, *The Boy who Harnessed the Wind*

English 10

The last required English course for students before the humanities elective program, English 10 offers an introduction to American literature. The course exposes students to a diverse range of American voices by including a mix of works long considered classics, contemporary texts, and older works that have only recently earned appreciation. During the year, students examine not only the literary techniques and themes that have shaped America's literary tradition, but also the values and ideas that have determined how that tradition has been defined over the years. Students also deepen their skills in analytical reading and work on ways to structure and support arguments of greater complexity in their writing. Students develop fluidity in their writing and polish their ability to effectively use vocabulary and grammar by writing frequent essays, both short (1-2 typewritten pages) and longer (5-7 typewritten pages). Students also write a longer research paper, in which they place a work in historical context while learning note-taking, bibliography, and revision skills. The course meets four times a week.

Texts:

Dickinson, Selected poetry
 Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*
 Selected turn-of-the century short stories by women
 Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
 Hawthorne, Short Stories
 Poe, Short Stories
 Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*
 Walker, *The Color Purple*
 Yang, *American Born Chinese*

Summer Reading:

Alexie, *Reservation Blues*

United States History

This course surveys American history from colonial times to the present, providing students with a conceptual understanding of the issues, events, and personalities that have shaped American history. Students explore the tension between individual freedom and majority rule in the American experience; analyze the causes and consequences of major events and developments; and explore multiple perspectives on how history is constructed and what it means. When possible, the course identifies parallels between past and current events and examines how historical

events and developments have shaped the present day. Students are encouraged to draw their own conclusions about American history while challenging their own biases and preconceptions.

The class uses a basic text but utilizes considerable supplemental primary and secondary source material to add richness and depth to the study of history. Students are evaluated through quizzes, tests, and papers, as well as group discussions, class projects, and short, informal writing exercises. Themes and topics in this course complement those in the American literature studied in English 10.

Texts:

Foner, *Give Me Liberty*
 Kilborne, *Woodley and its Residents*
 Selected primary source materials

Summer Reading May Include:

Brown (adapted by Amy Ehrlich), *Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*

HISTORY ELECTIVES

Accelerated United States History

(Grades 10–12, open by recommendation)

This course offers an intensive U.S. History course geared towards the redesigned (AP) Advanced Placement exam in early May. Considerable focus is placed on both primary sources and essays of historical interpretation in the context of thematic learning objectives (such as the environment and geography, politics and power, and US foreign relations). Students who wish to take this course should bear in mind that it is the equivalent of a full year's introductory college course, and therefore the demands in terms of both time and commitment are considerable. Departmental recommendation is a prerequisite.

Texts:

Foner, *Give Me Liberty*

Summer Reading:

Kilborne, *Woodley and Its Residents*
 Sloan, *The Great Decision*

Advanced Economics: Macro & Micro (MSON)

(Prerequisite: completion or concurrent enrollment in Precalculus.)

The macroeconomic portion of this year long course teaches students the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole. Specific topics include the study of national income and price-level determinants, economic performance measures, the financial sector, stabilization policies, economic growth, and international economics. The microeconomic portion teaches students about the nature and functions of individual decision makers in the modern economic system. Specific topics include the nature of product markets, factor markets, and the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy. Participation in the Florida Stock Market Challenge as a term project is to be determined. At the end of this course, students may elect to sit for the AP Economics exams.

The American Food System: Past, Present, Future (MSON)

(Fall semester)

The American Food System consists of the interrelated components of how we get food from “farm to fork,” including the producing, harvesting, processing, transporting, marketing, distributing, and the eating of food. Through a humanities-based, interdisciplinary approach the course will examine the political, social, economic, and environmental aspects of the system, as well as the challenges and opportunities in moving from our current industrial food system to a more sustainable one. Students will engage in a variety of projects, allowing them to understand their regional and local food systems, while learning from their classmates throughout the country. We will examine topics such as animal agriculture, organic farming, local production and distribution, the debate over GMOs, the marketing of unhealthy food to children and the problem of hunger in America.

Art History from Venus to Vera (MSON)

Students will learn about the history of three-dimensional art from its prehistoric beginnings to the present day. A focus will be representations of the human figure. Students will gain a fuller understanding of sculptural icons such as Michelangelo's David and

other significant artworks, as well as the vocabulary to talk about these works of art. The structure of the course is a chronological study of the evolution of sculpture, which will serve as our vehicle to explore the depth and breadth of the human experience. Throughout the semester, students will make thematic connections between artworks with the goal of examining topics such as consumerism and body image. The aim of the course is not only to better understand the visual environment we live in but also to see how it reflects our own values and ideals.

Black America—A Cultural Study

(Grades 11–12; also available as a literature elective)

This humanities course connects the history, literature, and the arts of African Americans to survey the African American experience. Through close reading of both canonical and noncanonical writers, analyzing political movements (slave revolts, American Reconstruction, Harlem Renaissance, American Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, Hurricane Katrina, and current events), and discussing recurring themes (the legacies of the Great Migration, the significance of art and music, lynching and racial violence, racial passing, etc.), students will engage in grappling with the rich culture of the African American community. From Douglass to Baldwin to Tupac, students will draw upon primary sources (film, print, and other art mediums) and scholarly articles and YouTube videos to assist discussions. Graded work will include projects, essays, participation, and a final poster project.

Text:

C. Carson, *The Struggle for Freedom*

Civil Liberties

(Grades 11–12)

This course explores the range of individual freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the government's role in protecting these liberties. Students examine such controversial topics as hate speech, prayer in schools, gun control, discrimination, abortion, and the death penalty to determine the boundaries of personal rights protected by the Constitution. Students read and analyze leading Supreme Court cases and legal commentary to develop their conclusions. Current event topics also help to shape the curriculum, as each week a student is

assigned to present on “Civil Liberties in the News.” Students are required to rely both on personal opinion and grounded analysis in their decision-making process. Class time centers on student dialogue and debate; all members of the class are expected to contribute actively to discussions. Students participate in local mock trial and moot court competitions, and they create political videos and cartoons for national competitions. Field trips to the Supreme Court and lower level courts, as well as a wide range of guest speakers, further enrich students' understanding of the political system. Through the content of the class, students cultivate their analytic, writing, research, and oral advocacy skills.

Text:

Epstein and Walker, *Constitutional Law for a Changing America*

Summer Reading:

Stewart, *The Men Who Invented the Constitution*

Comparative Religion: Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam

(Grades 10–12; not offered 2016-2017)

In this course, students explore three powerful world religions, focusing on their origins in the ancient world, their dialogues and clashes with one another and with Judaism and Christianity, their growth and change over time, and their ongoing transformation in the crucible of modern events. Topics of study include mystical and fundamentalist strains in each faith, the entanglement of each religion with contemporary political and social movements (such as in Tibet, Burma, Kashmir, Iraq, and Egypt), films, and important works of literature shaped by each faith. Students carry out research, write analytical papers, and give oral reports. Invited speakers, as well as visits to local mosques, temples, and museum exhibits, offer students a more complex view of the amazing diversity and vast cultural impact of these often poorly understood faith traditions.

Texts:

Brodd, et al, *Invitation to World Religions*

Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*

Narayan, *Ramayana*

Novak, *World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of The World's Religions*

Summer Reading:

Dalrymple, *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India*

Diversity in a Global Comparative Perspective (MSON)*(Fall Semester)*

Diversity in Global Comparative Perspective examines the ways our Human Family has sought to create, marshal, contest, and maintain identities through Culture and relations of power. These identities can be appreciated through “lenses of analysis.” The course critically engages the traditional “Big Three” lenses of analysis: Race, Class, & Gender, understanding that Culture serves as an important backdrop against which these identities emerge. Once students appreciate the important ways the Social Sciences have engaged with, written about, and debated these three core modes of analysis, the course expands to incorporate other, equally rich, lenses: age, ableism, intellectual diversity, geographic diversity, cognitive and neurological diversity, and the business case for Diversity, as well as how to study synergistically intertwined phenomena. Film and Critical Film Studies, as well as the role Colonialism has played in the major conflicts of the last 500 years, each serve to enrich student understandings of Diversity.

Environmental Bioethics (MSON) Spring Semester

This course will focus on such cases as environmental sustainability, global energy and food resources, gathered from sources in literature, journalism, and film. The academic study of ethics examines how we make the decisions. Curricula will build on a foundation of theoretical moral theories, more specifically, how we make decisions when faced with complex, often controversial, issues. No prior knowledge of philosophy is assumed, however, authentic assessment of students’ initial facility with logical analysis will ensure that all students are challenged to grow and deepen their theoretical and practical understandings of the subject.

Environmental History and Philosophy*(Grades 10–12)*

This course explores environmental issues and perspectives through history and the ones most critical to our time. Topics covered include climate change and strengthening hurricanes, eco-terrorism, management of global fisheries, polar exploration, causes for delayed reaction, and reasons for emerging hope. Students will examine the evolving perception of man versus nature and general issues like resource

use and population pressures in diverse seminal works ranging from *The Wealth of Nations* and Frederick Jackson Turner’s celebrated frontier thesis to modern pieces like *An Inconvenient Truth*, *The Perfect Storm*, *Into the Wild*, and *Collapse*. Numerous debates and hot-topic articles will augment our treatment.

Texts:

Achenbach, *The Grand Idea*
 Alexander, *Endurance*
 Diamond, *Collapse*
 Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*
 Heller, *The Whale Warriors*
 Krakauer, *Into the Wild*
 London and Kelly, *The Last Forest*
 Troost, *The Sex Lives of Cannibals*

Summer Reading:

Junger, *The Perfect Storm*

Globalization and the Modern World*(Grades 10–12)*

Where does your cell-phone come from? Where will your first job out of college come from? Ten years ago, many people thought globalization was just a code word for American economic and cultural imperialism. A decade later, the new conventional wisdom is that America has been hammered by the pace and character of change in the global age. But what will the next few decades bring? And what is globalization, anyway? Is it old? New? Does it promote peaceful integration? Tension and hostility? Does it give people new ways to fashion their identities and allow societies to shape their cultures more creatively? Is it crushing regional cultures under the weight of corporate branding? Does it provide new opportunities for the world’s poor? Exploit them more relentlessly? We examine these and other issues in general discussions about the meaning and impact of globalization, in repeated looks at the USA, and in two further case study regions: China and India. Specific readings change annually.

Texts:

Adiga, *White Tiger*
 Wise, *Cultural Globalization*

Summer Reading:

Rivoli, *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy*

Human Geography—Understanding Our World Through Spatial Relationships

(Grades 10–12)

Human geography is a system of thinking that explores why human events, cultural expressions, and activities happen where they happen. Human geography flips history on its side by considering how the physical locations of human phenomena—and their relative distance from other phenomena—influence how the human story plays out over time. While human geography does take physical geography (the locations of mountains, rivers, harbors, arable land, etc.) into consideration, it is chiefly concerned with the activities that human beings undertake on the physical landscape—and, by extension, with how they change that landscape over time. While these questions might at first seem somewhat esoteric, they turn out in practice to be fascinating and fun. Here are a few of the kinds of questions that we will explore in Human Geography: What brought my parents or previous ancestors to live in the Washington, DC area? Where will my children or grandchildren likely live? Why do people speak with different regional accents in different parts of the U.S. (and in different parts of our metropolitan area)? Is Syria really a country anymore? Is Kurdistan a state? Why is there so much tilapia in restaurants right now? Where does my paper come from? Where does my electricity come from? Why does my family vacation where we do? Why are there so many Starbucks in some neighborhoods? Why is Hollywood a world movie-making center, and why is Detroit known for auto manufacturing? As the internet has connected us virtually with so many places in the world, it has magnified—not erased—the need for an awareness of spatial relationships in understanding how our world operates at all kinds of scales, from the global to the very local. Our investigations in this course, and our exposure to models that help explain the spatial patterns of human activities, will enhance your “geographical imagination” and will change your perspective on everything you do and on all the places you go.

Man’s Inhumanity to Man: Genocide and Human Rights in the 20th Century (MSON)

(Spring Semester)

The story of genocide in the 20th century stands in stark contrast to the social progress and technological

advancements made over the last 100 years. As brutal culmination of nationalist and racist attitudes and policies, as well as a poignant reminder of both the cruelty and resilience of human beings, these genocides punctuate modern history with harsh reality. This course will explore the many facets of genocide through the lenses of history, literature, art, sociology, and law. Specifically, we will turn our attention to understanding the framing of genocide as a legal concept. Using the holocaust as our foundation, we will examine examples of additional genocides from the 20th century, including those in Armenia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia (among others). Ultimately, we will train our attention to the enduring legacy of genocides around the world, especially as we consider attempts to recognize, reconcile, and memorialize genocide from the individual to the collective. Students will read and analyze primary source material, secondary historical accounts, genocide testimony and memoirs, in addition to examining individual fictional and artistic responses and the collective memories and memorials of whole societies.

Mapping Inequality in DC

(Grades 10–12)

Is our country’s long history of discriminatory housing and educational policy a principal cause of the present-day spatial and racial inequality of opportunity in cities like Washington DC? Most historians assume so. However, to date, no researcher or scholar has examined the primary source data—census data, archival data, etc.—in Washington DC to rigorously test this assumption. Students in this elective will test this research question using primary source data in the local Washington DC community. Students will work in teams to create research questions and then blend demographic data with a digital mapping program to draw conclusions about patterns of inequity in DC. In addition, we have a tentative agreement to collaborate with Prologue DC, a team of local professional historians, on their ongoing project mapping segregation in DC. Students do not have to consider themselves strong in math, nor do they need to have any computer experience; however, they should be open to learning a digital mapping program and working with data. Students in this elective will test this research question using primary source data in

the local Washington DC community. This research has never been done before, so students will be contributing original knowledge to the scholarly fields of DC History and urban policy. Many are referring to digital history--and more specifically, the digital historical mapping--as “the future of history”. In other words, students will learn about history by actually doing history.

Inequity and Social Justice in DC

(Grades 10–12; not offered 2016–2017)

The “District of Columbia”—the step-sister of a city that lies in the shadows of the political and tourist “Washington” featured nightly in the news--is one of the most intriguing cities in the United States. Its 600,000 citizens, despite residing in the capital of the world’s “greatest democracy,” are denied voting representation in Congress and must seek Congressional approval of local budget and laws. DC is also unusual demographically. Thanks to a mass exodus of middle-class whites and blacks in the 1950–1970s, the city is polarized between a very wealthy and predominantly white elite located mostly west of Rock Creek Park, and an impoverished black underclass located mostly east of the Park. The city is a study in inequities: between rich and the poor, white and black, male and female, citizen and immigrant, and straight and gay. And despite—or perhaps because of this—DC is also home to some of the most inspiring and successful social justice campaigns in the country. This course will first explore the social and political inequities that divide DC, and then turn to the social justice activists and campaigns that fight to correct these inequities. As they learn about these topics, students will extend their note taking, research, and essay writing skills. Because community engagement is a major component of the course, they will also be learning advocacy and community organizing skills. A highlight of the year will be collaborating on a project with a local charter school.

Law, Culture and Society

(Grades 11–12; also available as a literature elective)

Does law serve justice or stand in its way? Throughout history, many in the United States have looked to the legal system to address societal inequities, but others have criticized this very system for serving

the interests of the powerful. Debate over the proper role of law in our society has not been limited to the courtroom or the newspaper—it has often been, and continues to be, waged in literature, on stage, in movie theaters, on the radio, and on television. This course will explore the nexus of law, society, and culture. We will examine how cultural productions, such as novels, memoirs, plays, films, television shows, podcasts, and documentaries, both reflect and seek to influence public perceptions of the law and its quest for justice. The class will raise big questions about the law, examining the meaning of justice, the relationship between law and morality, the difference between justice and revenge, and the proper aims of the criminal justice system. We will see how these larger questions play out in contemporary life by digging into current legal controversies relating to race, gender, social class, and sexuality, such as mass incarceration, the criminalization of poverty, the prosecution of campus sexual assaults, and LGBTQ parental rights. In all of our inquiries, we will work both as historians and as cultural critics, employing methods relating to history, literature, and cultural studies. To investigate how culture both reports on and seeks to create change in the law, students will examine and analyze a wide range of cultural productions and historical texts, which may include works such as Bryan Stevenson’s moving memoir *Just Mercy*, Earnest Gaines’ novel *A Lesson Before Dying*, Michelle Alexander’s influential *The New Jim Crow*, the riveting *Serial* podcast, the provocative documentary “The Hunting Ground,” the television series “Orange is the New Black,” and the classic legal film *The Verdict*. Students will have the opportunity to hone their writing and research skills as they experiment with writing in a wide variety of forms, including literary and cultural analyses, creative responses, position papers, document investigations, research essays, and op-eds. The class will be highly interactive, featuring discussions, debates, oral and media projects, and Socratic seminars. We will hear from guest speakers drawn from the rich legal community of Washington, D.C. to help us understand the dynamics underlying legal controversies. Ultimately, the course will invite students to consider what role they themselves can play in working towards a more just society.

Medical Bioethics (MSON)

(Fall Semester)

This course will focus on such cases as medical practice, medical research and development, and health care policy, examined through a wide array of case studies, gathered from sources in literature, journalism, and film. The academic study of ethics examines how we make the decisions. Curricula will build on a foundation of theoretical moral theories, more specifically, how we make decisions when faced with complex, often controversial, issues. No prior knowledge of philosophy is assumed, however, authentic assessment of students' initial facility with logical analysis will ensure that all students are challenged to grow and deepen their theoretical and practical understandings of the subject.

Music History: History of Rock and Roll (MSON)

(Spring Semester; No prerequisite, but students should have basic knowledge and understanding of music fundamentals.)

This course presents the historical evolution of contemporary American music. The course will primarily cover American pop/rock music through the lens of treating American pop music as a worldwide musical first. The course is the first of its kind, covering the pop/rock genre in a deep, consistent, and accessible way. The course includes detailed listening guides helping students understand compositional technique, musical timing, and lyric construction. Of particular significance is the inclusion of Interactive Listening Guides providing moment-by-moment descriptions of the music as it is performed.

Psychology

(Grades 11–12; not offered 2016–2017)

Psychology is the scientific study of the human mind, particularly as it influences human behavior. In this course, we'll examine several of the many branches of modern psychology (a discipline founded in 1879) and explore how psychological principles and theories can be applied to overcome problems in real-life situations. We start the year with an overview of four basic processes of our minds: perception, cognition, motivation and emotion, and memory and learning. We then turn our attention to personality, asking the questions, "How do we develop from infancy

through adulthood?", "What factors make each of us unique?" and "In what ways can we be abnormal?" Next we think about relationships and consider how our minds are influenced by the wider social context (other people). In the last part of the year, we train our psychological lens on some of humankind's most perplexing and thorny social, economic, environmental, and political problems, and we will seek new ways forward in the light of psychological findings. Each unit of the course offers opportunities to apply psychology to questions about yourself (for example, "What is my unique style of learning?" "How has my early childhood influenced me?"). Each unit also applies psychological principles and theories to literature, film, popular culture, history, or current events (for example, considering how the film *Groundhog Day* relates to the theory of pattern relations, how Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* relates to the psychology of learning, or how the ongoing global economic crisis can be understood in light of social psychology and behavioral economics). Students will also have opportunities to do original research or simple experiments relating to a special topic of their choosing, such as organizational psychology, evolutionary psychology, sport psychology, or even traffic psychology. Students can expect to do a significant amount of writing and a fair amount of reading and independent research. Class meetings will involve lively give-and-take and plenty of student-directed presentations and discussions. The overall goal of this course is to help students move toward college and adulthood with an emerging sense of how their minds work, a more informed approach to collaborating with others, and an optimistic sense of how they can help to address and overcome pressing social problems both large and small.

Summer Reading:

Foer, *Moonwalking with Einstein*

Texts:

Arnold, *Small Move, Big Change*

Chabris, *Invisible Gorilla*

Cialdini, *The Psychology of Persuasion*

Catheri, *Psychology Book*

Gladwell, *Tipping Point: How Little Things Can*

Make a Big Difference

Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*

Kaysen, *Girl Interrupted*

Pink, *Drive*

Revolutions

(Grades 10–12; not offered 2016–2017)

Are revolutions an effective means of social change, or do they merely reproduce the problems of the past? This interdisciplinary course examines historical and cultural revolutions through a humanities lens, taking a multi-pronged approach to analysis, and requiring students to explore complex questions without clear answers. The class will also ask students to evaluate social revolutions by developing an understanding of their own identity and how this affects the way we perceive historical and social changes. The class will utilize historical texts, philosophical documents, literature, music and film to analyze revolutions and social movements from a variety of times and places. Main units will include the American Cultural Revolution of the 1960's; the Chinese Cultural Revolution; the Greek war of independence; the Iranian Revolution and Cuban Revolution. Besides improving their writing and critical reading skills, students will produce assignments such as oral presentations, possible film projects, and ethnographies. Some units will culminate in an open-ended essay topic that requires students to explore and think critically about a variety of materials in their search for understanding. Some of the historical/philosophical texts we will study will include *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements* (DeFranzo), *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan) and *Creatively Maladjusted* (Richards). Some literature, music, paintings, TV and film we will examine includes selections from "Hellas," (Shelley), *Falling into Revolution* (Youssef), "Alabama" (Coltrane), "Killing US Softly 4 (Kilbourne)," "The Stonewall Riots (PBS)," "The Stepford Wives", "Tankman (Frontline)", paintings by Eugene Delacroix, *Giovanni's Room* (Baldwin), *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Vonnegut), TV episodes from "Three's Company", "Seinfeld", "Modern Family" & "Leave it to Beaver" and the graphic novels *Boxers and Saints* (Yang) and *Persepolis* (Satrapi).

Texts:

DeFranzo, *Revolutions & Revolutionary Movements*

Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*

Yang, *Boxers & Saints*

Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Summer Reading:

Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Topics in Psychology

(Grades 11-12)

"What type of learner am I?" "What motivates me?" "How does my brain influence my behavior?" "How do I better use my memory and intelligence to improve my performance for that next test?" "What type of personality do I have?" "How do social interactions affect my individual decision making?" These questions about the human mind and individual behavior constantly surface in school and in the real world. At the core of these questions, we seek to understand what are the mind's capabilities and limitations both in biological, cognitive, developmental, and sociocultural senses as well as how the mind varies from one individual to the next. Balancing the power of inquiry with the power of story, Topics in Psychology will use discussion- and activities-based approaches to carefully examine each topic ranging from the biological bases of behavior and states of consciousness to human development and learning, thinking and intelligence, motivation and emotion, theories of personality and psychological treatments, and social interactions. With the goal of gaining psychological knowledge that is not only generated and developed but also applied, students will explore case studies, create and administer surveys, and run small experiments regularly. At different points in the course, students will select topics for independent research and presentation. Possible topics include how psychology affects and is affected by class status, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, work environments, sports and entertainment, schools and prisons, health, driving and traffic, evolution, religions, social media, etc. Ultimately, with guidance and study, students will design and report on a psychological experiment.

LITERATURE ELECTIVES

African American Literature: Shades of a Black Experience

(Grades 11–12; not offered 2016–2017)

In *Shades of a Black Experience*, we examine the joys, triumphs, struggles and defeats within the lives of many African Americans through a range of genres and literary media. This class will explore such concepts as the duality of scrutiny and disregard, the

development of artistic cultural manifestos, and the never-ending search for one’s identity. Shades of a Black Experience is where past and present meet. In each thematic unit, we analyze two literary works: one from the first half of the 20th century, and one from the second half of the 20th century. Within each unit, we will also analyze an album and film that correspond with the larger themes of the course. In this class, discussion of essays from the Civil Rights Era will go hand in hand with discussion of lyrics from the Golden Age of Hip-Hop. The emergence of Black Art in the Harlem Renaissance will be connected to the success of Milestone Comics in the early 1990s. The lack of recognition addressed in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* will serve as the foundation of our examination of Kanye West and his turbulent celebrity. Students can expect frequent in-class journals and commentaries, as well as extended essays and presentations. Texts read during this course may include *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison, *Ultimate Comics Spider-Man, Vol. 1*, by Brian Michael Bendis, *Black Superheroes, Milestone Comics, and Their Fans*, by Jeffrey A. Brown, selections from *The Fire Next Time*, by James Baldwin, and *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Anthology*, edited by Venetria K. Patton.

Texts:

Ellison, *Invisible Man*
 George, *Hip-Hop America*
 Haggins, *Laughing Mad*
 Locke, *New Negro*
 McDuffie, *Icon, Hero’s Welcome*

Summer Reading:

Read: du Bois, *Souls of Black Folks*
 Listen and analyze the lyrics: Nas, *Illmatic*
 Watch: Simien, *Dear White People*

Black America—A Cultural Study

(Grades 11–12; also available as a history elective)

This humanities course connects the history, literature, and the arts of African Americans to survey the African American experience. Through close reading of both canonical and noncanonical writers, analyzing political movements (slave revolts, American Reconstruction, Harlem Renaissance, American Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, Hurricane Katrina, and current events), and discussing recurring themes (the legacies of the Great Migration, the significance of art and music, lynching and racial violence, racial

passing, etc.), students will engage in grappling with the rich culture of the African American community. From Douglass to Baldwin to Tupac, students will draw upon primary sources (film, print, and other art mediums) and scholarly articles and YouTube videos to assist discussions. Graded work will include projects, essays, participation, and a final poster project.

Text:

C. Carson, *The Struggle for Freedom*

Children in Literature

(Grades 11–12; not offered 2016–2017)

What is a child? It may surprise you to learn that the answer depends on time and place. In this course students read and analyze a range of literary works—some intended for young people and some for adults—that offer contrasting visions of childhood (and by extension, adulthood). In some, like *Alice in Wonderland*, a child is curious and malleable, viewing a topsy-turvy grownup world with fresh eyes. In others, like *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, children are evil, pulling adults into webs of deceit and misery. Still others, like *Peter Pan*, paint a complex picture of childhood as a phase of life characterized not only by imagination and play, but also by fear and denial. We will explore whether the concept of childhood as we know it is disappearing as new forms of media undermine our sense of childhood as a protected and innocent space, and will examine how contemporary works, such as *The Hunger Games*, present images of childhood under siege. As we explore the evolution of literary images of children from the Middle Ages to the present day, we will also examine literary methods and styles, and psychological and moral messages (both overt and subliminal). Invited speakers, including local authors, and field trips to bookstores and art exhibits will help us better understand the artistic, cultural and political dimensions of representations of children. Students write analytical essays, carry out historical research, participate in debates, and produce original stories featuring their own ideas and images of childhood.

Texts:

Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures Underground*
 White, *Charlotte’s Web*
 Kincaid, *Annie John*
 Kipling, *The Jungle Books*
 Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*

Burnett, *The Secret Garden*
 Foer, *Unbearably Loud and Incredibly Close*
 Shriver, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*

Summer Reading:

Brothers Grimm, *Selected Tales*
 Block, *The Rose and the Thorn*

Comedy and Satire

(Grades 11–12)

What is the funny business of comedy and satire? Comic writers make us laugh, but what else might they be up to? This course will examine how humorists both entertain us and raise provocative questions about our society and its treatment of individuals. We will begin the year by reading and viewing comic texts and videos by contemporary humorists, such as David Sedaris, to explore theories of humor. We will read classic comedies from writers like Plautus and Shakespeare to see how they employ techniques such as mistaken identity, wordplay, irony, and disguise to examine issues related to gender, sexuality, race, and social class. As we proceed, we will match older texts with newer versions, such as *Twelfth Night* and the movie *She's the Man*, to question whether works should ever be considered “out of bounds.” Contemporary texts may include Kurt Vonnegut’s exploration of weapons of mass destruction *Cat’s Cradle*, Gary Shteyngart’s novel *Super Sad True Love Story*, which examines our loss of privacy and dependency on social media, Bruce Norris’s play about the dynamics of racial identity, *Clybourne Park*, which begins where Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* ends, and Stephen Colbert’s *I am American (And So Can You!)*. Throughout the year, students will have the chance to grow as analytical writers by honing their powers of literary analysis and to develop their creative flair by writing their own comedies and satires. Most important, the course invites students to think critically about the role of comedy and satire in our society.

Texts:

Plautus, *Selected Plays*
 Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*
 Swift, “A Modest Proposal”
 Vonnegut, *Cat’s Cradle*
 Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*
 Norris, *Clybourne Park*
 Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*

Summer Reading:

Read: Sedaris, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*

Summer Viewings:

Select any film (except *Dr. Strangelove*) from AFI’s list of “100 Funniest American Movies of All Time.” You can find the list here: <http://www.afi.com/100years/laughs.aspx>

Coming of Age in the Modern World

(Grades 11–12)

In coming of age stories, characters encounter internal and external challenges as they leave a state of innocence (childhood) and transition into a state of knowing (adulthood). Readings for this course will include novels written from the 1950’s to today, as well as short stories, essays, and films that complement core texts. Students will examine texts from multiple perspectives as they attempt to understand the factors of environment—race, culture, school, historical era, class, religion, and gender—that dictate, provoke, complicate or demand a particular character’s progression. Specifically, students will look at how “families” (including not only traditional nuclear models but other forms, along with mentor or friend groups), schools, the nature of the individual, and times of crisis influence a character’s eventual transition; students will also try to decide what about these journeys may be universal or unique based on our understanding of environments that differ from our own. Students should expect frequent informal opportunities to write in class (journals and quotation analyses), the chance to present well-crafted and supported analytical essays (culminating with an essay exhibition and defense at the end of the year), and opportunities for creative and personal work throughout the year (using popular songs to enter certain stories or characters, for example). Texts may include *Old School*, by Tobias Wolfe, *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro, *Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned*, by Walter Mosely, *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison, *The Virgin Suicides*, by Jeffrey Eugenides, and selections from *Casualties of Privilege: Essays on Prep Schools’ Hidden Culture*, by Louis Crosier.

Texts:

Eugenides, *Virgin Suicides*
 Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
 Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
 McEwen, *Atonement*

Mosely, *Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned*
 Roth, *Goodbye Columbus*
 Wolff, *Old School*

Comparative Literature

(Grades 11–12; can also be used as a Spanish credit)

This course connects contemporary Spanish-speaking authors with international counterparts through a comparative study of their works by isolating and exploring common literary and philosophical concepts. Literary works will be grouped by theme and studied concurrently. The course comprises of the following units, which are illuminated through selected readings: tension between individual and society; narrative ambiguity; tension between individual and family; existential anguish; the nature of reality; the role of the concepts of zero and infinity in literature; and Cainism and friendship. Class discussions will be conducted in Spanish. Papers are written in English. Works in Spanish can be read in English translation.

Texts:

Borges, *Fictions*
 Camus, *The Plague*
 García Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*
 García Marquez, *Eyes of a Blue Dog*
 Kafka, *The Trial*
 Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*
 Unamuno, *Abel Sánchez*
 Unamuno, *Don Manuel Bueno Martir*

Viewings:

Abre Los Ojos
Amadeus

Summer Reading:

García Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Contemporary American Literature

(Grades 11–12)

In this class, we will examine a wide range of recent American literature. The class will ask not only what makes these texts distinctly “American” in form and content, we will also consider how the authors interrogate the “politics of identity” to make their works compelling, effective, and critical. Throughout the year, we will consider how writers encounter boundaries, and how they use their characters as vehicles to reconcile the limitations imposed upon

them as authors. We will primarily read works of literature from marginalized groups, and we will discuss how and why writers create, collapse, and capitalize on ‘hybridized’ identities to enrich their work. In the process, we will scrutinize various versions of “Americanness” and explore the attendant cultural issues of racism, privilege, and consent. We will also look at how genre, style, and the “packaging” of various works affect both their consumption and reception. The class includes expository and creative writing assignments, as well as oral presentations, interviews, and even play-acting. We will practice defining and shaping a workable, original, and complex thesis, and the course will also provide both formal and informal opportunities for students to explore their own identity through writing. There will be a consistent emphasis on constructing strong, well-supported, and compelling arguments that join social theory with original thought and careful analysis.

Texts:

Lahiri, *The Namesake*
 Bulter, *Kindred*
 Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
 Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*
 Wolfe, *The Colored Museum*
 Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*
 Wallace, *Consider the Lobster*

Summer Reading:

Alexie, *Flight*

Creative Writing

(Grade 12 only; not offered 2016–2017)

During the first semester the course explores autobiographical writing and literary journalism by using contemporary selections by published authors and a variety of student pieces. Short writing assignments and journal work are used to expose students to a variety of writing techniques related to diction, chronology, and pacing. In the second semester students will explore forms of drama, poetry, and fiction. Throughout the year, the class format encourages active participation, critical thinking, and an open exchange of ideas. Each unit will culminate in a major project, and each student will also develop and complete a final independent project during the fourth quarter.

Texts:

Selected Poems—Mark Strand
In Short: A Collection of Brief Creative

Nonfiction

Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Nonfiction

Wilson, *Fences*

Collected Stories of Lydia Davis

Walcott, *Collected Poems, 1948-1984*

Ellis, *The Maverick Room: Poems*

Mamet, *Goldberg Street: Short Plays and*

Monologues

Saunders, *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*

Summer Reading:

Queneau, *Exercises in Style*

Carver, “The Bath”, “A Small Good Thing”

Creative Non-Fiction Writing Workshop: If Only You Could See this Place (MSON)

(Spring semester)

How do we write great non-fiction (and this includes all flavors of essays—college essays, literary journalism, memoir, and more), so that our stories have an injection of narrative tension that invites the reader to sit down inside our stories and stay a while? This workshop will help you become a better writer so that your stories contain an electrical charge that starts at the sentence level and travels through the entire piece. This tension, or electrical charge, is the engine that great non-fiction runs on. Students will search the places in one’s life that have mattered most, and using a series of fun writing prompts, generate new writing, using place as a portal to help land on the life stories that students’ most want to tell. Later, the class will move into class workshops of each student’s work. Each session will also look at other specific craft aspects: primarily beginnings, endings, and the weaving of multiple story lines in one essay. Student’s will also read some fantastic published work.

Creative Writing in the Digital Age (MSON)

(Fall Semester)

Storytelling is as important today as it was hundreds of years ago. What has changed, in many cases, is the media through which writers tell their stories. Today’s literary artists take advantage of digital tools to spread their messages and tell their stories in new ways that combine narrative and contemporary form. Students will begin with the traditional forms of poetry, short

prose, and literary non-fiction and then go beyond those forms to explore how contemporary tools can enhance expression. We will study master writers in each of the traditional forms and be inspired by their examples. Then, we will look at how communication in the 21st century has provided us with even more ways to share our thoughts and to be creative. Possible explorations include hyperlinked narratives, social media as inspiration and tool, animated text, audio, videos, and all manner of non-linear narrative. The class will ask an essential question: what happens when communication becomes wider and has an instant audience? The class routine, based around writing, reading, and discussion, will include weekly critiques of student work and required writing, including in some non-traditional, contemporary formats.

Etymology of Scientific Terms (MSON)

(Fall Semester)

The purpose of the course is, to quote the textbook, “By teaching ... the root elements of medical terminology—the prefixes, suffixes, and combining forms of Greek and Latin ... not only to teach students modern medical terminology, but to give them the ability to decipher the evolving language of medicine throughout their careers.” This is in many ways a language course, and deals with the elements that are used to create terms to meet the specific needs of medical scientists. As material is introduced, students will complete practice exercises during each class meeting, as well as complete approximately one quiz per week. Outside of class, students are expected to analyze and define fifty terms each week. Additional material deals with especially complex etymologies, the history of our understanding of certain aspects of medical science, and relevant material from Greek and Latin texts.

Required Text:

Dunmore and Fleischer, *Medical Terminology*
Taber’s *Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*

Law, Culture and Society

(Grades 11-12; also may count as a history elective)

Does law serve justice or stand in its way? Throughout history, many in the United States have looked to the legal system to address societal inequities, but others have criticized this very system for serving

the interests of the powerful. Debate over the proper role of law in our society has not been limited to the courtroom or the newspaper—it has often been, and continues to be, waged in literature, on stage, in movie theaters, on the radio, and on television. This course will explore the nexus of law, society, and culture. We will examine how cultural productions, such as novels, memoirs, plays, films, television shows, podcasts, and documentaries, both reflect and seek to influence public perceptions of the law and its quest for justice. The class will raise big questions about the law, examining the meaning of justice, the relationship between law and morality, the difference between justice and revenge, and the proper aims of the criminal justice system. We will see how these larger questions play out in contemporary life by digging into current legal controversies relating to race, gender, social class, and sexuality, such as mass incarceration, the criminalization of poverty, the prosecution of campus sexual assaults, and LGBTQ parental rights. In all of our inquiries, we will work both as historians and as cultural critics, employing methods relating to history, literature, and cultural studies. To investigate how culture both reports on and seeks to create change in the law, students will examine and analyze a wide range of cultural productions and historical texts, which may include works such as Bryan Stevenson’s moving memoir *Just Mercy*, Earnest Gaines’ novel *A Lesson Before Dying*, Michelle Alexander’s influential *The New Jim Crow*, the riveting *Serial* podcast, the provocative documentary “The Hunting Ground,” the television series “Orange is the New Black,” and the classic legal film *The Verdict*. Students will have the opportunity to hone their writing and research skills as they experiment with writing in a wide variety of forms, including literary and cultural analyses, creative responses, position papers, document investigations, research essays, and op-eds. The class will be highly interactive, featuring discussions, debates, oral and media projects, and Socratic seminars. We will hear from guest speakers drawn from the rich legal community of Washington, D.C. to help us understand the dynamics underlying legal controversies. Ultimately, the course will invite students to consider what role they themselves can play in working towards a more just society.

Literature and Theories of Knowledge

(Grades 11–12)

His priority did not seem to be to teach them what he knew, but rather to impress upon them that nothing, not even... knowledge, was foolproof.

J. K. Rowling,
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

This is a philosophy-based literature course designed to develop a coherent approach to learning and understanding through a thoughtful inquiry into different ways of knowing and different types of knowledge. The course will first focus on how we perceive reality, with emphasis on emotion, reason, belief, and experience. We will question our own assumptions about reality through diverse philosophical and literary texts, and try to answer this seminal question: What level of certainty, if any, can I assign to a given assertion of knowledge? Through our readings, students will be encouraged to reflect on their own experiences as learners and to discover how different academic disciplines are interconnected. We will read literary works that explore different realms of knowledge from the Arts to Mathematics, and we will make connections between and across ways of knowing and areas of knowledge. We will read a combination of excerpts from philosophical works and complete works from various literary genres. Throughout the year, students will gain familiarity with Aristotle, Berkeley, de Beauvoir, Descartes, Heidegger, Hume, Kierkegaard, Kant, Lao-Tsu, Locke, Nietzsche, Pascal, Plato, Sartre, Schopenhauer, and Spinoza.

Summer Reading:

Read: Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

Watch: Andy and Lana Wachowski, *The Matrix*

Nolan, *Inception*

Texts:

Carroll, *Through The Looking Glass*

Doxiadis, *Logicomix: Epic Search for Truth*

Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*

Mann, *Death in Venice*

Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*

Media and Literature: Critical Approaches to Media, Messages, and Me

Ever wonder why, over time, television shows tend to be so similar? Or how the Swoosh, the trademark of the Nike Corporation, has become so important in many people's lives? Or why social media has become the driving force in most people's day? In this course, we will interrogate the relationships between the various mass media which flood our daily lives, the messages that they intend as opposed to the message we actually receive, and their effects on us as we attempt to make sense of them all. As we closely read fiction and nonfiction, as well as examine various types of media, we will also learn several critical approaches to media studies that will aid us in developing answers about the role media has and can come to play in shaping the ability of individuals to understand the idea and value of "me." Students should expect opportunities to write in class as well as prepare longer well-crafted and supported analytical essays. Also, there will be several creative projects and presentations throughout the course including creating an advertising campaign.

Texts:

Berger, *Ads, Fads and Consumer Culture*
Headrick, *Wiley Guide To Writing Essays About*

Lit.

Huxley, *Brave New World*
Orwell, *1984*
Ott, *Critical Media Studies*
Thompson, *How to Watch Television*

Summer Reading:

Read: Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*
(Signet Classics edition)

Watch: *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Hunger Games*

Optional Reading: Collins, *The Hunger Games*

Philosophy in Pop Culture (MSON)

(Fall Semester; No prerequisite, but some familiarity/experience with logic will be helpful.)

Have you ever had a realistic dream that you were sure was true and then work up confused? How do you know that you are not in the Matrix? What is real and what is not? This course will investigate the nature of existence. It will combine classic philosophic works, like Descartes, with contemporary movies like *The Matrix* and *Inception*, to contemplate what it is to

exist and what the meaning of life is or should be.

Philosophy—The Nature of Evil (MSON)

(Fall Semester)

What counts as 'evil' and how are we to understand it in relation to our conception of ourselves and our place in the world? Is evil a purely human creation? Has evil changed in degree or kind over time? Is evil compatible with a benevolent deity? Is evil something we always have a choice about? This semester-long course examines the concept and nature of evil, its problematic implications for our ethical and legal systems, and its most challenging manifestations in philosophy, history, and psychology. Students will address key texts in the recent history of this issue, including religious responses to the problem of evil, rigorous philosophical texts exploring the nature of evil (e.g. Mackie, Zimmerman), key historical characterizations of this issue (e.g. Leibniz, Wiesel, Arendt), and modern psychological investigations of psychopathy and group responsibility. Throughout, we will engage with ethical argumentation, hone critical reasoning skills, explore cross-disciplinary analysis, and improve historical awareness of central developments in the development of the concept of evil.

Religion & Literature

(Grades 11-12)

In this course, we will explore some ways in which religious faith—both inside and outside of organized religion—has shaped writers and their literary works in different times and places. Some of the novels and poems we will study celebrate orthodox viewpoints, others critique them, and others offer complex perspectives on how religion can interact with race, gender, sexuality, and other cultural markers to influence identity and expression. We will explore stories in which characters grow out of and into belief, as well as those that raise questions about how religion helps—or hinders—those seeking to make sense of our challenging world. Along with analytical essays and research projects, students will have opportunities to explore their own religious (or secular) perspectives and to write personally and creatively about their views. Works studied may include works like *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (Baldwin), *Purple Hibiscus* (Adichie), *Bless Me, Ultima* (Anaya), *American Dervish*

or *Disgraced* (Akhtar), *Distant View of a Minaret* (Rifaat), *Cracking India* (Sidhwa), *The Chosen* (Potok), *Siddhartha* (Hesse), and *Buddha Da* (Donovan).

Style and Literature

(Grades 11–12; not offered 2016-2017)

How do great writers create their unique and compelling voices? In this course, we will examine a wide range of texts, including novels, memoirs, personal essays, plays, speeches, news stories, blogs, and op-eds, to uncover the connection between style and substance. A key goal of the course is for you to employ your growing understanding of the vast resources of language, which fall under the deceptively simple name “style,” to your own creative and analytical writing. In this class, we will read literary fiction and nonfiction texts which consider how people negotiate societal and individual borders and boundary lines and explore what happens to individuals who want to live on both “sides” or in between. Through our reading we will ourselves cross the borderline between fiction and nonfiction and consider ways in which they might be surprisingly alike. Through novels, we will travel from Edith Wharton’s detailed portrayal of high society New York to Cormac McCarthy’s depiction of the often violent world of the mythic cowboy. We will examine how Shakespeare teams history and fiction to recreate Henry V as a mesmerizing orator and consider how famous American speakers, from Abraham Lincoln to Barack Obama, use language to weave their spells. Finally, we will examine how modern writers of literary nonfiction cross boundaries by using fictional techniques in weaving true tales as we read Truman Capote’s sensational story of violent crime in the American heartland, *In Cold Blood*, and Barbara Ehrenreich’s story of her undercover investigation of social class in *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Throughout the course, you will develop your own style by crafting personal essays, speeches, op-ed pieces, literary analysis essays, short fiction, journal entries, and blog posts.

Texts:

Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*
 McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*
 Capote, *In Cold Blood*
 Shakespeare, *Henry V*
 Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not)*

Getting By in America
 Cohen, *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*
 Call, *Telling True Stories*

Summer Reading:

Read one of the following:
 Wolff, *This Boy’s Life*
 McBride, *The Color of Water*
 Karr, *The Liar’s Club* by Mary
 Nafisi, *Things I’ve Been Silent About*
 Beah, *A Long Way Gone*
 McCourt, *Angela’s Ashes*
 Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*
 Grealy, *Autobiography of a Face*
 Monette, *Becoming a Man*
 Smith, *Just Kids*
 Walls, *The Glass Castle*
 Stevenson, *Just Mercy*
 Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

Technology and Identity (MSON)

(Spring Semester)

This semester-long course examines the nature of the self by looking at the ways probable and possible future technologies might transform human nature or challenge fundamental ideas about personal identity. Drawing upon works of science fiction literature and film, “trans-humanist” literature, and more traditional philosophical works, we will consider such questions as: Could your identity survive gradual replacement of all of your parts with cybernetic prosthetics? Could your mind be uploaded to a computer? Is it probable that we already are living in a computer simulation? If Star Trek style transporters are ever developed, should you use one? What about a time machine? Is it likely that human beings will one day achieve immortality (or greatly extended lives), and what would this imply about the nature and value of human life? What are the moral implications of the availability of technologies that would give us super-strength or super-intelligence, especially if (as seems likely) they would not be equally available to everyone? Through reflection on these topics, students will sharpen their creative and logical thinking abilities and advance their understanding of central philosophical ideas, including theories of the self, free will, knowledge, time, and ethics.

World Literature*(Grades 11–12)*

Is literature dead or alive? Is it a mirror that reflects the world, or a tool that can change it? In this course, we explore fiction, poetry, essays and graphic novels from England, France, China, Kenya, Japan, Iran, Colombia, and the United States to consider what literature means and how it “matters” in various cultural contexts. As students read a variety of classic and contemporary works, (including *Madame Bovary*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *Wuthering Heights*, *First Love*, and *Things Fall Apart*), they learn how authors from different times and places have portrayed the relationship between fiction and reality, and how stories can comment on and contribute to social and historical change. A major theme of the course is the power of imaginative literature to challenge the status quo, and students may participate in a Service Learning project, such as helping to raise awareness about and assist contemporary banned writers. Another major focus of the course is collaborative learning: Along with traditional assignments including reading quizzes, informal journal entries, and traditional analytical essays, students participate actively in online discussion forums and collaborative projects such as podcasts.

Texts:

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
 Argueta, *One Day of Life*
 Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
 Brown & Schechter, *Conversation Pieces:*

Poems that Talk to Other Poems

Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*
 García Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*
 Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*
 Turgenev, *First Love*

Summer Reading:

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
 Bennett, *History Boys*

Viewing: *History Boys* (film—please read AND view)