

Special and Elective Course Offerings 2018-2019

Freshman Seminar: 2-semester course, once a week (Grade 9), 0.5 credit

Prerequisites: None

Freshman Seminar is a required course for all 9th graders to help students with their transition to the Upper School--new teachers, friends, schedule, and different expectations. This course addresses common concerns specific to 9th grade students, such as time management, study skills, exam preparation, stress management, academic independence, and first steps in the college process. The class also provides the setting for students to build their reflective e-portfolio, which they will expand throughout their time in the Upper School. Freshman Seminar meets every-other-day and is graded Pass/Fail. **This course is required for all freshmen.**

College Exploration Seminar: 2-semester course, once a week (Grade 11), no credit

Prerequisites: None

College Exploration Seminar is a required course for all 11th grade students. The class steps through the college exploration process and prepares students for the college application process. Topics include creating a standardized test plan, exploring college characteristics, understanding how to create a balanced college list, researching colleges, learning about the college application and essay, exploring careers, and creating a resume. **This course is required for all juniors.**

Speech: 1-semester course, Fall, Spring (Grades 10, 11, 12), 0.5 credit

Prerequisites: None

Speaking and critical listening are crucial skills for the 21st century – especially for students living in a democracy. Speaking in front of a group comes naturally to some, but it is stressful to others. This project-based class covers a wide variety of speaking challenges. The ultimate aim is to give all students the tools to mitigate stress and communicate effectively. Class goals include identifying personal strengths and weaknesses as an oral communicator, disciplining the voice, learning to listen and analyze, communicating clearly, and organizing thoughts into effective structures. **This course is a graduation requirement and is usually taken during sophomore year.**

Competitive Speech and Debate: (Grades 9, 10, 11, 12)1-semester course, Fall, Spring, 0.5 credit

Prerequisites:

1. willingness and ability to travel with the Debate Team to two tournaments

Debate class offers an overview of the events offered at National Speech and Debate Association tournaments. Participation in this class empowers students to become effective communicators, ethical individuals, critical thinkers, and leaders in a democratic society. Students select events based on individual interests; their work culminates in tournament participation. Each student works towards improving communication skills (verbal and nonverbal), self-confidence, self-awareness, analytical skills, creativity, and collaborative skills. Students are assessed on their individual improvement in chosen events as well as on their willingness to experiment with new pieces and activities. *Note: This course

may be repeated for elective credit.

Advanced Competitive Speech and Debate: (Grades 10, 11, 12) 1-semester course, Fall, Spring, (Grades 10, 11, 12) 0.5 credit

Prerequisites:

1. successful completion of Competitive Speech and Debate
- AND
2. willingness and ability to travel with the debate team to two tournaments

Advanced speech and debate builds on the concepts taught in the previous course. Students in this course will take the lead in researching and writing new arguments or performances for themselves. This course will encourage student leadership in the team, and help students develop organizational and research skills that will benefit them in college and career. Advanced debate students will also grapple with contemporary readings in argumentative, debate, and performance theory as they improve their abstract and practical understandings of speech and debate praxis. Students will be assessed on their individual performance as well as on their contributions to team success. Enrollment is not a requirement for participation on the team. *Note: This course may be repeated for elective credit.

Honors Competitive Speech and Debate: (Grades 11, 12) Fall, Spring, 1-semester course 0.5 credit

Prerequisites:

1. successful completion of Advanced Competitive Speech and Debate
- AND
2. willingness and ability to travel with the debate team to two tournaments

Honors debate shifts the focus from honing the individual student's skills at argumentation and speaking to encouraging that student to mentor younger students on the team. Students in this course are expected to work closely with the instructor in developing argumentative materials for less experienced competitors. Honors speech and debate students will also be responsible for assessing the performance of younger students, both to improve their performance and to encourage reflection on what makes an argument or performance compelling. Honors competitive speech students are expected to compete in at least two events at most tournaments, while honors debate students are required to assist with in-tournament preparation. Students will be assessed both on their individual performances and on their contributions to the successes of others. *Note: This course may be repeated for elective credit.

Independent Student Research Project (ISRP): (Grades 11, 12), 1 or 2-semester course, 0.5/1 credit.

Prerequisites:

1. written proposal and approval by ISRP facilitator

This experiential, educational opportunity is designed to provide students with a platform to develop their intellectual curiosity, as they delve into an exploration, through research, of a topic of their choice. The ISRP may be undertaken during a student's junior or senior year, with the help and guidance of the course instructor and mentorship from a chosen faculty member; it may be done individually or collaboratively with a partner/s. Internships, films/videos, the sciences, social studies, mathematics, and/or the arts are just a sampling of directions a research project might go. What all projects will have in common is an essential question to guide exploration, a blog to reflect upon ongoing work, a carefully constructed research paper, and a multi-media presentation of choice to the larger community. Our hope is that students will take the opportunity to learn about something they have always wanted to explore--something for which they have a passion or care about deeply or about which they have always wondered.