

## 2010-2011 Nichols Upper School Curriculum Guide

### Graduation Requirements

To receive a Nichols diploma, students must earn a **minimum of 23 credits** (a full year course or its equivalent in trimester courses constitutes one credit). The normal course load during grades 9-12 results in a total of 24 credits.

### Departmental Requirements

#### **English** (4 Credits)

Students must take English every year. Senior English consists of two trimester elective courses and a shorter seminar period at the end of the year.

#### **History** (3 Credits)

Students are required to take Ancient World History in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Modern European History in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and U.S. History in either 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **Science** (3 Credits)

Students are required to take Physics in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Chemistry in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and Biology in 11<sup>th</sup>. Course requirements for students entering after 9<sup>th</sup> grade are determined on a case-by-case basis by the department.

#### **Mathematics** (3 Credits)

Students must pass *Precalculus* in order to fulfill requirements, except as noted in the Mathematics section. Registration for a senior elective in Mathematics is contingent upon completion of *Precalculus* with a C or better.

#### **Modern and Classical Language** (3 Credits)

Students must successfully complete the third year of any one language except as noted in the

Modern and Classical Language section.

#### **Arts** (2 Credits)

Students are required to take one credit of Arts in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year and one credit in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

9<sup>th</sup> Graders can fulfill their requirement by taking Freshman Survey of the Arts.

11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Graders may complete their requirement by taking Chorus, Orchestra, or a full-year Arts elective.

#### **PE/Athletics** (2 Credits)

Each season (fall, winter, spring) for all 4 years, all students are required to take physical education or a Nichols dance class, be a member of a sports team or its manager, or are granted a contract sport by the Director of Athletics.

#### **Electives** (3 Credits)

#### Additional Requirements

In Math and Modern and Classical Language, students may satisfy their requirements in each department if they have completed level three (in MCL) or Precalculus by Junior year. In the event that a student completes both Math and Modern and Classical Language requirements by the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade, the student is then required to take at least one advanced course in either department before graduating.

#### Course Minimum / Maximum

Juniors or Seniors must take a minimum of five courses, and they must pass all those courses in their final year. This requirement negates the use of the "wild card" credit during senior year. Only the

Academic Review Committee (ARC) may approve six or more courses, schedule permitting.

#### Sophomore Elective (1 Credit)

All 10<sup>th</sup> graders are required to take either three trimester sophomore electives or a full-year course. The Arts Department offers *Foundations of the Arts* electives in Visual Arts, Music, Theater, and Dance. Chorus, Orchestra, Introduction to Computer Programming or the first year of a second Modern and Classical Language will also fulfill this requirement.

#### Senior Project

In the third trimester of the senior year, Nichols students are required to research and develop a project that will facilitate meaningful learning to complete their Nichols educational experience. Students research and write a proposal for their project, which is reviewed by a faculty committee which provides oversight to the proposal process. Following senior exams in mid-May, students begin their three-week senior project. The project concludes with a senior project night in the first week of June. The senior project is a graduation requirement which receives an honors, pass or fail grade. The senior project coordinator is Dr. Collins.

#### AP Exam Policy

Any student whose cumulative average in an AP course is below B-two weeks prior to the AP exam will be required to take a departmental final exam in addition to (or, with the instructor's permission, in place of) the regular AP exam.

### **Drop/Add Procedure**

After the beginning of the year, adjustments are made to students' schedules, such as changing from AP to regular math or dropping a difficult sixth course. Only in very unusual circumstances, and only with the approval of the Academic Review Committee, may a student drop a year-long course after the third week of school or go below five courses. Students dropping a year-long or trimester course after the third week of the marking period will have the designation of "withdrawn passing" or "withdrawn failing" on their transcript, unless that designation is waived by the Academic Review Committee.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **THE ARTS: Theatre, Music, Visual Arts, Dance**

**Nichols requires all students to participate in the fine and performing arts. We feel no education is complete without a profound understanding of the arts, and that understanding is best gleaned from hands on involvement in the creative process. In addition to offering students formal instruction in the arts, extracurricular activities are available in theatre, music, and dance.**

In Grade 9, **Freshman Survey of the Arts**, a comprehensive, interdisciplinary course is required. Students are exposed to dance, music, theatre and the visual arts. Survey of the Arts emphasizes a

shared vocabulary amongst all of the art disciplines. Double class periods may be used for guest artist visits and presentations. The course involves a rotation through the music, theatre, dance and visual arts mediums. Students may also take chorus, orchestra or dance for credit.

Many students in grade 10 choose to take an arts elective, Chorus, or Orchestra in order to fulfill the sophomore elective requirement

In Grade 11 or 12, students take an additional Arts elective in either or both years.

### **Dance Electives**

Students in the Nichols after school Dance program take movement classes that meet personal goals and provide a broad base of dance study. They may receive physical education and/or artistic credit. Examples of courses offered are Modern Dance, Ballet, Choreography, Improvisation, and Repertory/ Performance. Yoga and conditioning mini courses are offered at special times in the year to coordinate with new trimesters of study and to provide opportunities to use mind body techniques to prepare for exam testing. The Nichols Dance Ensemble is the performance group at school; students present their own work at the "Choreographers' Showcase", and also perform at the "Fall Dance Concert". Other opportunities for performance are the Holiday Assembly and special school festivals, forums, morning meetings and functions. Students learn from professional guest artists. Advanced or more serious dance students are given the opportunity to work individually with Ms. Gardner on developing a dance portfolio which

includes preparation for college auditions.

### **Chorus**

The Chorus sings repertoire from many traditions and genres, e.g., music of Western European masters, multi-cultural music sung in the original languages, Musical Theater, and contemporary songs. Singers attend regular rehearsals and small voice labs. Proper performance practice and age appropriate vocal techniques are stressed. Learning music theory and music history are also part of the syllabus. The Chorus performs at two annual school concerts, at various times for school-related functions, and for the wider community. Optional events include Cabaret, All-County Chorus, Area All-State Chorus, and NYSSMA solo adjudication. Students should plan on a year-long commitment to this ensemble. The ability to match pitch is required.

### **Orchestra**

A year-long commitment, Orchestra is open to players of string, wind, brass, and percussion instruments who have demonstrated proficiency on their instrument. Music from Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern era is performed. Developing aesthetic sensitivity, the proper technique, timing, tone, and interpretation are stressed. Each student is evaluated in a weekly lesson lab. Performances include a minimum of two instrumental concerts. The Jazz Band, an extracurricular activity, meets twice a week after school to prepare for performances throughout the year.

## **Sophomore Foundations of the Arts**

### **Mask and Movement (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

Through improvisation, acting exercises, and scene work, we will learn how the physical self tells a story. Expect to be on your feet as we learn to understand our own physical traits so that we might outwardly express the emotional life and thought process of a fictional character. We will begin with self-awareness, focusing on relaxation, flexibility, alignment, centers, and creative movement. Next we will play with Basil masks (exaggerated character masks made famous by French theatre artist Jacques LeCoq), and finally, we'll make history live and breathe as we explore the hilarious Italian mask form of Commedia dell'arte, writing and performing in our own scenarios.

### **Design 1, Photography (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

In this course the student will develop their understanding of the basic guidelines of good composition, utilizing the principles and elements of two-dimensional design (line, shape, value, form, texture, color and unity, continuity, repetition, balance, rhythm). Using a variety of photographic based media the student will be required to complete several projects. The projects will include; the properties of light and pinhole photography, digital photographic continuity, the invisible/visible long exposures and afterimages. The goal for each project will be for the student to gain experience with a new or

familiar material, develop a strategy for completing a piece of artwork, and incorporate an art historical reference, or scientific concept into their production. The class will include at least one field trip to a local art center or museum.

### **Modern Dance Technique (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

Students will learn to dance the elementary principles of modern techniques created by Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Merce Cunningham. Viewing biographical documentaries and dance masterpieces choreographed by the above founders of modern dance will also be part of the class. This course is open to sophomores and a limited number of juniors. Students may get the opportunity to perform a dance masterpiece in the "Fall Dance Concert".

### **Exploring Drawing (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimesters)**

"Drawing is the basic language of Art." This drawing course will introduce the student to a variety of materials and techniques and help them understand what drawing is and its importance. The students will complete a variety of projects that will not only improve their techniques but also their visual communication skills. By experimenting with mediums such as pencil, charcoal, and pen and ink, the students will enhance their ability to look and see selectively while developing their artistic skills and talents.

### **Technical Theater (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimesters)**

This course covers the important concepts of technical production primarily through hands-on

experience. The students will learn about the principles and basic operation of theatrical lighting, audio, and video systems; theatrical rigging; the theatrical production process and technical theater's role in it; and workplace safety.

Participation in school plays and Cabaret is encouraged but not required.

### **Design 1, Photography (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

In this course the student will develop their understanding of the basic guidelines of good composition, utilizing the principles and elements of two-dimensional design (line, shape, value, form, texture, color and unity, continuity, repetition, balance, rhythm). Using a variety of photographic based media the student will be required to complete several projects. The projects will include; the properties of light and pinhole photography, digital photographic continuity, the invisible/visible long exposures and afterimages. The goal for each project will be for the student to gain experience with a new or familiar material, develop a strategy for completing a piece of artwork, and incorporate an art historical reference, or scientific concept into their production. The class will include at least one field trip to a local art center or museum.

### **Acting in Shakespeare (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

You've read him on the page but have you lived him on the stage? William Shakespeare wrote human beings meant to be interpreted by actors. What may seem like a foreign language will begin to make sense as you speak the words with the meaning and intent of a real person

(no funny accents required). We will learn about Elizabethan England through films, exercises, and improvisation, while always making an effort to connect his plays to our lives. We will do our best to interpret his rich verse so that it is active and immediate as well as poetic. By the end of the trimester participants will perform in a scene from one of Shakespeare's comedies.

### **Design 2, Collage, Gouache, Ink, and Pencil (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

In this course the student will develop their understanding of the basic guidelines of good composition utilizing the principles and elements of two-dimensional design (line, shape, value, form, texture, color and unity, continuity, repetition, balance, rhythm). Using a variety of traditional drawing and painting tools, along with mixed media strategies the student will be required to complete several projects. The projects may include: Russian constructivist poster design, contemporary art and crafting silhouettes, re-purposing a book and designing type. The goal for each project will be for the student to gain experience with a new or familiar material, develop a strategy for completing a piece of artwork, and incorporate an art historical reference into their production. The class will include at least one field trip to a local art center or museum.

### **New Moves (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

This class will build upon the foundations of dance training techniques. Ideally, students will take the first trimester (classic modern dance) to get in shape and lay the ground work. Students will

be introduced to different kinds of dance improvisation choreographic composition, and creative collaborative peer movement projects. Varied ways of moving will be explored by the dancers individually, in small groups, and as a class. Interested students wanting to fully produce their work for stage will have the opportunity to perform in the Choreographer's Showcase.

### **Exploring Painting (3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester)**

Strongly Suggested pre-requisite: Exploring Drawing or Design 2. This course will introduce the student to one of the most natural forms of human communication, painting. Students will learn how paintings are constructed, how to evaluate what artists do, how to talk about art, and how to use tools and media to create their own kinds of visual expression. The students will work primarily in watercolors and acrylics in completing works that will enhance their understanding and appreciation of this art discipline.

### **Ballet Past and Present (3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester)**

This course will focus on learning and refining classical ballet techniques. This class will allow for personal and individualized attention. Students will train at the barre, practice adagio variations in the center and allegro locomotor phrases. Historical and contemporary ballet works from Europe and the U.S will be viewed and discussed. Students may opt to perform a ballet variation for the school. This course is open to sophomores and a limited number of juniors.

### **Advanced Technical Theatre (3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester)**

Students who have completed one trimester of Technical Theater are eligible to take the Advanced Technical Theater class. A maximum of six students will use the knowledge they have acquired in the first Technical Theater class as a springboard for exploring more advanced topics in audio, lighting, and theatrical production. Students will design, organize, and implement their own mini-productions. Members of this class are required to participate as technicians in concurrent Nichols School productions such as Cabaret, the Spring Play, and musical performances, at the discretion of the instructor

### **Design 3, Kinetic art, Performance work, and Motion Pictures (3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester)**

In this course the student will develop their understanding of the basic guidelines of good composition, utilizing the principles and elements of two-dimensional design (line, shape, value, form, texture, color and unity, continuity, repetition, balance, rhythm) in relationship to both space and time. Using a variety of media the student will be required to complete several projects. The projects may include: understanding media literacy through movie making, exploring performance art through restaging iconic and historical artworks, and creating animations using stop motion technique. The goal for each project will be for the student to gain experience with a new or familiar material, develop a strategy for completing a piece of artwork, and incorporate an art historical reference, or contemporary cultural

critique. The class will include at least one field trip to a local art center or museum.

### **Performance Technique (3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester)**

Regardless of whether or not you ever plan to be on stage you will inevitably be asked to present yourself in a public situation. Beyond announcements at morning meetings, you may be required to give an oral report, interview for a college or job, speak at a charity event, or run a meeting. Learn the tools that are necessary to succeed in any public speaking situation. For the first half of the trimester we will focus on relaxation, Concentration, diction, vocal variety, intention, and preparation through public speaking projects and acting exercises. In the second part of the trimester we will explore how actors apply text analysis and physical and vocal technique to monologues and short scenes.

### **Guitar and Keyboard Exploration (one trimester, Fall, Winter or Spring)**

Do you own a guitar or keyboard and would like to learn how to play it? This course will help you to learn how to read, play, and compose music. You will listen and study different styles of music as well as create your own original compositions. The class will also include appropriate field trips.

### **Handbell Ringing (First Trimester)**

This trimester elective will explore all aspects of handbell ringing. Students will start with basic ringing techniques and then

advance to more involved techniques such as “4-in-hand” and solo ringing. This is open to all students with or without music reading ability. Students will learn how to read musical scores, with special emphasis on rhythm. Students will participate in at least one workshop with Diane Dick, one of the country’s leading solo handbell ringers. Students will learn about the historic origins of handbell ringing by reading Dorothy L. Sayers’ *The Nine Tailors*.

### **Junior/Senior Arts Electives**

#### **Acting: Introduction to Acting Technique**

Students will engage in exercises that focus on building a character vocally, physically, and psychologically. Acting exercises created by theatre greats Konstantin Stanislavki, Uta Hagen, and others will be explored through improvisation and prepared performance projects. Students will also apply Stanislavski’s character and scene analysis techniques to short elliptical scenes and full length scenes from 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century American Theatre. Finally, students will collaborate with the Digital Video class on the Spring Film. Suggested Prerequisites for this course are Foundations of the Arts: Acting Styles or Performance Technique.

#### **Advanced Acting**

This year long class is available only to students who have completed Acting: Introduction to Acting Technique or those who have been granted special permission from the instructor. After a brief review of Konstantin Stanislavski’s technique, we will focus on the Sanford Meisner acting technique through improvisational “repetition”

exercises and scene work. For the second half of the year we will apply improvisation, character analysis, and scene analysis techniques to a small ensemble piece to be performed in late spring.

### **Photography**

The photography course takes the application of image reproduction and photographic techniques and applies them to the very simple and complex techniques available to us. The course starts with basic pinhole camera construction and black and white traditional photography for the first semester branching out in the second semester to introduce digital imaging, electronic transmission and image analysis. Emphasis will be placed on development of a photographic portfolio that will include 25 quality works. Students are required to have either a 35mm or a digital SLR (single lens reflex) camera for this class. Suggested prerequisites for this course are Intro and Advanced Design and Composition. Open to Seniors, and Juniors.

### **Digital Video/Film Making**

This course challenges students to use the tools of digital filmmaking in the production of original, creative, and thought provoking work. The use of digital video cameras, lighting, microphones, audio editing software, video editing software, and postproduction techniques will be introduced and taught through projects. Students will be asked to produce several short original works in a range of genres that include animation, narrative, experimental, documentary, and performance/video art. In order to better understand time based media super 8mm film production, wet

processing, and hand coloring are explored. In addition to making films, videos and audio works the class will spend time looking at a variety of films and videos by local, national and international artists. In the Spring the class will curate and produce the Flick Fest, an annual film festival that features work from Western New York High School filmmakers. The students in the class will work to launch the festival at Nichols in addition to an encore presentation at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Suggested prerequisites for this course are Intro and Advanced Design and Composition.

### **Advanced Photography**

Photography AP track is a class for juniors and seniors that have a serious interest in photography even though they may not have any experience with formal photographic technique. This class will move quickly through the technical strategies involved in traditional and digital photography. The emphasis of this class will be on developing original and individual expression through photography. Students will be challenged to address each class project through the production of a series of photographs. As a final project students will be required to complete an in-depth investigation on one topic. Both digital and traditional photography will be accepted for the final project. The class will emphasize building a portfolio of work, and is a suggested pre-requisite for the AP Studio Art class. Students are required to have either a 35mm or digital SLR (single lens reflex) camera for this class. Suggested prerequisites for the Advanced

Photography course are Intro and Advanced Design and Composition. This course is a suggested prerequisite for AP Studio Art.

### **AP Studio Art**

#### **2-D Design, or Drawing Portfolio**

A capstone course, this class is for students that take their art making seriously, are highly motivated and self-reliant. The work of this class is to make art with fluency and conviction. Student must produce a living breathing body of work (not a corpse). This class will require a lot of work and promises great reward and satisfaction for jobs well done. The class builds on techniques and concepts that students have acquired in past art courses in the production of new work. The major project in this class is the production of a series of 12 artworks based on a central interest. The concentration should develop a theme and challenge the maker and viewer with complex aesthetic and conceptual ideas. Work in this class can include photography, mixed media collage, digital art, painting, and drawing. The portfolio of work must be primarily two-dimensional in nature. Students will be required to complete a portfolio of at least 25 works. The portfolio includes a concentration (12 pieces), a breadth (12 pieces) and 5 works selected for quality. Suggested prerequisites for this course are Advanced Photography, Design and Composition, Photography, Drawing, Painting. Open to Seniors, and Juniors.

#### **Painting (Introductory, Advanced)**

An introduction to the concepts, skills, methods, and work processes needed to explore the potential of painting. Students work primarily

with acrylic paints on canvas, but also experiment with a variety of materials on paper, including relief work and three-dimensional forms. Students are required to complete a minimum of four canvases in a variety of styles and techniques. Class discussions and critiques help evaluate work in progress and gauge a student's success. Advanced Painting expands on the principles and techniques taught in the introductory course.

#### **Sculpture (Introductory, Advanced)**

Beginning students are introduced to problems and concepts particular to three-dimensional art. An overview of the processes, tools, and materials used in sculpture, including the use of paper, wood, plaster, clay, and metal will be explored. Advanced students will investigate the relationship of ideas to materials and construction techniques in the 3-D format. This course provides an opportunity to develop and expand one's own individual imagery. Periodic critiques to discuss progress are conducted by the teacher, along with class participation. All participants must have permission of the instructor.

#### **Jazz Music - A Truly American Art Form**

We will trace the development of Jazz Music from its beginnings in Blues and Ragtime to its influence on the music of today. A study of Jazz Music provides a greater understanding of the development of the American personality. The class will also attend live jazz and blues performances in the area.

## Music Theory

Students must have 2 years minimum of instrumental or vocal study. The course is designed to aid the students with music reading skills through the study of the structure of music. Emphasis on rhythms, simple and compound meters, scales, key relationships, intervals, chords, interpretive markings, and score analysis.

## American Song: African American Spirituals, Musical Theatre, and Today's Song

Part I of this course will study African American spirituals from musical, literary and, most importantly, historical perspectives. Related topics include the oral tradition, family histories, historical perspectives of nineteenth century America, and early American folk singing traditions. Each student will be assigned a specific aspect of early African American history to research. Part II of this course will be a survey of musical theater. Students will view samples of musical theater from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to today. Students will research biographical information about individual lyricists and composers, study scores for musical styles, trace the derivation of musicals from other literary sources, and discuss how cultural trends were incorporated in the themes of each play. Part III will involve discussing today's American song, and cataloging and researching biographical and recording information about the songs on your iPod. Juniors and Seniors should plan a year-long commitment to this course.

## A Study and Practice in Creativity

This full year course will focus on experiential learning of the creative process. This is an ideal course for seniors who have not had a junior year of arts and have limited experience. Projects that encourage creative collaboration between peers will be a fundamental method of learning. This course is an interdisciplinary class that provides opportunities to engage in many creative projects. Students create their own journals, mini books, jewelry, posters, and other interdisciplinary projects. Media resources will be an ideal way to offer students exposure to artists, their periods of history, and work. Contemporary work in dance-theater, performance art, and interdisciplinary genres will be viewed.

## English

**The Nichols English program seeks to develop in our students the related skills of reading, thinking, speaking, and writing. Students achieve these goals through the study of high quality literature at all grade levels in the Upper School. The English faculty expect and encourage students to read with close attention; to participate in Socratic-style class discussions; to become aware of the linguistic nuances of the texts they read; and to incorporate the fruits of their reading, thinking, and speaking into well-crafted essays.**

**The English program serves the purposes and objectives of Nichols School in several ways:**

**-- The close, careful reading of literary texts is a skill transferable**

**to texts in other academic disciplines.**

**-- The ability to write clear and concise prose is equally valuable in other disciplines and in later life.**

**-- Articulating ideas in the give-and-take of class discussion helps to build the student's confidence in his or her own ideas and values.**

**-- Exposure to the ethical and moral issues found in great literature intensifies a student's awareness of these issues in his or her own life and in the wider world.**

**-- An aesthetic appreciation of the beauties of the English language—especially in poetry—makes our various Arts offerings more attractive to students.**

**-- The pleasures of close and attentive reading require patience and a willingness to reflect and contemplate. We all require a "broad margin" to our lives and occasional havens of peace.**

## Grade 9:

### Foundations of Literature

Foundations is an introductory course in composition and world literature. The program in writing provides a review of paragraph structure and introduces short expository or analytical essays. In literature, readings in poetry and short fiction build critical attitudes and develop awareness of narrative points of view, tone, imagery, symbolism, and irony. Works studied include *The Odyssey*, *The Old Testament*, and *Julius Caesar*.

**Grade 10:  
Literature of the English  
Language I**

This course focuses on the development of the literary tradition in the English language from the late Medieval period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Extensive emphasis will be placed on lyric poetry and drama; the second semester will cover the emergence of prose fiction in both the novel and short forms. Students will receive further instruction and practice in critical writing and will continue to develop verbal and analytical skills. Works studied include *Hamlet*, the poetry of Donne, Milton, and Wordsworth, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Scarlet Letter*.

**Grade 11:  
Lit. of the English Language II  
or  
AP English Literature and  
Composition**

Although the course reviews usage, mechanics, sentence structure, and organization, the most significant progress takes place individually, as students revise and edit their own work through teacher's comments on papers or after individual conferences. Taking up where the Sophomore class leaves off, Literature of the English Language II traces the development of modern literary forms from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, with emphasis on the 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel. Additional emphasis is placed on women authors, authors of color, and authors from outside the United States and Great Britain. Works studied include *The Great Gatsby*, the poetry of Whitman, Dickinson, and Frost, and *Invisible Man*.

**Grade 12:  
English VI or  
Advanced English VI**

This course is the culmination of a student's progress in critical reading and in the development of a mature writing style. Students select a different course each trimester.

**Elective Offerings**

**Southern Literature (1<sup>st</sup>  
Trimester)**

This course will present a survey of the development of literature of the American South. It will examine the works and influences of authors spanning nearly four centuries, and their place in the pantheon of American and world literature. We will be reading the prose, drama, and poetry of authors such as William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Eudora Welty, James Dickey, Kate Chopin, Katherine Anne Porter, Richard Wright, Tennessee Williams, Fred Chappell, Joel Chandler Harris, Cormac McCarthy, and A.R. Ammons. We will look at the essays of notables such as H.L. Mencken, John Barth, Wendell Berry, Alan Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Frederick Douglas, and John Adams. Most of the written work will be essays based upon the analysis and response to the assigned literature as well as class discussion.

Much of the study of southern literature will lead to an examination of the turbulent social, economical, and political history of the American South as well as the geographical features that have shaped its way of life.

**Literature of Childhood (1<sup>st</sup>  
Trimester)**

The "Literature of Childhood" is a survey course addressing classic and

contemporary children's literature. We will read fairy tales and other works emerging from oral tradition, picture books, poetry, juvenile novels, and non-fiction and informational books. We will address the literature from various theoretical positions, including historical, feminist, and multi-cultural approaches, and will address the changing definitions of "child" and "childhood." We will read such authors as Horatio Alger and Lewis Carroll, and Patrick Chamoiseau and some of the fairy tales written by the children of the Butterfly Peace Garden of Sri Lanka. You should expect to read the literature as well as literary criticism.

Note: We will not address pedagogical methods in this course.

**Psychoanalysis and Literature (1<sup>st</sup>  
Trimester)**

This course will examine the fruitful ways in which psychoanalysis has contributed to literary studies. Our focus will be on Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and Lacan, the French analyst who emphasized the importance of language to Freud's theory. Freud's interpretive method and Lacan's linguistic theory will provide a set of tools for reading literary texts. Thus the course serves as an introduction to psychoanalytic ideas, a study of the uses of criticism, and a chance to read literature—some new and some familiar—in a psychoanalytic way. For their final papers, students will be asked to write on a piece of literature *not* discussed in class.

## Literature of the American West (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)

What is the American West and who are its people—the boomers and the stickers? What is the history of the American West and the American Western? How much is fact and how much is fiction? The novels, short stories, poems, essays and movies should help us move toward answering some of these questions. In addition we will view artwork and websites whose focus is the cultural history of our West. We will attempt to understand its place in history and in the American imagination, and to separate fact from myth, for the American West is steeped in myth. This is an English course, however, not a history course. This means that the focus is the frontier narrative, and to this end the discussion of literature, so keeping current is essential.

## Terrorism and its Discontents, or Apocalypse Then until Now (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)

This course will focus on literary presentations of terrorism and apocalypse, from their earliest appearances in Hellenistic Jewish writings to their refiguration in the modern novel. Students will consider religious, philosophical, historical, and scientific factors conditioning authors' and readers' understanding of these themes; course materials will encompass a wide range of genres including Biblical apocrypha, French film, and science fiction.

Required Texts:  
William Gibson, Neuromancer  
The Qur'an (selections)

The Bible (selections)  
Walter Abish, How German Is It  
La Reine Margot (film)

Summer Reading: Orhan Pamuk, The New Life

## The Twentieth Century Irish Theater (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)

The Irish achievements in theater in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has undoubtedly surpassed those of any other nation in the English-speaking world. Irish playwrights have excelled in both of the major theatrical genres – tragedy and comedy. This course will read, discuss, and partially enact several Irish masterpieces.

Required Texts:

J.M. Synge: Riders to the Sea and Playboy of the Western World.  
Sean O'Casey: Shadow of a Gunman and Juno and the Paycock.  
Eugene O'Neill: Long Day's Journey into Night.  
Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot or Endgame.

Summer Reading: O'Casey: The Plough and the Stars  
O'Neill: A Touch of the Poet

## Creative Writing (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)

Seniors in the creative writing elective should expect to read and to write every day. This class will be a workshop in poetry and fiction; although we will work on style, the production of writing each day and the sharing of it with others will make the most important course requirement courage.

Classes will include creative writing exercises, discussions of the course texts, and critiques of one another's work, all leading to the submission of thoroughly revised poetry and stories.

Required texts: Raymond Carver, What We Talk About When We Talk About Love; Loren Goodman, Famous Americans.

## Literature of the Criminal Mind (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)

This course will examine the genre of literature that explores the complex perversions of the criminal mind. Verses and ballads about crimes and criminals demonstrate that particular crimes have caught the public eye for centuries. We will look at the broadsheet ballads from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries which present grisly details of crimes accompanied with advisories appropriate to the moral tenor of the times. "True confessions" by criminals were printed in pamphlet form in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and continued through moralistic crime stories such as the *Newgate Prison Calendar*. We will be looking at other early examples of crime stories from the Bible, ancient Greek literature, and Shakespeare's plays. We will be reading stories narrated through the eyes of journalists, biographers, criminologists, psychiatrists, and the criminals themselves. Among the selections will be works by Jorge Luis Borge, Truman Capote, G.K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoyevski, Edgar Allen Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, James M. Cain, James Harrison, and others. The course will include studies of crime and crime literature done by researchers such as James Ellroy, Lonnie Athens, Sister Helen Prejean, Richard Rhodes, and Martin Priestman.

### **Literature by Women (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

In this course we will address literature written by women, exploring how women from diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and class positions articulate those positions. Implied and articulated are these positions in relation to a larger world context. In our reading of poetry, short fiction, novels, and non-fiction prose, we will be attentive to women writers' representations of creative authority as well as to historical, cultural, and literary contexts. Students should expect to read literature and literary criticism.

### **Theory of Knowledge and the History of Ideas (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

This course serves several purposes. First, it is an introduction to epistemology, the branch of philosophy that asks the question, "How we know what we know?" In our day-to-day lives, this is an inconvenient question to ask because we could never accomplish anything if we doubted our knowledge at every turn. But the question has been asked by philosophers at least since Plato, and their answers have a great influence on how knowledge is presented and received. We'll read some of those philosophers and consider their arguments.

Second, the course serves as an introduction to the history of ideas. Although its name seems obvious, the discipline itself is a fairly recent invention. The study of the history of ideas was begun at Johns Hopkins University in the 1920s. There, Arthur O. Lovejoy and others created a method for systematically tracing key ideas as they changed and developed

throughout history. We'll read Lovejoy, Boas, Tillyard, de Rougement, Berlin, Lewis, and Lakoff and Johnson and trace the history of some basic Western ideas such as love, freedom, power, and nature. Third, our ultimate goal is to consider how knowledge and ideas shape culture, and we'll accomplish this through reading literature. How does literature shape and reflect the ideas and beliefs we hold? How do readings of literature change over time as culture and ideas change? We'll use literature to trace cultural transformations. Finally, this is a course in critical thinking. We will question accepted ideas to read literature in new ways. Students will write several short papers, and one long paper tracing the history of one idea through different works of literature.

Readings (entire or in selections):

Lovejoy, Arthur. Essays in the History of Ideas

———. The Great Chain of Being

Boas, George. The History of Ideas

Tillyard, E. M. W. The Elizabethan World Picture

De Rougement, Denis. Love in the Western World

Berlin, Isaiah. The Power of Ideas

———. Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas

Lewis, C. S. Studies in Words

———. The Discarded Image

Lakoff and Johnson. Metaphors We Live By

### **The Short Story (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

This course will study the short story in an historical context, beginning with early writers of the craft and rushing headlong to the present. The focus will be on critical reading, writing, and discussion of stories that represent the considerable

diversity of this genre. This study will also offer creative opportunities for students to show their stylistic and imaginative powers.

### **The Birth of Bohemianism (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

The period 1775-1875 saw the beginnings of the modern notion of a literary and artistic counter culture, tendency for artists to be regarded (by themselves and the world at large) as a separate, sometimes oppositional, class of people distinguished by eccentricities of behavior and ideology. This course will investigate the development of literary Bohemianism in a variety of textual genres including poetry, letters, journals, and prose fiction; we will consider the influence of political, philosophical, economic, and technological developments on Bohemianism, as well the impact of narcotics and non-European philosophies. Authors: Villon, Coleridge, Byron, De Quincey, Baudelaire, Poe, Whitman, Flaubert, Sand, Nerval.

### **A Sense of Place (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

In many noteworthy works of literature, SETTING is the most important element. Such works communicate a vivid "sense of place" by bringing the reader very close to a particular landscape, environment, or even a country and its culture. This course will explore five such works from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries:

Herman Melville: Typee (South Sea Islands)

Andre`Gide: The Immoralist (North Africa and Normandy)

Rudyard Kipling: Kim (late 19<sup>th</sup> Century India)

Isak Dinesen (Baroness Karen Blixen): Out of Africa (Kenya in the 1930's)

Edward Abbey: Desert Solitaire (The American Southwest)

### **Nathaniel Hawthorne (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

Because Nathaniel Hawthorne read nearly everything written in America before his time, and because he influenced nearly every major American writer after his death, familiarity with Hawthorne's work gives a student remarkable insight into American literature. Hawthorne's tales and novels are dark, funny, beautiful, and strangely human. Aside from the pleasure of reading them, however, his stories provide us an opportunity to ask two central questions about literature itself: how is literature representative, that is, how does literature represent both its time and ours; and how is literature hermeneutical, that is, how does literature make us think about the act of interpretation itself?

Required texts: Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance, The Marble Faun, Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales (Norton Critical Edition); Henry James, Hawthorne (paperback). Handouts will include: selections from Hawthorne's American Notebooks, Puritan documents, and selected letters between Hawthorne and Herman Melville.

### **Literature of the *Belle Epoque* (Seminar)**

For the five week semester we will be studying the literary works of the *Belle Epoque*--the period

between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I, during the French Third Republic and the German Empire —a period where the fortunes of industrialists and the grandeur of the aristocracy reached new heights of excess. The Impressionism of the earlier nineteenth century evolved into the new cultural avant-garde of Expressionism. We will examine the radical transformation of the arts during these decades as new forms of cultural modernity emerged. Literary realism and naturalism evolving into the modernism which came to dominate European literature of such writers as Joseph Conrad, Guy du Maupassant, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, D.H. Lawrence, Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, Oscar Wilde, and William Butler Yeats, and Emile Zola.

### **The Non-Traditional Novel (Seminar)**

We will begin our study of the graphic novel by addressing the *reading* of these novels: defining the distinctive elements of the graphic novel (the boxes, the gutter, etc.), how the images work with the text, their development and varied purposes, as well as their growing acceptance among scholars. We will most certainly consider Art Spiegelman's ground-breaking Maus I: A Survivor's Tale (1986), his remarkable examination of the Holocaust, as well as Marjane Satrapi's more recent Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood (2004).

### **Linguistics and Literature (Seminar)**

This course is an introduction to contemporary linguistics. We'll talk about how languages work and how they change. We'll look at examples

of language use in everyday life and in literature. We'll consider how language shapes our reality and our interactions with each other and with the world around us. Nineteenth century linguistics primarily involved the comparative study of ancient languages and bequeathed to linguists useful tools for language study such as phonology and grammatical analysis. It also developed a number of evolutionary "rules" that described the family relationships between languages. In the twentieth century, structural linguistics asked a different set of questions: What are the structures that underlie grammar? What are the significant differential features of language? What accounts for language shift over time? What set of rules govern a language at any given time? In this course, we'll learn about the two dominant trends in twentieth-century linguistics, the schools of Saussure and Chomsky. We'll read their works, along with popular works by Pinker and McWhorter. Finally, we'll apply linguistic analysis to selected works of literature. Students will be graded on a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes, short responses, and a longer final paper.

Readings:

de Saussure. A Course in General Linguistics.

Chomsky (selections)

Pinker. The Language Instinct.

McWhorter. The Tower of Babel.

### **Contemporary Poetry (Seminar)**

We will be reading mostly poetry of the present day. You will be writing your own poetry, building a portfolio for a class collection.

### Latin Lyric Verse (Seminar)

While many students are familiar with some of the longer constituents of the canon of Latin poetry (Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or *Ars Amatoria*), few have had much exposure to its shorter forms. This course will offer an intensive focus on five authors (Catullus, Horace, Virgil, Sulpicia, and Martial) in a variety of modes ranging from Catullus' starkly powerful "mini-epics" to Sulpicia's surprisingly modern-sounding love-complaints and Martial's savagely irreverent epigrams.

The syllabus is textbook-free; all assignments are online. Readings are in English translation and no expertise in Latin is presumed.

### Shorter Works of Mark Twain (Seminar)

Almost all Nichols students have read *Huckleberry Finn*. But Mark Twain's collected works are replete with many other works, most of them brief and all of them accessible and pleasurable. We will dip into *The Portable Mark Twain* to sample a wide variety of his shorter works drawn from the following list:

"Old Times on the Mississippi"  
"The Private History of a Campaign that Failed"  
"Jim Baker's Bluejay Yarn"  
"To the Person Sitting in Darkness"  
"The Mysterious Stranger"  
"The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg"

### Postcolonialism and Scottish Literature (Seminar)

Most Americans have heard of William Wallace, aka Braveheart, and Rob Roy. We sing a Scottish poem called "Auld Lang Syne" every New Year's Eve. This is strange. Both heroes lived in a country conquered by another country, and the poet Robert Burns wrote in a language the English tried to eradicate. Indeed, tiny Scotland is one of the poorest and wildest countries in Europe, a nation subjugated for more than 300 years by the English--and yet its literature and culture have not only survived, they are revered.

Postcolonialism is a critical approach in international relations theory that deals with the literature of countries that were once colonies of other countries. We will study postcolonial theory in excerpts and essays by Michel Foucault (from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*), Frantz Fanon (from *The Wretched of the Earth*), and Gayatri Spivak ("The Postcolonial Critic").

We will apply the theory to our readings in contemporary Scottish literature. In 1999, Scotland reopened its parliament and has since exercised more control over its educational system than at any time since the nation was conquered in the 18th Century. Gaelic and Scots, two of the country's native languages, have made a comeback. In fact, one can now see Gaelic on the nation's road signs and in its textbooks alongside English. Edinburgh, always a literary city, has since become a hotbed of distinctively postcolonial literary activity, with an emergent Scots and Gaelic literary scene paradoxically cosmopolitan in its ability to attract

writers working in other minority literatures from Europe, Asia, and Africa to its International Book Festival each August. Something very exciting is happening in Scotland, with broader implications for the world at large.

While a look at the work of Robert Burns will serve as a starting point, the most appropriate material for a course in postcolonial Scottish literature is being produced right now. We will therefore read contemporary fiction and poetry by Scottish writers including Irvine Welsh, author of *Trainspotting*, and Carol Ann Duffy, the first woman and the first Scot ever to become Britain's poet laureate (in May 2009).

### Modern & Classical Languages

**We teach foreign languages in order to bring to our students the intellectual, personal, and cultural benefits of learning new means of communication. Students, in learning a language, come to understand the structure underlying all language, including their own. Language study increases mental agility and leads to growth in one's powers of reasoning, memory, and creative thinking. Language study allows one to go beyond oneself to experience the new and different, and to courageously confront and surpass personal limitations. It nurtures adaptability and openness. Through the medium of language, students come to know and appreciate the richness of other cultures in our increasingly interdependent**

world. By encouraging the free exchange of ideas, the development of articulate expression, and the incorporation of both contemporary and time-tested thinking in other languages, we help equip our students to learn from the past, to participate in the complex world of today, and to shape the future.

### **Chinese I**

This course begins with an introduction and an overview of both the phonetic and writing system of Mandarin Chinese. After extensive drill of the phonetic system, listening and speaking skills are cultivated through the acquisition of vocabulary, memorization of dialogues of natural speech and extensive drill of pattern structures. Learning to read the traditional form of characters and to write simplified forms of characters is the second phase after an oral foundation has been established. Appreciation of Chinese culture is cultivated through readings and appropriate activities.

### **Chinese II**

A continuation of Chinese I, Chinese II is designed to increase vocabulary and strengthen grammar. The course will focus more on integration of oral and written skills. The class is principally conducted in the Chinese language and students are required to use Chinese as much as possible. Additional aspects of Chinese culture will be introduced through readings, film and speakers.

### **Chinese III**

Chinese III continues to sharpen students' oral and writing skills by increasing the volume of vocabulary, mastering more complex sentence patterns and writing compositions. Chinese culture will be farther explored through reading pieces in various genres, making oral presentations, learning songs and watching/discussion films.

### **Chinese IV**

This course is designed to continue the study of Chinese through a variety of cultural topics. The topics in this course will include, but will not be limited to, Chinese music, art, holidays, medicine, cuisine, and geography. The course will be conducted solely in Chinese. Students will discuss, present, read, and write in the target language. Grammar points will be embedded in the reading materials. Students are expected to do extensive research and writing projects.

Prerequisite: completion of Chinese III and recommendation of the Department

### **French I**

French 1 is an introductory course for all students beginning their study of French. Through the acquisition and practice of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, the course aims to develop functional proficiency -- the language skills necessary to handle communication tasks and social situations in a culturally correct manner. Students work on acquiring a wide range of vocabulary, and on mastery of verbs, both regular and irregular, in the present tense. The compound past tense is introduced in the second semester. Students are

introduced to and work on appreciating and reproducing both formal and informal levels of language. A new textbook and materials include a very developed Internet component which allows students unlimited listening, speaking and vocabulary practice on their own from any Internet-connected computer.

### **French II**

French 2 continues the work of French 1 using the second half of the textbook begun in Nichols' French 1 course. The course work again centers around the four language skills. Vocabulary development expands and students thoroughly review the present and compound past tenses. The remaining indicative tenses, both simple and compound, are presented, and the study of grammar structures intensifies with an emphasis on reflexive verbs and pronouns. Class activities emphasize speaking and listening activities.

### **Advanced French II**

The Advanced French sequence comprises Freshman and Sophomore-level courses emphasizing grammar study and vocabulary building. Students who successfully complete Nichols' Advanced French sequence generally go on to the Advanced Placement course and exam in French language during Junior year. Students in Advanced French 2 review and work on present and past tenses, reflexive verbs and pronouns, among other grammar topics. Cultural topics and short-subject films provide a theme for each chapter's extensive vocabulary. Students are introduced to

expository writing in Advanced French 2.

*Prerequisite: Recommendation of the Department.*

### **French III**

French 3 continues the sequence of instruction begun in Levels 1 and 2. The Level 1 and 2 grammar work is reviewed in advanced form as part of each chapter's work. Vocabulary-building continues with review and expansion of vocabulary topics from French 1 and 2 and with the addition of new topics. Students learn to use the subjunctive and conditional modes and to express actions in the future tense. Readings are literary, historical and cultural at this level. Level 3, regular or advanced, is the final required course in French. Students successfully completing French 3 may elect to continue in French 4.

### **Advanced French III**

Students in Advanced French 3 continue the grammar and vocabulary work begun in Advanced French 2. Verb tense review and practice is constant. Students learn the remaining indicative tenses and the two subjunctive tenses. Other grammar topics include review of all pronouns, adjective, adverbs, prepositions and the passive voice. Writing assignments are lengthier than those in Advanced French 2 leading up to working on essay-writing. Level 3, regular or advanced, is the final required course in French, although students in the Advanced section generally elect to continue in the Advanced Placement course as Juniors.

*Prerequisite: Recommendation of the Department*

### **French IV**

This course is designed to introduce the student to French culture through examining a variety of contemporary themes. By studying French music and literary works, our objective is to gain a better knowledge of how French speakers view the world around them. We will examine their thoughts and ideas concerning present-day issues through in-class discussions and written compositions. This course is conducted solely in French and will expect the student to respond, discuss, and participate in the target language as well. In addition, vocabulary acquisition and grammar review will be emphasized in order to strengthen the student's foundation in the target language.

*Prerequisite: Completion of French III and recommendation of the Department.*

### **French IV AP: French Language**

AP French concentrates on further developing the four language skills in order to prepare the students for the College Board Advanced Placement exam in French Language given in early May. The AP exam in French is divided into four equal parts, one part for each of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Classes are conducted predominantly in the target language, the major exception being grammar study. Works of literature and other authentic documents make up the reading material. Internet resources are increasingly available both as reading and as listening-practice material. Essay-writing is also an ongoing part of the work in AP

French. Speaking practice in class is required of all participants. Students in AP are strongly encouraged to participate in Nichols' French Exchange Program if they have not already done so.

*Prerequisite: Completion of Advanced French III and recommendation of the Department. The AP exam is a requirement of the course.*

### **French V**

Students who elect French 5 will continue to practice and to develop their language skills through reading, class discussion, research, writing assignments and student oral presentation. Using a poll of the students currently in French 4, the content of French 5 will try to respond to the interests of the majority of the students electing the course. Contemporary Civilization and French cinema have been offered most recently. Other possibilities include an Internet-based course in current events, and a survey of literature.

*Prerequisite: Completion of French IV and recommendation of the Department.*

### **Latin I**

In this course students are introduced to basic elements of Latin grammar and begin to build a vocabulary in Latin through the reading of stories about the adventures of young people and their family in ancient Rome. Students also learn to recognize the patterns of word derivation from Latin to English and the Romance languages. They investigate ancient Roman life and culture, and explore many facets of Greek mythology.

## Latin II

Students continue to master fundamental Latin grammar, to broaden their vocabulary, and to further their understanding of the etymology of English words derived from Latin. The continuing saga of the Cornelius family again comprises the core readings for the course, as we now also begin to read selected stories from Latin literature and short poems in Latin. Ancient Roman life and culture, and Greek mythology, are also important topics in this course.

## Latin III

This course completes the sequence of grammar lessons and continues the study of mythology, word etymology and derivation, and Roman culture and life. The development of a broad vocabulary and a strong facility in reading Latin is a significant goal of the course. Students now begin reading selections, in both prose and poetry, from various Roman writers on a wide range of perennially vital topics including love, leadership, and heroism.

## Latin IV/V

This course offers advanced work in Latin literature, word derivations, and Greek mythology. Students will read selections from Latin authors, some in Latin and some in translation. There will be a systematic study of English etymology based on Greek and Latin, including legal, medical, and scientific terminology. Finally, we will explore the world of Greek mythology in depth, considering its historical, psychological, and literary aspects.

*Prerequisite: Completion of Latin III and recommendation of the Department.*

## AP Latin: Vergil (08-09)

AP Latin will prepare students for the AP exam on Vergil's Aeneid. The Aeneid, an epic about the founding of Rome, is one of the great, foundational works of western literature. The class will read a portion of the Aeneid in Latin, and the entire work in English translation. They will furthermore aim to develop a high level of skill in reading authentic Latin literary texts, in both prose and poetry, from a variety of genres and authors. They will also gain familiarity with the history and mythology of the Trojan War and its aftermath, leading up to the founding of Rome. The AP exam is a requirement of the course.

*Prerequisite: Successful completion of Latin 3 and recommendation of the Department.*

## Spanish I

Spanish I provides an introduction to the four basic skills of language and communication: speaking, listening, writing and reading. Acquisition of cultural knowledge is also emphasized at this level. Students focus on subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement, the essential building blocks of all sentences. The present tense, gender and number agreement, an introduction to the preterit and basic vocabulary elements complete the course work.

## Spanish II

Spanish II is a continuation of the development of the four basic language skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading) plus cultural awareness. Emphasis is placed on oral communication and interaction, accompanied by structured reading

assignments and grammar-vocabulary activities. Students will learn to utilize past, present, future and conditional tenses to fully express their thoughts and views.

## Advanced Spanish II

Advanced Spanish II is designed for students who possess strong linguistic skills and dedication to the study of languages. This course covers the same material as Spanish II at a faster pace, with greater attention to reading, and more frequent writing assignments. Students are selected for the course by the department members, based on ability and commitment to the language.

*Prerequisite: Recommendation of the Department.*

## Spanish II Principles

The Principles level course covers the majority of topics from level two, at a slower pace. Emphasis is placed on guided repetition with a goal of achieving elementary mastery of basic grammar structures and vocabulary.

## Spanish III

This course completes the more advanced grammar points and refines the ability to communicate successfully in more difficult conversational situations. Proficiency in the use of language is sought through a multiplicity of drills, compositions and aural-oral techniques. The students are introduced to short stories and articles and they develop more detailed insight into culture. Written work gradually becomes more complex as students master the ability to use all verb tenses and moods, including subjunctive.

### **Advanced Spanish III**

This course is conducted almost entirely in Spanish. Students are expected to express themselves exclusively in Spanish both in oral and written work. It is designed for students with strong linguistic skills and dedication to the language. It is taught at a faster pace, with a more extensive reading list and more frequent writing assignments. This course introduces literature through short stories, poetry and drama by Spanish and Latin-American authors. The department selects the students for the advanced section based on ability and commitment to the language.

*Prerequisite: Recommendation of the Department.*

### **Spanish III Principles**

This course completes the study of basic grammar and introduces new concepts at a slower pace. New tenses and vocabulary are reinforced through a variety of review exercises to achieve practical mastery of basic grammar structures. Through cultural readings, students are exposed to various aspects of daily life in the Spanish-speaking world.

### **Spanish IV**

This course increases student proficiency in language skills, requires frequent class participation, readings in Spanish, writing, and the use of recorded material. Language usage is stressed, as well as a thorough review of grammar. The course is taught predominantly in Spanish, and examines the history and society of Spain and other Hispanic countries.

*Prerequisite: Completion of Spanish III and recommendation of the Department.*

### **Honors Spanish IV**

This course combines a thorough review of advanced grammar with a study of poems and stories taken from the AP Spanish Literature reading list. Whenever possible, these readings will be supplemented with music, art, and films, as well as additional cultural and historical material. Students will be graded on tests, quizzes, essays, and oral presentations. The course will be taught entirely in Spanish.

*Prerequisite: Completion of Advanced Spanish III and recommendation of the Department.*

### **AP Spanish Language**

The Advanced Placement Spanish Language course is for students who have demonstrated proficiency in composition, conversation, and grammar. This course will concentrate on further developing the four communicative skills. Classes are conducted entirely in Spanish, and emphasize advanced work in grammar, progressive vocabulary building, reading advanced works of literature and other authentic documents. Intensive writing and extensive speaking stress both formal and informal types of situations. It prepares the students for the May AP examination, a requirement for this course.

*Prerequisite: Completion of Spanish III Advanced and recommendation of the Department.*

### **Spanish V**

One of the department's most advanced courses, it expects a high level of accomplishment from its students and requires them to

confront material of substance and sophistication. Students aim at perfecting their reading, writing, and speaking skills, and review advanced grammar concepts. Students continue their study of the history and society of Hispanic countries that commenced in Spanish IV. This course is taught primarily in Spanish. *Prerequisite: Completion of Spanish IV and recommendation of the Department.*

### **AP Spanish Literature**

This course prepares the students to take the Advanced Placement Spanish Literature Exam. Classes, conducted entirely in Spanish, consist of discussion and analysis of major Hispanic literary works. The reading list covers a survey of literature in Spanish from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth century. Students explore all literary genres and write text analyses and comparative essays.

*Prerequisite: Completion of AP Spanish Language or Honors Spanish and recommendation of the Department.* **The AP exam is a requirement of this course.**

## **History**

**The study of history is a cornerstone of a liberal arts education. History provides an appreciation of the past, its peoples and its cultures. The study of history offers unique opportunities to understand the human condition and the processes of change. These skills are necessary for the development of citizenship in a democratic republic. History allows for the development of a range of skills including reading, writing, interpretative analysis,**

**and critical thinking. Research is an integral part of historical scholarship and requires familiarity with current technologies for investigation and communication.**

**Grade 9:  
Ancient World History**

This course is a survey course tracing the development of civilization from the Neolithic Revolution to the emergence of the modern world around 1500 AD. Emphasis is placed on an examination of the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Greece, Rome & the medieval Mediterranean. A strong emphasis is also placed on upon the development of key skills through a multifaceted program of instruction. Instruction will emphasize technology and media skills and will foster development of critical thinking and reading. Special attention will also be paid to analyzing and interpreting primary sources as a key to understanding history. Finally, connections to contemporary world issues will be a critical part promoting historical understanding as well global awareness.

**Grade 10:  
Modern European History or  
AP Modern European History**

The course begins with the Renaissance and Reformation and continues to the present. Topics include the rise of nation-states, social and intellectual development, the great revolutions, World Wars I and II and changes in society and family life. Critical reading is expected and analytical writing is developed. Students learn to work

with primary documents and refine research skills.

**Grade 11 or 12:  
United States History or  
AP US History**

Students take a course with two major components. The first is a chronological coverage of American history from the Colonial period to the 1990's. In the second component, students examine in depth critical themes of American history. Critical writing and analytical skills are emphasized. So, too, is historiography, the analysis of how historians have viewed controversial events, trends, or people in history. In the second semester, a major 2,000 to 3,000-word research paper is required. Topics are introduced in the spring at the teacher's discretion and the process of completing a major research paper becomes the focus of the third or fourth marking period.

**History Electives (Grade 12)**

**AP Macro- and Microeconomics  
(Year Long)**

This course introduces the students to the basic concepts of macro- and microeconomics and examines the operations of the market through case studies. Students write several papers and become acquainted with economic theories from Adam Smith to John Kenneth Galbraith. Discussion of public policy and government intervention in the economy is included

**AP Art History (Year Long)**

A.P. Art History is designed to foster an understanding and enjoyment of architecture, sculpture, painting, and other art forms within diverse historical and cultural

context. In the course, students will examine major forms of artistic expression from the past and present, as well as from a variety of cultures. They will learn to look at works of art critically, with intelligence and sensitivity, and to articulate what they see or experience.

During the year, class time will be spent roughly as follows: 40-50% painting and drawing, 25% architecture, 25% sculpture, and 5-10% other media. Students will be required to understand the basic elements of art, fundamental art historical terminology, and the technical processes used in the production of art. Finally, as Art History increasingly emphasizes understanding works in context, issues such as patronage, gender, and the functions and effects of works of art, will also be examined.

**AP United States Government  
and Politics (Year Long)**

This course begins with a general study of the American political system, taking a look at the constitutional and federal context of the national government as well as the cultural and ideological backdrop against which this system operates. In the belief that theory and practice cannot be separated, it shows how the system works using current politics.

**AP Human Geography (Year  
Long)**

This course is designed to be a college introductory geography class based on the Advanced Placement curriculum. It aims to introduce students to the basic concepts of Human Geography and provide a

geographic framework for the analysis of current local, regional and global problems. Using geographic tools and map skills, the course will examine issues pertaining to population distribution and composition, cultural patterns and processes, political organization, land use, industrialization and economic development and urbanization.

### **Urban Studies I (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

Using the city of Buffalo as a laboratory, we examine its rise as a great American city. This course will introduce students to the history of the City and place it in the context of 19<sup>th</sup> century America when Buffalo grew from a small outpost to prominence as the 8<sup>th</sup> largest city in America by 1890. Topics include the creation of the Erie Canal, the growth of immigrant neighborhoods, the creation of the Olmsted Parks System and the Pan American Exposition. Readings will be drawn from history, literature, journalism, urban planning and urban studies.

### **Early Modern European Culture (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

Culture has been an important element of historical thinking for the last generation of historians. Understood in terms of art and literature as well as a society's broader assumptions about the world, studying culture enables us to comprehend the most basic values and characteristics of a society. This course will look at the culture of early modern Europe through some of the major literary works of the time, some personal writing, and the work of modern

historians of culture. The course will follow both chronological and thematic approaches beginning with popular culture and madness in the sixteenth century, court and elite society in the seventeenth century, Shakespearean understandings of politics and the world, and eighteenth-century globalization.

### **African American History (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester)**

This course will start prior to the arrival of the first Africans in America, with a consideration of English attitudes towards blackness and difference. It would proceed from the early years of slavery and colonial black experience, up through the present. The class will explore the question of how race has been and continues to be constructed in the United States, and the place African Americans have had in that definition—as subjects, and creators, and as resisters.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Century American Social Movements (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

This course will look at the history of attempts on the part of Americans to alter their world and their country. We will consider questions such as: are all movements for change utopian? Can we assess reactionary movements in the same way we do progressive ones? What is the difference between movements that trickle from the top down (i.e. the Supreme Court) and ones that originate at the grass roots? Do the former even exist? Other fields of exploration will be feminism and women's rights, prohibition, the American Indian Movement, poor people's socialist movements of the 1930s and 1980s, the African American freedom struggle and the massive resistance it

engendered, the environmental movement, and student movements against sweatshops and globalization.

### **Capitalism & Democracy (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, current world crises point critically to some of the most basic economic and political forms originating in western civilization and now global in scope. Globalization (in all its forms) has created wealth, opportunity, and reorientations of borders and alliances, not to mention violence, a new brand of terrorism, and economic dislocation. Some critics see these changes as painful but ultimately positive. Others see them as brutally destructive. Who is right? This course will explore the origins of two of the primary components of globalization, democracy and capitalism, and explore their place in the contemporary world.

### **Urban Studies II (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

Using the city of Buffalo as a laboratory, we examine its history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Topics include the political structure of the city, its neighborhoods and community organizations, its historic architecture and current preservation efforts. In addition, we examine the city's stratification and its economic problems. Readings will be drawn from urban planning, urban design, and urban theory; we urge reflection on the direction cities are taking today. Asking each student to become an informed citizen, we hope to actively engage them in the issues confronting our

city today with the hope that they will exert visionary leadership tomorrow.

### **United States History Through the Lens of Ken Burns(Seminar)**

How has Ken Burns shaped how we think about American history? The course will present a different documentary each week. We will view the following: "The Civil War," "Jazz," "Baseball," "The National Parks," and "Not for Ourselves Alone" (about Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony). Each of these will be accompanied by a set of readings that will provide the historical context and challenge Burns' interpretation. We will also consider Burn's place in the field of documentary film: how did his "The Civil War" change people's ideas about the nature of documentary and history? How did "Baseball" open up new fields of study--- or did it? The historian Frederick Jackson Turner stated, "Each age tries to form its own conception of the past. Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time." Just what is it that Ken Burns has done for us?

### **Paris through the Ages (Seminar)**

This course will examine French history and culture through the Ages. Beginning with the creation of Paris during Roman times, we will trace the development of the city and the role it played in French history. We will read primary source accounts, historical novels and general histories of the time in order to understand the influences

that shaped the City of Lights. Focussing on particularly exciting eras in the history of the city, we will examine art, architecture, religion, culture and daily life among Parisians during the following times:

Roman Paris  
Medieval Paris  
Revolutionary Paris  
Haussman's Paris  
Fin de Siecle Paris  
Paris in the 1920's

### **Hell as History: Dante's *Inferno* in History (Seminar)**

This six-week seminar will explore the historical importance, meaning, and viewpoint of Dante Alighieri's masterwork *The Inferno*. Although readable purely as allegory, this text is full of historical references and Dante's own vision of the world and how it works. This course will closely read the text with the goal of understanding Dante's world and times.

## **Mathematics**

**The goals of the mathematics program at Nichols are for students to think conceptually, to reason analytically, and to utilize mathematics to solve everyday problems. For each course, the students are divided into levels based on their backgrounds and abilities. Courses at all levels make extensive use of graphing calculators and computers.**

### **Grade 9: Geometry**

Students study the concepts of plane geometry, area, volume and proportion, and study the presentation of ideas in the format

of formal and informal proof. The course also introduces students to trigonometry, which is explored in greater depth in the advanced sections.

### **Grade 10: Algebra II**

Algebra II reviews basic algebra skills and explores other topics in algebra including absolute value, linear and quadratic functions, systems of equations and inequalities, logarithmic and exponential functions. The notion of function and function notation is introduced. Modeling and interpreting data is also emphasized. The Advanced sections study polynomial, rational, power and root functions and begin the study of analytic trigonometry.

### **Grade 11: Precalculus**

This course extends the ideas studied in Algebra II and further explores topics in Analytic Trigonometry. Topics include polynomial, rational, trigonometric, exponential, and logarithmic functions, and if time permits may include: matrices, polar coordinates, parametric equations, vectors, sequences, series, probability, and analytic geometry. In the Advanced sections, differential calculus is studied in the fourth marking period.

### **Mathematics Electives:**

#### **Introduction to Computer Programming**

A computer program is a set of instructions that tells a computer how to accomplish a given task. Computer programming is the art and science of planning and

implementing computer programs. This course is designed as an introduction to both hardware and software programming. The course begins with basic components of a computer, machine representation of data, number systems, and an introduction to digital electronics through logic gates. The course will also introduce the syntax and style of a high level programming language such as C++ or Java. The course stresses the nature and design of algorithms, top-down and object-oriented design, and coding and debugging skills. Topics will include data types, file and screen input and output, conditional statements, iterations, recursion, subroutines, arrays, and if time permits pointers and data structures. Students who do well in mathematics and have a possible interest in pursuing careers in any math or science area should consider taking this course.  
*Prerequisite: An interest in computers, logic, and digital electronics with completion of Geometry with a Grade of C or better and permission from the Department.*

### **AP Statistics**

AP Statistics introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Students are exposed to four broad conceptual themes: *i*) Exploring data: Observing patterns and departures from patterns *ii*) Planning a Study: Deciding what and how to measure *iii*) Anticipating patterns: Producing models using probability theory and simulation *iv*) Statistical Inference: Confirming models. The AP examination is a

requirement of the course.  
*Prerequisites: Completion of Algebra II with a Grade of C or better and permission from the Department.*

### **Senior Mathematics Electives:**

**Registration for VI Form electives requires completion of Precalculus with a grade of C or better. Students whose grades do not support further study in mathematics may be required to do summer work if they wish to register for a mathematics elective.**

### **Discrete Mathematics**

This full-year elective course introduces students to the study of discrete mathematics. Most of the mathematics students encounter in high school is the study of functions in algebra, trigonometry, and calculus that is based upon the continuous set of real numbers. Topics like permutation, and combination, treat only whole numbers, hence the term “discrete.” Such topics are found in isolation within traditional high school courses, however today mathematics is being applied to important problems in the social sciences and to problems that arise in the design of computer systems. Most of these applications involve discrete mathematics. Topics of study may include election theory, apportionment theory, matrices, graph theory, consumer mathematics, set theory, logic, critical thinking skills, number theory and probability.  
*Prerequisite: Completion of Precalculus Principles and permission of the Department.*

### **Functions and Differential Calculus**

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed *Precalculus*. The first trimester of the course will further explore the abstract notion of Function including Composition of Functions, Transformations of Functions, and interpreting applications of Functions. Particular emphasis will be placed on Exponential, Logarithmic, and Trigonometric Functions. During the second and third trimesters, the course will explore the fundamentals of Differential Calculus including Limits, the Difference quotient, the Derivative and its applications.

*Prerequisites: Completion of Precalculus and permission of the Department.*

### **Differential and Integral Calculus**

A full-year course offered to qualified students. The areas covered include topics from differential calculus including slopes of secant and tangent lines, the definition and interpretation of the derivative including related rates, optimization and linearization. Topics from the integral calculus include techniques of integration and using integration to find area, distance, arc length and volume.

*Prerequisites: Completion of Precalculus and permission of the Department.*

### **AP Calculus AB**

AP Calculus AB covers all the material presented in Calculus, however it is studied in greater depth and with more emphasis on theory as opposed to computation. Additional topics covered include Mean Value Theorem, volumes by known cross-section, slope fields and differential equations. The AP exam is a requirement of the course.

*Prerequisites: Completion of Precalculus and permission of the Department.*

### **AP Calculus BC**

AP Calculus BC covers all the topics in AP Calculus AB. Additionally, students in BC also study Rolle's Theorem, Taylor series, polar coordinates, hyperbolic functions, vectors, and parametric equations. The AP exam is a requirement of the course.

*Prerequisites: Completion of Advanced Precalculus and permission of the Department.*

## **Science**

**Science at Nichols is designed to acquaint and encourage students to emulate the process of science; to examine natural laws, matter, ecology, energy, and the structure of the world around us; to acquire the tools of scientific inquiry; and to consider the relationship between science and society. The use of technology is an important part of the science curriculum. The department sections students by ability in biology, chemistry, and physics.**

### **Grade 9:**

#### **Physics**

The science department believes that a firm understanding of the natural laws that govern the universe is essential to further study in science. This is a conceptual and mathematically rigorous course that allows students to understand the principles that govern the phenomena they witness in their everyday lives. The process of

science is emphasized through laboratory work as each student will develop the skills to use technology for data collection and analysis.

### **Grade 10:**

#### **Chemistry**

Chemistry is a broad science. Knowledge and awareness of chemical principles are important in understanding other fields of science and touches on virtually every aspect of life. Chemistry is a subject that explains the fundamental principles involved in the study of matter. Topics include: the states of matter; chemical equilibrium; acids and bases; oxidation-reduction reactions; kinetics and thermodynamics; and organic biochemistry. This course prepares the student for advanced study in chemistry. It also establishes a foundation for the understanding of the chemical principles which are especially applicable to the study of biology, the next course in the science sequence at Nichols.

*Prerequisite: Physics*

### **Grade 11:**

#### **Biology**

The main topics covered in Biology are: *i)* Molecular and Cellular Biology, *ii)* Genetics, *iii)* Animal Structure and Function with an emphasis on Human Systems, *iv)* Evolutionary Concepts, and *v)* Plant Structure and Function. Laboratory exercises are designed to demonstrate the principles discussed in class. Additionally, labs provide the students with an opportunity to develop laboratory skills and to learn the use/application of scientific instruments.

*Prerequisite: Chemistry*

### **AP Biology**

This course follows the advanced placement biology curriculum. There are three major areas of study. In molecular and cellular biology, students study the chemical basis of biology, cell structure and function, enzymes, and energy transformations. In heredity and evolution, topics include basic heredity, molecular genetics and evolutionary biology. The organisms and populations unit includes species diversity, structure and function of plants and animals, and ecosystem structure and function. Laboratory work is an essential part of the course. The AP exam is a requirement of the course.

*Prerequisite: Chemistry and permission of the Department.*

### **Grade 12:**

#### **Physics II**

This course starts with a review of motion and forces from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade course. It then branches into momentum, energy, and fundamental forces; the field concept and its applications; wave phenomena; and modern physics such as relativity and quantum mechanics. It is the goal of this course to ensure that students wishing to continue in the sciences, engineering, and medicine have a strong background that will prepare them for success at the college level. Laboratory work will provide opportunities for student-directed inquiry into the application of physics concepts to a wide variety of situations and phenomena. In addition, students will be introduced to computer programming as a tool for visualizing physics phenomena through numerical modeling using the VPython language. This course

is open to students with a strong background in mathematics.

### **AP Physics C**

This course involves a rigorous mathematical approach to physics using a comprehensive college-level text. The content of the course follows the AP Physics C syllabus which is a calculus based program consisting of one semester of mechanics and one semester of electricity and magnetism. The AP exam treats each semester separately. Students should feel well prepared for the mechanics exam and the electricity and magnetism exam. Concurrent registration in AP Calculus BC is required. The AP exam is a requirement of the course. In rare cases, the department chair may also admit students registered for AP Calculus AB.

### **AP Chemistry**

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed one full year of chemistry and who have demonstrated excellent ability in the area of mathematics. It is the equivalent of a college freshman chemistry course. This course provides preparation for the advanced placement chemistry exam and for further scientific study at the college level. Laboratory work is a vital part of AP Chemistry. The AP exam is a requirement of the course.

*Prerequisite: Permission of the Department.*

### **Anatomy and Physiology**

Complete with clinical case studies and dissections, human anatomy and physiology examines both the structure and function of the

human organ systems. The anatomy section of the course is interwoven with the physiology section so that the structure of body parts is related to the function of the body parts. Emphasizing relevance, each organ system is introduced with a clinical case study pertaining to a pathology of the system. Through lecture and laboratory work, the course will explore the skeletal system, the muscular system, the nervous system, the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the digestive system and the renal system.

*Prerequisite: Completion of the science graduation requirement.*

### **Environmental Studies**

This is an ecologically based course of study, although interdisciplinary topics from economics to ethics are considered. The course objective is to provide the students with a general understanding of how human activities affect the environment. We will consider from a variety of perspectives questions such as: Are we living sustainably? Should we, as a society, move towards renewable energy sources? What is the current state of our natural resources? Those students who struggle with these questions inevitably gain a heightened sense of awareness both of human nature and of the relationship between people and the environment. Lecture will be supported by laboratory work, student projects, and field studies.

*Prerequisite: Completion of the science graduation requirement.*

### **Geology**

The study of the Earth's processes will offer students the opportunity to apply the principles of science learned in Physics, Chemistry, and Biology to our planet. The scientific

principles of seismic waves will aid the student in determining the Earth's internal composition, while fossil studies will lead to conclusions about geologic time and past earth environments. Theories on plate tectonics, geomorphology, and geologic hazards are other topics of study. Lecture will be supported by laboratory work, student projects, and field studies. *Prerequisite: Completion of the science graduation requirement.*

### **Introduction to Engineering**

This course is intended as a survey class for students interested in Engineering. The first half of the course is focused on Mechanical Engineering, with topics including, Siege Engines, Aeronautics and Civil Engineering. The second half of the course focuses on Robotics, with focus on Mechanical and Electrical Construction and Programming. Each topic is comprised of equal parts and instruction and lab work. In class the students learn the physical theory behind the devices. Homework and unit test are based on this material. In lab, we learn construction techniques and do two big projects per topic. Lab work is a large component of the grading system. This course is suitable for any student that successfully completed Physics.

*Prerequisite: Completion of the science graduation requirement.*

## **Independent Research: Nichols Research Scholar**

### **Science Scholar**

This program gives Nichols seniors the opportunity to conduct scientific research in the western New York area. Research facilities previously involved in this program include the University of Buffalo, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and the Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute. Students, under the guidance of research scientists, learn laboratory techniques, use state of the art equipment, and study the processes involved in completing college level scientific research. All students participating in the program present their scientific findings to the Nichols community at a spring symposium. Students may request independent research credit through a petition to the Academic Review Committee.

*Senior class status, along with permission from both the Science Department and the Academic Review Committee are required for participation in this program.*

### **Humanities Scholar**

This program gives Nichols seniors the opportunity to conduct humanities research in the western New York area through SUNY Buffalo. Depending on the length and intensity of the project, students may apply for independent study credit through the Academic Review Committee. Faculty members will serve as liaisons with university and institute personnel. Student participants are encouraged to apply to present their papers at conferences and seminars in which they present and defend their data

before other scholars who evaluate its merits. They are also expected to attend local humanities events, lectures and demonstrations as observers.

At the conclusion of the program whether it is for the summer, one year or more, students will present a poster or power point presentation to other participants in the program, mentors, faculty and parents. Other interested teachers and students may attend, as well.

*Senior class status, along with permission from either the Modern and Classical Languages Department, English Department or the History Department and the Academic Review Committee are required for participation in this program.*