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# WOODSTOCK DAY SCHOOL

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# Y E A R S

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**Woodstock Day School  
Course Guide  
2023-2024**

Nursery School-Grade 12

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## **WDS Course Guide Overview**

In keeping with our mission, Woodstock Day School (WDS) students pursue their passions and demonstrate a commitment to service, while simultaneously deepening their knowledge in academics. We actively cultivate a Nursery School through a Grade 12 learning environment that is inclusive, developmentally anchored, has expansive social relationships and is growth-oriented. Our classrooms are part of a thriving school community where our students feel valued, intrinsic motivation is nurtured, and learning happens through collaborative problem-solving.

WDS students begin their formal academic studies in Kindergarten. Nursery School and Preschool students are immersed in experiences that build their literacy, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science awareness using the resources in our community, and engage in Physical Education, Music, Art, and Language classes. Beginning in Kindergarten, WDS students take a well-balanced program of core academic subjects in Science, Mathematics, English Language Arts, Social Studies/History, Spanish, and Physical Education. Simultaneously, students are immersed in Visual Arts, Music, Ceramics (beginning in Grade 4), and a rich elective program in Middle and Upper School with courses in Media Arts, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Science, and English. Academic classes are full-year classes, as are Beginning and Advanced Ensemble. Middle and Upper School electives are one semester courses.

WDS academic pathways are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science; and the New York State Frameworks for Social Studies. As an independent school accredited by the New York Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS), WDS meets all New York State graduation requirements. What sets us apart from other schools are the pedagogical practices we use that meet the needs of the whole child, and provide multiple means of engagement, expression, and representation. In addition, our Upper School students are invited to participate in the Collegian Program where they take SUNY Ulster courses in Advanced Mathematics and English 101, earning up to 4 college credits per course.

# Core Classes

English Language Arts

Mathematics

Science

Social Studies and History

Spanish

Physical Education

Health

# English Language Arts

WDS approaches English Language Arts (ELA) with a lens on balanced literacy, embedding explicit language instruction with independent learning and language exploration. In a balanced literacy classroom, reading proficiency is dependent on a child's decoding skills, their background knowledge (vocabulary, context, etc.), and their interests. We want to foster a love of reading and writing in every child. In the early grades, students are exposed to phonics programs to develop their ability to decode text. As students progress from Grade 2 to Upper School, they read through the lens of a writer, and write through the lens of the reader. Students also engage in building vocabulary and knowledge centered on high-quality, grade appropriate text. The goal of ELA is to develop students' ability to use language for information and understanding, for literary response and expression, for critical analysis and evaluation, and for social interaction.

## Early Childhood and Lower School

### Nursery School

In Nursery School, students are immersed in language daily during "read alouds" where they listen to books in a variety of genres, through drawing and painting where they learn to hold instruments for writing, and in speaking with adults and peers. In social interactions, students learn about relationships and play, critical to understanding more sophisticated text in later grades. Through exploration and play, students begin to build a rich vocabulary, developing the phonemic awareness of more formalized literacy instruction in Preschool and Kindergarten.

### Preschool

Preschool students begin their formal study of language arts as they learn a weekly letter. Students develop phonemic awareness, learning the sounds of letters in spoken words, and build their vocabulary. Students begin to develop their fine motor skills, striving for a pincer grip as they trace, and follow dotted lines to write their names. Story paper and small books are created throughout the year. Each child "writes" and illustrates an autobiography at the year's end with a section on describing situations where a variety of feelings are experienced. Students engage in reading books every day with discussion that captures comprehension and connections to previous knowledge and experiences.

### Kindergarten - Grade 5

In Kindergarten through Grade 5, WDS has adopted [Expeditionary Learning \(EL\)](#), an English Language Arts curriculum born from a collaboration between the Harvard School of Education and Outward Bound. EL takes a student-centered approach to teaching

literacy, emphasizing building knowledge and skills, reading increasingly more complex text, and using evidence from a range of text to support writing. EL presents four modules per grade, blending social studies, life science, and English. Each module embeds multiple text types and genres. In Kindergarten through Grade 2, there is a phonics skill block and EL Labs that provide students with an opportunity to explore in depth the concepts and knowledge they are learning in modules. In Grades 3 through 5, students engage with a skills block focused on building vocabulary and grammar conventions.

In Kindergarten, students explore literacy topics in science, social studies, and literature to deepen their understanding of content as they simultaneously acquire the key literacy goals for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The EL modules - Toys and Play, Weather Wonders, Trees are Alive, and Enjoying and Appreciating Trees - engage students in reading both literary and informational text, and writing opinions, informational text, and narratives. Students also keep journals, conduct research. They engage in systematic and specific instruction in the basics of reading and writing to acquire strong and automatic knowledge of letters and sounds in the daily foundations skills block. In the weekly labs, students apply their learning in hands-on experiences centered around deepening students' understanding on the module topic.

In Grade 1, students learn to read and write as they continue to build their vocabulary and knowledge, drawing from hands-on experiences in the world. In Tools and Work, students begin writing informational pieces about the “magnificent things” we create. They then dive into poetry and journaling inspired by the sun, moon, and stars. In the second semester students study birds, by learning how to conduct research and writing their own non-fiction pieces. Later, students learn about the important role birds play in our environment and conservation efforts as they read and write opinions. Throughout this time, they review short vowels and consonants and add beginning and ending blends, eventually learning long vowels. Students add 100 sight words to their Word Wall as we focus both on phonics and sight word recognition. Students show marked growth in writing as they begin the year using some letters to represent words and by the end the year they fill pages with their writing.

In Grade 2, students finish their formal study of phonics, cultivating their use of language with more sophisticated vocabulary as they transition from learning to read and write, to using reading and writing to learn by the end of the year. In Module 1, Schools and Community, students will build their literacy and citizenship skills as they engage in a study of schools. We focus on the guiding question “What is school and why are schools important?” They learn about schools around the world, the challenges communities face in ensuring all students have access to learning, and conduct research to compare and

contrast to create an informational book “The Most Important Thing about Schools.” Students extend these skills and knowledge for the remaining modules: Learning through Science and Story: Fossils Tell of the Earth’s Changes; Researching to Build Knowledge and Teach Others; The Secret World of Pollination; and Providing for Pollinators.

In Grade 3, students dive into reading and writing skills by exploring “Overcoming Learning Challenges Near and Far.” Students learn how children around the world access learning and books, overcome geographical challenges, as well as address personal and structural challenges to become strong, motivated readers and writers. They transfer their knowledge to the Adaptations and the Wide World of Frogs, they explore literary classics, and complete their year with a study on water around the world. Throughout each module, students move from learning to read to reading to learn, increasing their vocabulary, and writing expository, narrative, and opinion pieces.

In Grade 4, students begin with a study on Poetry, Poets, and Becoming Writers. They learn about strategies and devices authors use to engage readers, and they apply these to their own unique works. They continue investigating the intersections between reading and writing in modules on Animal Defense Mechanisms, the American Revolution, and finally, Responding to Inequity: Ratifying the 19th Amendment. Students read important texts individually and in small groups or whole class discussions. Students independently read both books of their choice and books that support the units we are studying. They keep track of their reading and responses in a journal, study spelling, vocabulary, grammar and usage, practice cursive writing, not only for ease of writing, readability and the connection to handwritten texts of the past, but also for the proven neural connections that penmanship makes.

In Grade 5, students continue their studies on critical topics in the world around them. In the first module, Stories of Human Rights, students read *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan in tandem with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The novel serves as a case study to examine the threats to human rights that the fictional characters face. Subsequent modules, Researching to Build Knowledge and Teach Others: Biodiversity in the Rainforest; Athlete Leaders of Social Change; and The Impact of Natural Disasters engage students in timely topics as they build knowledge from multiple perspectives, read a broader range of text, and write informational, narrative, and opinion pieces about the impact each topic has on communities.

## **Middle School**

In Middle School, students engage with more complex and diverse text, conduct research, and begin to write persuasive pieces stating a claim and supporting their claim with



text-based evidence. Students have the space to create written pieces that are meaningful to them, and to read books that peak their interest and suit their purposes. Students focus on critical reading and writing skills in order to analyze, question, and reconstruct the world around us.

In Grade 6, students write essays, narratives, and poems as a means to tell our story, as well as the stories of people we admire, and the times they lived in. They tell these stories through thoughtful research, learn to ask questions, and find relevant information in order to answer the questions asked. Telling stories requires the use of descriptive language, the organization of information so the stories are engaging to the audience, readable, and persuasive. Students continue to engage in guided reading with a focus on inference, analysis of a plot, character development, build their grammar and vocabulary, and to conduct research on big questions and finding evidence to support a claim. Research strategies developed include how to annotate text, using and citing quotations from text, and how to analyze textual evidence.

In Grade 7, students explore the power of language, and the way in which it resonates in our day to day lives. They read novels, poems, short stories, book reviews, and essays as a means to better understand the world around us, and to better understand themselves as writers, with a voice that needs to be heard. Students communicate their ideas and interests not only through formal and informal modes of writing, but also through performance and presentations as well. In reading, students focus on inference, literary devices that shape characters and settings, and citing textual evidence. In writing, students further develop their use of grammar, and how to organize ideas, in order to summarize, write and analyze claims, and the development of central themes and ideas. Students conduct research, asking “big questions,” finding relevant sources to support claims, and using textual evidence to support claims.

In Grade 8, students explore different cultural perspectives as they are communicated in literature. Students question what it means to be voiceless, whether it is due to race, class, religion, or gender, and the way in which the outsider finds their voice. They sharpen their skills as critical thinkers through close analysis of the literature, engage in debate, and formulate arguments in order to communicate their thinking about the themes they encounter in the text they read. In reading, students further develop their use of literary devices and how to use text-based evidence in persuasive and argument writing. In writing, students transition from persuasive writing where they support a claim, to argumentation, where they support a claim and refute a counterclaim with textual evidence.

## **Middle School Electives**

### **Short Story:** Fall (6th-8th Grade)

In this elective students will focus on the craft of short story writing. Students will learn about character development, and how to go about creating characters that are both believable and engaging. Also, students will focus on the question of how to create setting and plot structure in a story, as well as how to incorporate descriptive language into our stories. This is an elective for students who are enthusiastic about writing, and while there will not be any homework required, our time together in writing workshops will be focused on the reading, writing and drafting of short stories, which requires a level of focus and commitment on the part of everyone present.

### **The Howler - The WDS Middle School Literary Blog:** Spring (6th-8th Grade)

The Howler is produced by a group of dedicated students who are interested in working on the development and weekly upkeep of the middle school blog. The blog represents the short stories, poems, essays, and articles of students in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Students take on the role of editors, writers, and promoters in order to keep the blog running. They learn how to develop and produce a weekly blog. Students meet weekly to recruit writing that best represents the WDS literary community.

## **Upper School**

Students take one credit of English each year, exploring the world's most important literary works while learning how authors create meaning. Students use textual evidence to understand the elements of writing in order to write critiques, understand the construct of the text, and how perspectives are being told. Students use argumentation to support their analysis of text. Each student engages with text appropriate for the course and grade level, and they have opportunities to choose text of their own at their independent reading level throughout the course.

### **American Literature:** Full Year (9th & 10th Grade)

This course will use a thematic approach to studying literature of the United States of America by examining and interpreting the literary developments as our nation grew. We will start with the oral storytelling traditions of the Indigenous Northern Americans and loosely follow the timeline of American literature from the Enlightenment Period all the way up to Contemporary times.

Students will have the opportunity to choose an American time period to research and explore with intent to present

their findings to their peers. Students will also have the opportunity to choose some of the reading material to help supplement the course, and have a say in what novels, poetry, short stories, and other assorted texts we decide to read.

This course will allow students to experience what each literary movement had to offer, find their own literary likes and dislikes, and explore the many literary interpretations of the “American Dream”. We will ponder what makes an “American”, and how the American identity has been created or expressed through literature. In addition, we will investigate how the American dream differs from person to person and how it has changed as our nation has evolved.

### **Great Literature:** Full Year (11th Grade)

Deciding what makes a specific piece of literature great is a complex issue that involves differing rationales constructed by the critics and by popular audiences. Students learn how each individual constructs their own set of literary preferences and corresponding justifications that may embrace or reject the views of others. Students read and discuss a variety of literary forms that have been deemed “must read” and try to determine why. They explore biographies on the authors of the literature to see if they can provide us with any insight. Students become the experts as they investigate the issues each literary work presents, explores, and/or ponders. We look at why some pieces have stood the test of time, why they carry such significance for the people who have read them and why some have not. It is expected that students challenge their ways of thinking about literature, their lives and the world as it is placed in front of them on the page.

### **The Art of the Short Story:** Fall (12th Grade)

In this semester-long course, we will read and discuss a variety of short stories & literary works and supplemental materials. Our goal is to see what all the hubbub is about and learn as much as we can about the art of the short story, how they are constructed and their importance and place in the literary canon and the lives of their audience.

There will be weekly writing assignments and readings. Students will choose the short stories they want to read, research their authors, and present their findings to the class.

Students will exercise their ability to think aloud in discussions and engage their peer’s point of view. Students will ponder how privilege, power, and difference manipulate the world around them and write, write, and write.

### **Poetry and Journaling:** Spring (12th Grade)

With the Senior Projects heating up, students spend the third quarter focusing entirely on discovering, writing, and presenting poetry. Students mimic poetic forms, themes, and

styles and learn about the wonderful poets that have shaped and challenged American and world thought. For the fourth quarter, students teach their classmates about their passions while reminiscing about their life journey. Students journal daily and share weekly. At the end of the semester, all students will walk with a Poetry Manuscript and Senior Journal filled with the writings, musings, and explorations of their own and their peers.

Students will be asked to read, discuss, investigate, emulate, and draw inspiration from several poets and writers in this student-centered elective. The study of each poet and author will include biographical information, reading aloud from texts, and in-depth discussions on individual works with an emphasis on the inspiration factor, i.e., how can we use what we learn to become better writers. Students will learn to create “Walls of Words.” A final manuscript of completed poetry and/or prose is required at the end of the year.

### **English 101:** Fall (12th Grade)

This is a three credit course in which students read, discuss and write essays that explore contemporary social issues. Students work on skills necessary to meet the challenge of writing accurately and clearly on the college level through in class instruction, workshops, and one-on-one tutoring if necessary. Students will write a minimum of six essays, including two in-class essays. Emphasis will be placed on the development of a topic, use of appropriate research, review of grammar, critical reading, composition, and academic forms of writing. At the end of the semester, students must take and pass a writing competency test in order to pass the class with a grade of C or better. Students who pass the exam receive the grade earned during the semester; those who do not pass must repeat the course.

## **Upper School Electives**

### **Literary Journal: *The Battering Ram*:** Fall and/or Spring (9th-12th Grade)

During these courses, students create the fall and spring editions of *The Battering Ram* literary journal. The journal's main goal is to unite the many different schools in the greater Hudson Valley area through poetry, fiction, art, photography and all things creative under the sun. It requires creative and self-motivated students who enjoy working in a democratic setting. Each student is assigned a role as part of the editorial board and collectively, they are in charge of the entire publishing process from raising funds to constructing the final layout to be sent to the printers.

**Debate and Public Speaking:** Spring (9th-12th Grade)

Students will examine how the tools of rhetoric are effectively used by famous orators, before applying these skills in real world settings. Students will have opportunities to prepare and deliver debates in class, as well as research and present a range of public speaking topics for varied audiences. Students will regularly practice debating skills to hone their rhetorical speaking craft, and the class will culminate in a prepared class debate and public speaking presentation.

# Mathematics

Mathematics at WDS engages students in doing mathematics; that is, putting the mathematics they learn to work solving problems within a real-world context. Our mathematics curricula resources, [Investigations in Number, Data, and Space](#) (Investigations) for Kindergarten through Grade 5, and [Illustrative Mathematics](#) (IM) in Grades 6 through 11 are problem-based curricula designed to build conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application in problems that are engaging and contextual.

In a problem-based curriculum, students explore multiple representations and strategies to solve problems. They learn that doing mathematics focuses on the ways in which they approach problems, use strategies, explain why they choose the strategy they used and how it compares to other strategies, and interpret solutions in the context of the problem. They understand that quantities consist of a unit and a number/variable, and that the quantity determines how operations are applied and results are interpreted.

## Early Childhood

Early Childhood mathematics is hands-on and focused on the overarching concepts of counting, addition and subtraction, understanding the attributes of geometric shapes, and using these to measure and interpret data. By the end of Early Childhood, students can count to 120 from any starting point, add and subtract within 20 using properties of operations, tell time, measure, and develop an understanding of place value. Throughout Early Childhood, students use concrete objects and manipulatives to model mathematics making connections to formal mathematical notation and vocabulary in Grade 1.

In Preschool, students develop and recognize numerals 0-10 and begin counting sequences by counting objects with a 1:1 correspondence. They learn the counting sequence through the teens, and the underlying concepts of addition are introduced using concrete objects. Students explore and identify two- and three-dimensional shapes.

In Kindergarten, students engage in hands-on activities using manipulatives and games to connect counting and cardinality to number sense as a foundation for conducting operations with numbers. They build conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and apply these to real world problems. Topics include computational fluency with whole numbers through 5, composing/decomposing numbers, geometry, measurement and collecting data. Students have ongoing opportunities to think, reason, solve problems, state opinions, justify, and use mathematical vocabulary to communicate. 'Mathematics Talk' is an essential part of learning mathematics and problems are

connected to real world situations so they can interpret results in the context of the problem where they are also encouraged to act out word problems (math stories) in order to understand and identify strategies to solve problems.

In Grade 1, students use manipulatives and active games that deepen their number sense and use their understanding to addition and subtraction operations within 20. They can count to 120, starting from any number. They develop an understanding of the properties of addition operations and work in the base ten system to compose, decompose, and regroup numbers to find sums and differences. They measure lengths indirectly, tell and write time, and represent and interpret data. Students learn to use mathematical vocabulary to explain operations and relationships between quantities.

### **Lower School**

In Lower School, students use their understanding of place value to engage with multi-digit addition and subtraction. They use these understandings to build concepts for multiplication and division, extending their application of the four operations to fractions, and decimals by the end of Grade 5. Students solidify their knowledge of the four operations, using properties of mathematics to solve problems in novel and more complex situations.

In Grade 2, students represent and solve problems in addition to 100. They begin to work with equal groupings and skip counting as a foundation for multiplication in Grade 3. Students deepen their understanding of place value and use these understandings to do two- and three digit addition and subtraction. Students are introduced to standard units of measure to measure and estimate length, and use addition and subtraction with length. They work with time and money, and continue to represent and interpret data. Finally, they reason about shapes and their attributes.

In Grade 3, students begin their formal study of multiplication and division, by building on work from second grade on equal grouping and skip counting. They learn the properties of multiplication and the relationship between multiplication and division, and at the end of the year, are able to apply these understandings within 100. Students extend their understanding of place value and the properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic. They develop an understanding of fractions, and solve problems involving measurement of time, liquid volume, and the mass of objects. They use their knowledge of multiplication to understand concepts of area and perimeter, and to distinguish between linear and area measurement.

In Grade 4, students use the four operations with whole numbers to solve problems. They extend their understanding of multiplication to the concepts of factors and multiples, and

generate and analyze patterns. Students use their understanding of fraction equivalence and ordering to build fractions from unit fractions, and they learn decimal notation for fractions and compare decimals and fractions. In measurement, they solve problems converting units of measure from a larger unit to a smaller unit. Students continue to represent and interpret data, and learn the concepts and how to construct angles, classifying shapes by the properties of lines and angles.

In Grade 5, students develop algebraic thinking as they write and interpret numerical expressions and analyze patterns and relationships. They use their understanding of the place value system to perform operations with multi-digit numbers and with decimals to hundredths. Students apply their knowledge of equivalent fractions and the identity properties to multiply fractions. In measurement, they convert like measurement units within a measurement system and begin to understand the concept of volume. Students are introduced to the coordinate plane, and graph points in quadrant 1 to represent real-world and mathematical problems. Finally, they classify two-dimensional figures based on their properties.

### **Middle School**

In Middle School, students begin their formal study of algebra, and apply their understanding of the four operations to work with integers, expressions and equations, ratio, and proportional reasoning in Grade 6. In Grade 7, students immerse themselves in proportional relationships with a focus on linear equations, solve problems involving scale, do informal geometric constructions, and draw inferences from statistics and probability. In Grade 8, students model associations of bivariate data using linear equations, and solve equations and systems of linear equations. Students grasp the concepts of functions and use functions to describe quantitative relationships. They analyze two- and three-dimensional figures using distance, angle, similarity, congruence, and understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem.

In Grade 6, students begin their study of algebra, applying what they know about operations in arithmetic to the rational and integer number systems and how to represent and solve one variable equations and inequalities. They begin to work with proportional reasoning to represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables, defining and using ratios in a variety of real-world situations and extend this understanding to unit rates and to find percents. Students use expressions and equations in one variable to find missing values, and apply mathematics to measurement including surface area and volume, data, and statistical problems. Students are introduced to integers and use number lines to represent integer relationships and the four operations.



In Grade 7, students are immersed in ratios and proportional relationships, geometry, and begin their formal studies of statistics and probability. They analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve multi-step real-world and mathematical problems, for example simple interest, tax, percent increase and decrease, etc. They apply and extend their understanding of the four operations to the rational number system, using the properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions and solve linear equations. In geometry, students draw, construct, and describe geometrical figures and solve problems involving angle measure. They also study statistics and probability using random sampling to make inferences, draw comparative inferences, and to investigate chance processes to develop and use probability models.

In Grade 8, students are introduced to the irrational number system, using their knowledge of rational numbers to approximate values. They use radicals and integer exponents (including scientific notation) to generate equivalent expressions, and use square and cube roots to represent non-linear equations. Students extend their understanding of proportional relationships to slope and compare and represent proportional relationships in multiple ways. They define, evaluate, and compare functions, and use functions to model relationships between quantities. Finally, they are able to analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.

## Upper School

Upper School Mathematics at WDS engages students in putting their math skills to work to solve problems within a real-world context. Using a problem-based curriculum, students explore multiple representations and strategies, build understanding and apply their learning. They learn that “doing” mathematics focuses on the ways in which they approach problems and use strategies, encourages them to explain why they choose the strategy they used, how it compares to other strategies and helps them interpret solutions in the context of the problem. Upper School students follow a traditional mathematics progression of Algebra in Grade 9, Geometry in Grade 10 and Algebra 2 in Grade 11. Students in the Collegian Program have the option in Grades 11 and 12 to take Introduction to Probability and Statistics as well as college-level Algebra and Trigonometry, Precalculus, and Calculus to receive 4 college credits from SUNY Ulster or high school credit from WDS. In addition, all WDS seniors take a Personal Finance course.

### **Algebra I:** Full Year (9th Grade)

Algebra I provides students with the necessary background and solid foundations in algebra and problem-solving using a variety of approaches. Topics include: expressions, equations, functions, graphing linear and quadratic functions, graphing and solving systems of equations, exponents and exponential functions, polynomials and factoring,

quadratic equations, radicals and radical equations, rational expressions and equations and probability and data analysis.

**Geometry:** Full Year (10th Grade)

Geometry blends algebraic concepts and reasoning skills with measurement and construction of two and three dimensional shapes. Unit topics include right triangle trigonometry, constructions and rigid transformations, congruence, similarity, solid geometry, coordinate geometry, circles and conditional probability. Students use reasoning and proof formally and informally to illustrate concepts and solve geometric problems using definitions and theorems to support arguments.

**Algebra II:** Full Year (11th Grade)

In Algebra II, students engage with a variety of topics including: sequences and functions, polynomials and rational functions, complex numbers and rational exponents, exponential functions and equations, transformations of functions, trigonometric functions and statistical inference.

**12th Grade Pathways in Math**

Depending on student ability and interest, two Mathematics courses are currently offered for WDS Seniors.

**Personal Finance:** Fall (12th Grade)

This course is designed to ensure students are prepared for post-secondary pursuits, whether college or career, by studying a number of topics relating to personal finance, our economic system and everyday life. Students explore their role within the United States economic system including bank accounts, debit versus credit, financial needs/requirements, as well as taxes, personal investments and credit.

**College Algebra & Trigonometry:** Spring (12th Grade)

As part of the Collegian Program, seniors have the option of taking College Algebra and Trigonometry through SUNY Ulster. The course provides students with the necessary background in algebra and trigonometry to continue on to precalculus and calculus in their senior year and in higher education. Topics include: equations and inequalities, graphs, functions and their graphs, polynomials and rational functions, and trigonometric functions. Students can receive 4 credits from SUNY Ulster or receive high school credit from WDS.

**Intermediate Algebra:** Full Year (12th Grade)

In Intermediate Algebra students will explore all the most essential and important parts of Algebra. The goal of this class is to give students a strong foundation in Mathematics

before students explore after-school pathways. Students will learn to conceptualize and utilize simplistic linear equations, using algebra to analyze and solve statistics and applying probability in real world scenarios.

**Precalculus:** One Semester (12th Grade)

As part of the Collegian Program, seniors have the option of taking Precalculus through SUNY Ulster. In precalculus, students study functions (polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric), inverse functions, and conic sections. This course covers the following topics: The Cartesian plane, graphs of functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, elementary trigonometry, advanced trigonometry, and applications of trigonometry. Students receive 4 credits from SUNY Ulster or high school credit from WDS. This course is a prerequisite for MAT 170 (Calculus).

# Science

The WDS Science Program challenges students to utilize hands-on experiences through scientific exploration using problem- and project-based learning. Students build content knowledge, explore multiple fields of study, learn strategies and methodology, build their understanding, and apply their learning to real-world scientific inquiries.

In Early Childhood and Lower School, science is a developmentally appropriate, “hands-on, minds-on” inquiry program designed to engage and challenge students to apply their growing knowledge of natural processes, phenomena, and cycles to solving real-world problems. WDS uses [Amplify Science](#) in Grades K-5, a phenomena-based science program that blends hands-on investigations, with literacy based activities, and digital simulations.

## Early Childhood

In Nursery School, WDS students learn about the natural world. They discover edible plants that live on our campus and in our area (apples, pumpkins, dandelions, etc.), and learn about local insects and amphibians. As our campus transitions through seasons students observe weather and clouds.

In Preschool, students continue to learn about the natural environment including native trees and animals during the first part of the year and the planets in our solar system and the different cloud shapes and their meaning in the second half of the year.

In Kindergarten, students learn about sunlight and weather, and investigate push and pull as they design their own pinball machine. They develop an understanding of the needs of plants and animals with a focus on monarch butterflies and what it means to be classified as endangered. In addition, Expeditionary Learning Labs from the English curriculum are integrated with science providing students with an opportunity to dive deeper into their studies of weather and trees as they integrate topics across multiple disciplines.

In Grade 1, students learn about the Earth's rotations, how light can be used to make areas brighter and how shadows are formed. They continue their studies on plants and animals by exploring their defenses, paying attention to how camouflage, spikes, and shells protect. In addition, Expeditionary Learning Labs from the English curriculum are integrated with science providing students with an opportunity to dive deeper into their studies of tools and work; the sun, the moon, the stars; and birds as they integrate topics across multiple disciplines.

## Lower School

In Grade 2, students learn about the relationships between plants and animals as they study a module on Chalta Trees and Bengal Tigers in India. They explore the properties of materials associated with glue and slime, and how landforms can change over time with erosion. In addition, Expeditionary Learning Labs from the English curriculum are integrated with science providing students with an opportunity for in depth study of fossils, and pollinators.

In Grade 3, students learn about survival needs in different environments as they study yellow snails in an area over time. Students explore inheritance and traits, learning about the yellowstone wolves and similar packs of animals. They learn about balancing forces of a train on its tracks, and about how weather and climate are necessary to think about when providing habitats for different species.

In Grade 4, students learn about energy and waves through a study on how dolphins communicate. They use their new knowledge to develop an understanding of energy conservation, exploring the energy grid and blackouts. Their final unit of study focuses on geology, specifically sedimentary rocks and fossils.

In Grade 5, students conduct science explorations, learning how to design and safely conduct experiments and field studies in both our lab facilities and on our campus, and how to effectively report their findings. Investigations and collaborative projects include, but are not limited to, the water cycle and global water resources, creating models to explain how matter behaves, discovering patterns and processes in our solar system and the universe, recognizing ecosystems in distress and exploring ways to potentially restore balance to natural systems. Students will share their knowledge and discoveries with our school community when they transform our laboratory space into an interactive science museum focused on a topic/unit chosen by consensus.

## Middle School

Middle School science utilizes [the OpenSciEd curriculum](#), and is designed to prepare students for the rigors of Upper School science and the formal studies of biology, chemistry, and physics. Students expand their understanding of scientific inquiry to design, investigate, and report on increasingly complex studies of the natural world, using phenomena to understand the fundamentals of Earth science, physical Science, ecology, and natural resources. In addition to core science classes, Middle School students have an opportunity to take a space science elective.

In Grade 6, students explore Earth systems science through an inquiry-based program designed to engage and challenge students to apply their growing knowledge of natural

processes, phenomena and cycles to the world around them. Students design and safely conduct experiments and field studies in both our lab facilities and on our campus, and effectively report their findings. Investigations and collaborative projects include, but are not limited to, basic ecology, food chains and webs, classification systems, energy pyramids, the water cycle, water resources, basic meteorology and climatology, the rock cycle, the connection between plate tectonics and global geologic features, and a survey of environmental issues. Students will share their knowledge and discoveries with our school community when they transform our laboratory space into an interactive science museum focused on a topic/unit chosen by consensus.

In Grade 7, students begin their studies of physical science through an inquiry-based program designed to engage and challenge students to apply their growing knowledge of basic physics and chemistry to the world around them. Students learn how to design and safely conduct experiments and field studies in both our lab facilities and on our campus and to effectively report their findings. Investigations and collaborative projects include, but are not limited to, discovering how matter behaves and is classified, an introduction to the Periodic Table, exploring the types of chemical reactions, the materials and energy sources mined from the Earth's crust, a survey of the electromagnetic spectrum, the laws of motion, simple machines, and the fundamentals of producing energy in environmentally friendly ways. Students will share their knowledge and discoveries with our school community when they transform our laboratory space into an interactive science museum focused on a topic/unit chosen by consensus.

In Grade 8, students continue their studies of physical science and Earth systems with an emphasis on water, an issue expected to define the 21st Century. Students explore how every day, the quality and quantity of water resources are being impacted and the effect of this on the health and well-being of the planet's ecosystems and organisms. They use water as a conduit to explore the scientific method and experience creating, performing, and analyzing their own original scientific studies. While the amount of water on Earth cannot be increased, students learn the systems that bring water to us, the dangers those systems face, and act to protect and manage water resources available to us. Throughout the course, local, national, and global events are explored in real time.

### **Middle School Elective**

#### **Science Goes to the Movies - Fall and/or Spring**

Science Goes to the Movies challenges students to view science fiction films through an inquisitive and critical lens. Students will dig deeper into a variety of films by learning about the basic scientific concepts each movie builds upon, performing experiments to replicate the inventions or other endeavors undertaken in each film, and ultimately

determining the accuracy of the science behind each film. A different slate of films will be presented each semester, allowing students to examine the plausibility of cinematic science fiction for the entire year or just one semester.

## Upper School

Upper School Science challenges students to utilize hands-on experiences through scientific exploration. Using a curriculum that blends problem and project-based learning with a focus on content knowledge, students explore multiple fields of study and learn strategies, build understanding, and apply their learning to real-world scientific inquiries. Throughout their high school careers in the science lab and out in the WDS woodlands, students develop laboratory, analytical and investigative skills, each through the lens of the particular “ology” they are immersed in that year. The science courses each follow traditional topics, but with a progressive twist that encourages the students to see themselves as citizen scientists and utilize the content they are learning in practical, real-world application on local to global, to sometimes galactic scales. WDS uses [New Visions for Public School Science](#) curriculum, an open-source hands-on phenomena program as the framework for Upper School science classes.

### **Biology:** Full Year (9th Grade)

Biology is the study of life, focusing on organisms, living systems and their environments. In this course, students will explore biology by studying the wonders of the Hudson Valley and the WDS campus. Students learn to appreciate the beauty of life from its seemingly simple composition at the molecular level to the global spectrum of complex ecological issues our world has faced in the past and faces today. Topics include but are not limited to: cell biology, ecology, genetics, evolution, anatomy and physiology. Projects and lab activities will focus on using biological tools (microscopes, trail cameras, etc.), ecological investigations and a multiplicity of variables that affect organisms.

### **Chemistry:** Full Year (10th Grade)

In this course, students learn that chemistry is all around us, from the seen to the unseen. Students explore traditional chemistry topics with a focus on real-world phenomena and how the structure of the fundamental building blocks of matter - the atom - influences these interactions. Topics include but are not limited to: atomic theory, molecules and macromolecules, chemical reactions, environmental chemistry, biochemistry, food chemistry, and medicine. This course allows students to apply observations and mathematical derivations to a wide range of practical and classical problem-solving examples.

### **Physics:** Full Year (11th Grade)

Through this full-year course, students learn a general understanding of the fundamental

principles of physics through the lens of their previously studied sciences, biology and physics, and apply these to phenomena in real-world and scientific problems. Topics include but are not limited to: motion, forces, energy, pressure, momentum, heat and heat transfer, waves, electricity and magnetism. Through the course's emphasis on scientific inquiry, investigations and labs help students refine their scientific knowledge and skills set.

### **Upper School Elective**

#### **Forensics:** Fall and/or Spring

Forensic science uses a structured and scientific approach to the investigation of crimes. Using inquiry-based settings, students will learn basic scientific and mathematical methods and models required in forensic science. Students gain experience in applying previous knowledge and skills developed through biology, chemistry, and physics to answer questions and solve problems within a forensic context. Additionally, students gain a general understanding of how science, technology, and logical thought processes are applied in real situations, and how to recognize and question areas of bias related to crimes. To be clear, this course utilizes, practices, and questions the processes of forensic investigations and does not seek to sensationalize crimes, victims, or perpetrators.



## Social Studies and History

The study of social studies and history formally begins in Kindergarten and continues through 11th Grade. In Nursery School and PreSchool, students' sense of self, the classroom community, and the geography of the campus serve as the foundation for their ongoing learning in social studies and history. There is a natural progression throughout Early Childhood and Lower School as students study self and others, families, local, national, and global communities, New York State and local history, and the Western Hemisphere. In Middle School, students study the Eastern Hemisphere with an emphasis on ancient civilizations in Grade 6. In Grades 7 and 8, students study the history of the United States, through the Reformation in Grade 7 and through modern history in Grade 8. In Upper School, the focus is on global history and American government. In 12th Grade, seniors can choose a history choice class in a topic of interest to them.

The teaching of social studies and history immerses students in multiple perspectives using primary and secondary sources, and can include videos with historical reenactments and actual events. Students in K- Grade 5 use the [C3 Inquiry](#) curriculum which integrates social studies with literacy, and balances academic rigor, with inquiry, and civics. Middle and Upper School students use curricula resources provided by the Smithsonian Institute, the History Channel, and [New Visions for Public School's Social Studies](#) curriculum.

### Early Childhood

In Nursery School and Preschool, students experience social studies through the classroom and school communities, and learn geography exploring the richness of the natural resources on our campus. Their learning opportunities serve to understand how natural resources shape communities, and to connect the individual student with the norms and roles of communities. In addition, Preschool students do a geographical tour around the world, learning about the animals and features of continents.

In Kindergarten and Grade 1, students continue to develop their own sense of place in their world by first getting to know themselves, learning about their homes and families, and getting to know their peers and school community. They explore the broader community, and learn key aspects of social studies by studying the Hudson River through the lenses of culture, continuity, and change. Students understand how the history of the Hudson River developed individual identity, citizenship, and the people, places, and the environment in which they live. Key aspects and critical skills learned include collaboration, communication, interviewing/gathering data, mapping, presentations, land forms, charting, graphing, comparing, and contrasting.

## Lower School

In Lower School, students expand their knowledge of local communities and resources to explore how these inform citizenship at the state, national, and global level. They study communities around the world, are immersed in New York State history, and begin their study of American History and the Western Hemisphere.

In Grade 2, students explore their communities and other communities, beginning with individual development and cultural identity, basic civic ideas and practices, how geography and the environment shape human interactions and communities, and the ideas for understanding time, continuity, change, and economics. Units of study are built on guiding questions, for example, the Unit 1 guiding question is: “What kinds of things do “good” citizens do?”

In Grade 3, students are immersed in the study of “Communities Around the World.” Using knowledge of their own community as a foundation, students explore the globe and global citizenship, examining different communities and cultures. Cultures include the social constructs, customs, traditions, language, arts, literature, religion, forms of government, and economic systems. Students are introduced to concepts of prejudice, discrimination, and human rights, as well as to social action.

In Grade 4, students focus on New York State and local communities and their change over time, incorporating the study of geography, history, economics, and government. Many local connections will be made throughout the year. The course is divided into Key Ideas that span the State’s history from before the European colonial era to the modern period. The Key Ideas allow frequent connections to present-day New York State, Saugerties, and the Hudson Valley region, as well as New York City.

In Grade 5, students focus on the history and geography of the Western Hemisphere, including the development of cultures, civilizations, and empires. They learn about interactions between societies, and compare the government and economic systems of modern nations. Students are introduced to elements of archeology, in a course that spans prehistory to modern times. Topics include early peoples of the Americas, societies and civilizations, European exploration, geography, culture, government, and economics.

## Middle School

Middle School history focuses on the underlying geography and chronology of historical events from the Eastern Hemisphere in Grade 6, to an in-depth study of American History in Grades 7 and 8. Students will use multiple lenses to understand history, including how geography, politics, and societies shape history. They explore chronology and conduct research using evidence from maps, timelines, and primary sources to support claims and

provide information. Students learn how to write informative and persuasive pieces and have opportunities to present their findings in different settings, with diverse audiences, using a variety of mediums.

In Grade 6, students study the geography and history of the Eastern Hemisphere, and how the characteristics of a region affect the development of a society's culture, civilizations, and empires. They explore how societies interact, compare trends in governments and economics. Students interpret timelines, and conduct research on early river civilizations, the Mediterranean, feudal Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the rise of world religions. They gather, interpret, and use evidence from history to make claims about societies/events in the Eastern Hemisphere.

In Grade 7, students study the geography and chronology between places and regions in North America from the pre-colonial period through the Civil War. Throughout their studies, seminal events in local communities are highlighted, for example, The Battle of Saratoga, Underground Railroad locations, and the Seneca Falls Convention. They interpret timelines, and conduct research using maps and timelines to frame driving questions about social and political developments in North America, including the revolution and imperial expansion, up to the Civil War.

In Grade 8, students continue their study of American history from Reconstruction through present times. Students learn about the human experiences in the United States through the end of World War II, and the themes that have shaped modern history in New York State and the United States. Throughout their studies, students explore changing societies, the impact of technology, westward expansion and imperialism, World Wars I and II, economic progress and decline, foreign policy, changes in demographics, and domestic politics and reform. They use maps, timelines, and historical accounts in primary source documents to answer questions on American experiences, including race/racism, labor unrest, and gender inequity.

### **Middle School Elective**

#### **Mythology:** Fall

In this course students will learn about various cultures throughout history and their mythologies. Students will focus on the functions of myths and what they highlight about the cultures and societies they, like Athena born from the head of Zeus, sprung from. Students will read and analyze folklore, myths, and legends from various civilizations throughout ancient history, including but not limited to Greek, Egyptian, and Norse cultures.

## Upper School

Upper School history focuses on historical events at the global and national level that have shaped societies through policies, laws, beliefs and systems. Students begin their study of global history in Grade 9, developing an understanding of the foundation of politics through the year 1600. In Grade 10, the Global History 2 course continues their study of world events from the year 1600 to modern times. In Grade 11, students study the American government to understand how the United States Constitution frames the law of the land and the role each branch of government has in upholding the United States Constitution.

### **Global History 1 (9th Grade)**

This course explores the foundations that shape the political world and prompts students to reflect on their personal position within it. Students unpack systems of oppression, connecting seemingly “ancient” history to contemporary life. The course begins at the dawn of human society and ends in the Scientific Revolution in the year 1600. Throughout this course students dare to ask, “How did we get here?,” providing opportunities for students to connect historic events to modern times. Students conduct extensive research, reading, writing, discussion and presentation projects. They engage with a diversity of voices, disparate perspectives and neglected histories. Topics include: an introduction to culture and geography, neolithic development, classical civilizations and its discontents, medieval times, colonialism, and globalization.

### **Global History 2 (10th Grade)**

In their second year of global history, students grapple with the development of modern statehood and the role of the individual within it. The course begins by examining an age of revolution and colonialism, investigating the dynamics of people and government. Key questions include: “Who has power?”, “How is it wielded?”, “What are ways for people to enact their power - politically, socially, personally?” Students conduct extensive research, reading, writing, discussion and presentation projects. Topics include: revolution, industrialization and imperialism, global conflict, genocide and decolonization.

### **American Government (11th Grade)**

Students take a full year course on the role, structure, systems and processes embedded in American Government from colonial to modern times. The course begins in colonial times and the American Revolution, and it extends to the formation of a new nation as defined by the United States Constitution. Students explore seminal historical events that informed the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the United States Constitution, as well as laws enacted by the United States Congress. Topics include sectionalism, the Civil War, reconstruction, the gilded age and progressive era, rising American power, prosperity and depression, World War II, the Cold War and domestic change.

# Spanish

Students begin their study of Spanish in Early Childhood through sound, gestures, pictures, songs, play, and games. They continue their formal study of language through 11th Grade, and in their Senior year can choose to receive additional credits in Spanish. Throughout their studies students learn Spanish vocabulary and grammar, develop an ear for the language, become immersed in Spanish culture, and develop skills to read, write, speak, and listen. The teaching of a foreign language has many benefits including increased problem solving, cognitive development, and the flexibility to embrace the culture of Spanish speaking countries.

## Early Childhood

One of the main reasons for teaching Spanish to our children from the earliest years is that they educate their ears and they start loving Spanish, the second most spoken language in the United States. Teaching language to Early Childhood students is organic. They learn Spanish in the same way that they learned to speak English, through immersion in the language. Our course in the early years is based on songs that are carefully chosen. These songs should convey knowledge that they will need in elementary school, for example, numbers, body parts, colors, etc.

## Lower School

In the Lower School, students increase their vocabulary to include animals, vegetables, planets, fruits, days, months and clothes. They begin to express likes and dislikes, greetings and first dialogues, as they are introduced to the structure of Spanish. Using small theatrical scenes that motivate children to speak and participate, students engage in the language in real-world settings fostered by the characters, Don Carlos and his two grandchildren, Tomasito and Anita.

## Middle School

Beginning in the middle grades, students deepen their knowledge of Spanish to understand, speak, read, write and communicate with the proper pronunciation and intonation in Spanish. The focus is on oral production, with time to practice their oral production through dialogues, drills, songs and exercises in free association and self-expression. Students learn to communicate in everyday situations, and develop a greater understanding of Spanish and Hispanic culture.

## Upper School

Students study Spanish throughout Grades 9-11. Students immerse themselves in the language as they learn vocabulary, grammar, have conversations, and develop the skills to read, write, and speak Spanish in increasingly sophisticated ways. Students engage in discourse, presentations, and papers using a project-based curriculum.

### **Spanish I** : Full Year (9th Grade)

This in-depth beginning Spanish course covers a wide range of vocabulary necessary for navigating daily situations, present and future tenses, sentence structure and idiomatic expressions. The central focus of this course is on speaking and writing in Spanish, as well as listening and reading comprehension. Students also study aspects of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit.

Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish speaking countries, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored.

### **Spanish II:** Full Year (10th-11th Grade)

In this follow-up course to Spanish Level I, students study more advanced vocabulary and grammar, with an emphasis on dialogue and conversation for everyday situations. Students continue studying present, future, past and other tenses. Students build skills in expressing themselves in Spanish through speaking and writing. Students also continue to study aspects of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world.

The goals of the course are to expand vocabulary, enhance a further development of oral skills through extensive and varied speaking activities, improve students' ability to express oneself in written Spanish by providing review and practice of verb forms and tense usage, develop reading and critical-thinking skills through cultural and short literary readings, develop awareness of the culture in which the target language is spoken, competency in cultural behaviors linked to proficiency in a second language, and cooperative learning through paired and small group activities.

**Spanish III:** Full Year (11th Grade)

As students progress to Spanish Level III, they study advanced vocabulary and grammar. All tenses and grammar structures are covered in the course. Students study current events in Spanish culture and are expected to deliver oral presentations in Spanish. The course will also explore many aspects of Hispanic culture and history, with an emphasis on literature.

Students will work specifically on engaging in conversations about expressing feelings and emotions, rather than just facts about locations and everyday concerns, demonstrate a specific understanding of Spanish culture and how Spanish-speaking cultures interact with the globe, be able to make comparisons between their own country and Spanish-speaking cultures, and demonstrate their use of Spanish outside of their school community.

**Senior Spanish:** Full Year (12th Grade)

Seniors may choose to take Spanish as part of their choice classes. In Senior Choice Spanish, the emphasis is on conversation and deepening understanding of Spanish vocabulary in order to conduct conversations in a variety of settings.

The entirety of class will take place in Spanish, and cover a range of conversational topics such as expressing feelings and emotions, rather than just facts about locations and everyday concerns, demonstrate a specific understanding of Spanish culture and how Spanish-speaking cultures interact with the globe, be able to make comparisons between their own country and Spanish-speaking cultures, and demonstrate their use of Spanish outside of their school community.

# Physical Education

Physical Education (PE) is an essential part of learning for all WDS students. In PE classes, students learn essential skills of body management, develop strategies and have fun with physical fitness, and learn to work in teams, build sportsmanship, and cooperation.

## Early Childhood and Lower School

In Nursery School through Grade 5, the main goal of Physical Education is to provide students with developmentally appropriate physical activity experiences. They use movement, play and exploratory-based activities to work towards appropriate developmental outcomes. The content is intentionally designed to foster the development of knowledge and skills in the six main movement categories: movement concepts, balance, locomotor (walking, running, leaping, jumping), manipulative (handling objects with feet or hands: throwing, striking, kicking etc.), health and nutrition, and social-emotional development.

## Middle School

In Grade 6, Physical Education is an integral part of the total education program of each student. It contributes to the development of the individual in many ways; critical and creative thinking, positive self image, teamwork and cooperation, socialization, goal setting, problem-solving, large and small muscle development, hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, patterning, spatial relationships, physical fitness, and the understanding of human motion. Students will be provided opportunities to develop physical fitness and acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for successful participation in a variety of activities.

In Grade 7, Physical Education focuses on taking personal responsibility for one's overall health through an active, healthy lifestyle that fosters a lifelong commitment to wellness. Physical education is a tool by which our students can realize the benefits of further education, productive exercise, responsible leadership, and personal fulfillment. Physical Education develops the physically literate individual through deliberate practice of well-designed learning tasks that allow for skill acquisition in an instructional climate focused on mastery. This course provides students with educational experiences that enable them to acquire knowledge and the ability to apply these necessary skills and to experience the benefits of learning and the values of wellness. The aim of this class is to guide all students in discovering, valuing, and developing their unique talents to realize their potential, while being focused on a lifetime of wellness as a physically literate individual.



In Grade 8, Physical Education provides experiences to develop coordination, control, initiative, self-reliance, self-worth, honesty, and kindness to others. Opportunities will be provided for increased responsibility in planning, organizing, and leadership. The importance of fitness through activity will continually be stressed, while offering as wide a skill and game experience as possible. Students will be introduced to and participate in activities that will help them remain active through a lifetime, learn to set and achieve health and fitness related goals, and work with others in multiple situations.

### **Upper School**

In Grades 9 and 10, Physical Education targets a wide variety of interests incorporating team games as well as the opportunity for enhanced individual skill and fitness development. Students build on skills learned during middle grades and begin to incorporate more complex tasks and opportunities. Through the broad range of sports, games, and diverse fitness activities and assessments, many large and small muscle groups are challenged. This also includes development in the areas of cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance as well as flexibility. While the emphasis of the course is focused on the development and maintenance of fitness, and an understanding of how to live a healthy, balanced life, it is also designed for FUN!

In Grades 11 and 12, students practice, build upon, and develop skills in activities that will help students maintain fitness throughout their lifespan. Skills learned in 9th and 10th grades are broadened and deepened, and students begin to incorporate more complex tasks into their regimen. Students practice and develop skills in activities that will help them maintain fitness throughout their life, while simultaneously targeting a wide variety of interests, incorporating team games as well as the opportunity for enhanced individual skill and fitness development. Through the broad range of games and diverse fitness activities and assessments, many large and small muscle groups are challenged. This also includes development in the areas of cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, and endurance as well as flexibility. While the emphasis of the course is focused on the development and maintenance of fitness and an understanding of how to live a healthy, balanced life, it is also designed for FUN!

# Health

## Middle School

In Middle School Health, students meet weekly for the full year to explore and discuss health-related topics specific to middle school students based on the knowledge, maturity, and readiness of each class. Topics are age appropriate and include but are not limited to: overall health, physical health, mental health, puberty changes, sexuality/sex education, identity, drug awareness, decision-making, healthy relationships, media literacy/digital citizenship, and other topics/questions that the students raise throughout the year. The core foundation of the health program includes the three concepts of rights, responsibility, and respect and it is discussion and project-based.

## Upper School

In Grades 9 through 11, students meet weekly to discuss and study health-related topics specific to high school students. Topics include: overall health, physical health, mental health, puberty awareness, sexuality/sex education, identity, drug awareness, decision-making, relationships, media literacy/digital citizenship and other topics/questions that the students raise. The core foundation of the health program includes the three concepts of rights, responsibility and respect.

For Seniors, the focus is working with the transition to living more independently after high school in relation to decision making and staying safe in a variety of settings. This includes but is not limited to: discussions around safe sex, drug/alcohol use/awareness, living alone or communally, navigating college or the workplace, recognizing and/or addressing mental health challenges and accessing resources, and how to seek support.

# Signature Programs

Art

Ceramics

Media Arts

Music

Drama

# Art

Students take art classes throughout their experience at WDS, refining the mediums, tools, and techniques employed to create original works of art. They study works of art and artists to increase their art vocabulary and to better understand how artists approach their work and how they present their work, to gain insight into their own creative process so that they may increase their confidence and proficiency at self expression.

## Early Childhood

Early Childhood students receive exposure to art fundamentals, materials, and methods. They experiment with, name, and discuss multiple art media and techniques. Students immerse themselves in color and in the range of shades within a color to experience first-hand how colors work together. In Nursery School and Preschool, students have opportunities to engage with artistic materials on a daily basis. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students apply their explorations and study of art to techniques as they develop their fine motor skills.

## Lower School

In Lower School, students explore many different art making techniques and fundamentals while developing art confidence, vocabulary, and understanding. Themes and projects are designed to complement and integrate with their academic studies, while leaving plenty of opportunities for students to create original works of art throughout the year.

## Middle School Electives

### **Foundations of Art:** Fall (6th-8th grade)

Students will explore the various forms and media of Art. Projects will introduce the elements and principles of art/design through drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture.

### **Themes of Visual Art:** Spring (6th-8th Grade)

Students will explore the various functions and themes of art. Projects will discuss the role of the artist as storyteller, recorder, designer, teacher, and pioneer.

## Upper School Electives

### **Principles of Art & Design:** Fall (9th-12th Grade)

Students focus on balance, emphasis, movement, proportion, rhythm, unity, harmony, and variety in order to hone their application of the principles of design and better the organization of elements within their own art.

### **Studio Art:** Spring (9th-12th Grade)

The class is required to produce a cohesive group of work and then facilitate two art shows themselves. Students will work independently to choose their own directions and themes. Group critiques and gallery visits will be expected.

# Ceramics

Students begin their exploration of ceramics in Grades 4 and 5 as they prepare for more in-depth study electives in the Middle and Upper School.

## Lower School

In Grade 4, students meet weekly to learn the basic techniques needed to work with clay. Students start with pinch pots and coil pots, learning how to decorate and glaze them. They develop skills to attach clay pieces to their pots and how to give them texture, while simultaneously learning the basics of chemistry. At the end of the year, they are introduced to throwing pots on the wheel.

In Grade 5, students meet weekly to review the basic techniques of clay, (pinch pots, coil pots, etc.), and learn new techniques in order to make sculptures, learn slab building, sgraffito techniques, and a variety of glazing styles.. They deepen their understanding of the chemistry of ceramics and begin to discuss the engineering of clay. In the second semester, students start throwing on the potter's wheel, reviewing what they learned in Grade 4, to create more elaborate pieces.

## Middle School Elective

**Ceramics:** Fall and/or Spring (6th-8th Grade)

In Middle School, students can choose to take a Ceramics elective which provides a quick introduction and review into the basics of clay techniques, which is especially important for students who have not worked with clay previously. They work on throwing cylinders, and when ready, move on to bowls etc. More advanced sculpting techniques are used and different glaze methods. The students are given broader freedom in their individual projects as the semester progresses.

## Upper School Elective

**Ceramics:** Fall and/or Spring (9th-12th Grade)

Students in the Upper School can choose to take the Ceramics elective where they will learn the many techniques of working with clay. There is a great variety of ways that they can approach the medium and can choose to do assigned projects as well as to create their own curriculum, such as handbuilding, sculpture, or working on the pottery wheel. Glazing, firing, and the basics of chemistry as related to ceramics will also be studied.

## Media Arts

In the Media Arts Program, middle and upper school students learn production skills, along with critical theory, media literacy, and digital citizenship. Our courses balance the academics and the artistic through an experiential and project-based learning environment that enables students to develop a deep understanding of media, and cultivate the tools and skills necessary for storytelling and communicating in other digital forms. Students use media to help students tell their stories and nurture artistic expression. Students have access to professional-level technology in our Media Center and this helps prepare our students for the digital world that students live and learn in.

Many of our students' work has been featured and won awards at festivals such as the Woodstock Film Festival, All-American High School Film Festival, NY Alliance Film Festival, etc. Our students also collaborate with outside organizations to help produce videos. Some collaborations have been with the Ulster County Sheriff's department, the Wayfinder Experience, YESS Conference, and several organizations in Nepal and India.

## Middle School Electives

### **Introduction to Media Arts:** Full Year(8th Grade)

In Grade 8, students take a full year Introduction to Media Arts as the foundation for the Media Arts Program. Students learn the necessary skills to not only understand media, but to also work in groups to produce their own media projects. This class introduces key concepts such as genre, storytelling, critical viewing, peer discussion, and basic production skills. Students learn about the different production roles as well as act in these films. Media projects from this class are screened at our very own WDS Film Festival.

Students learn programs like Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro, Garageband, etc. With the access to technology and digital information that our students face and use every day, it is more important than ever for our students to learn about media literacy and digital citizenship. Students also screen important films and learn to understand cinema as both a visual and narrative art form. Students should expect to analyze, research, discuss, write, and present on the language of film.

### **Digital Life:** Fall and/or Spring (7th & 8th Grade)

In Digital Life, students explore graphic design, animation, media literacy, youth voice, world news, podcasting, current events, social media, art, culture jamming, etc. We also explore and experiment with programs contained within the Adobe Suite. This class

learns basic photography skills and may help produce the WDS yearbook. When possible, students learn how to produce content in our TV studio and learn about the various production roles. This class is a forum for students to use media to explore and communicate with the world around them.

## Upper School Electives

### **Cinema and the Art of the Image:** Fall and/or Spring (9th-12th Grade)

In Cinema and the Art of the Image, students screen movies and learn to understand cinema as both a visual and narrative art form. Students use various digital mediums such as photography, digital music creation, photoshop, graphic design, etc. to further explore the themes and artistic styles of these films. They explore how these films had an impact on artistic, technological, and historical developments, as well as the cultural and political climate that shaped them. Assignments are focused on written responses to movies students watch and hands-on media projects. Students should expect to analyze, research, discuss, write, and present on the language of film.

### **Media Arts:** Fall and/or Spring (9th-12th Grade)

In Media Arts, Upper School students explore the art of filmmaking, building upon key concepts such as genre, storytelling, composition, critical viewing, peer discussion, etc. Students delve deep and expand their production skills, working both independently and in small groups. Filming occurs in a variety of venues, including location and after hours to work on their films. Some possible crew roles are director, cinematographer, writer, editor, etc. In addition to production, students learn how to give and receive feedback.

Students continue to learn how to use professional video, sound, and editing equipment. They have access to the full Adobe Suite. Some students will also explore various digital mediums such as photography, digital music creation, photoshop, graphic design, etc.

Students continue to submit student films to festivals throughout the year, as well as making films for our WDS Film Festival. Our student films continue to win awards every year and screen at festivals like the All American High School Film Festival, Woodstock Film Festival, etc.



# Music

## Early Childhood

In Early Childhood, students begin by listening and tapping to simple rhythms and distinguishing the sounds of different instruments, to learning different beats. They learn songs and develop a love for singing, clap to a beat, and begin to recognize harmony, learning vocabulary, and musical notation.

In Nursery School, students learn to tap along to a simple rhythm/counting in four beats and to distinguish between instrument sounds including strings, percussion, woodwinds, and voice. They distinguish between high and low pitches and tones, and execute simple movements to the beat (clapping, dance movements, etc.) Nursery School students learn many songs and show their love for singing.

In Preschool, students learn to tap along to a simple rhythm/counting in four and six beats and to distinguish between instrument sounds including strings, percussion, woodwinds, and voice. They are introduced to and use basic music vocabulary: forte (loud), piano (soft/quiet), mezzo forte, etc. Preschool students refine and deepen their ability to distinguish between high and low pitches and tones, and execute simple movements to the beat (clapping, dance movements, etc.) Students continue to learn many songs and show their love for singing.

In Kindergarten, students learn to tap along to a simple rhythm/counting in three, four, and six beats and to distinguish between instrument sounds including strings, percussion, woodwinds, and voice. They are introduced to and use basic music vocabulary: forte (loud), piano (soft/quiet), mezzo forte, etc.; and recognize basic musical concepts of melody and harmony. Students refine and deepen their ability to distinguish between high and low pitches and tones, and execute simple movements to the beat (clapping, dance movements, etc.) Preschool students start to distinguish between genres of music, e.g. jazz, classical, and rock, and execute more complex movements to the beat (clapping, dance movements, etc). Students continue to learn many songs and show their love for singing.

In Grade 1, students learn to tap and count along to a simple rhythm/counting in three, four, and six beats, and to distinguish between instrument sounds including strings, percussion, woodwinds, and voice. They are introduced to musical notation (treble/bass clefs, quarter/dotted half/half/whole notes and rests), and use basic music vocabulary: forte (loud), piano (soft/quiet), mezzo forte, legato versus Staccato, etc. They deepen their understanding of melody and harmony, and explore chords. They continue to learn songs

including solfege with accompanying hand signs. Students refine and deepen their ability to distinguish between high and low pitches and tones, and execute simple movements to the beat (clapping, dance movements, etc.) They execute more complex movements to the beat (dance movements, etc.)

## Lower School

In the Lower School, students continue to learn vocabulary, beat, and more complex movements. Students explore a range of beats, including 4 beats and 3 beats. Beginning in Grade 3, students learn more both the treble and bass clefs, including musical notation: treble/bass clefs, quarter/dotted half/half/whole notes and rests. They also learn the ukulele. Beginning in Grade 4 students choose an instrument, and begin weekly small group lessons on their instrument. In the latter half of Grade 4 and through Grade 5, students learn to work together in ensembles.

In Grade 2, students learn to tap and count along to a simple rhythm/counting in three, four, and six beats, and to distinguish between instrument sounds including strings, percussion, woodwinds, and voice. They recognize basic musical notation (treble/bass clefs, quarter/dotted half/half/whole notes and rests), and are introduced to scales and chord structures. basic music vocabulary: forte (loud), piano (soft/quiet), mezzo forte, legato versus staccato, etc. They deepen their understanding of melody and harmony, and explore chords. They continue to learn songs including solfege with accompanying hand signs. They execute more complex movements to the beat (dance movements, etc.)

In Grade 3, students learn to tap and count along to a simple rhythm/counting in three, four, and six beats, and to distinguish between instrument sounds including strings, percussion, woodwinds, and voice. They recognize basic musical notation (treble/bass clefs, quarter/dotted half/half/whole notes and rests), and are introduced to scales and chord structures as they learn the ukulele. They continue to learn and use basic music vocabulary: forte (loud), piano (soft/quiet), mezzo forte, legato versus staccato, etc., and deepen their understanding of melody and harmony. They continue to learn songs including solfege with accompanying hand signs. They execute more complex movements to the beat (dance movements, etc.)

In Grade 4, students begin small group lessons on their chosen instrument: piano, guitar, bass, or drums. They participate in a classroom Orff xylophone ensemble. In the fall semester, students develop basic skills on their chosen instruments, and in the spring semester. They pivot to a class ensemble using their new instruments. Students learn instrumental basics including several chords, beginning note reading, drum rudiments, and some drum set patterns as well as songs and pieces for performances.

In Grade 5, students take a full-year class on ensemble/instrument including small group lessons to refine practice on their chosen instruments. Building on basic skills expanding chord, reading, scale, rudiment, and drum pattern vocabulary as well as navigating repeats and more advanced music notation they learn songs/pieces to perform in a concert.

## Middle School Electives

### **Beginning Ensemble:** Full Year (6th Grade)

Beginning Ensemble is a performance based music ensemble where students rehearse and learn music in a variety of contemporary styles culminating in a final concert performance. This is an extension of how the program works in 5th grade but now is an elective that meets twice a week. In addition students will get a weekly pull out lesson in small groups specific to their instrument. Students will work on learning pieces using a variety of methods including written notation, by rote and improvisation. Students will have assignments of group and individual exercises to further their abilities on their instrument.

### **Intermediate Ensemble:** Full Year (7th & 8th Grade)

Intermediate Ensemble is a performance based music ensemble where students rehearse and learn music in a variety of contemporary styles culminating in a final concert performance. Students must have roughly 1-2 years prior training and a basic understanding of a musical instrument to enroll at the instructor's discretion. Students will work on learning pieces using a variety of methods including written notation, by rote and improvisation. In addition students will have assignments of group and individual exercises to further their abilities on their instrument.

## Upper School Elective

### **Advanced Ensemble:** Full Year (9th-12th Grade)

Advanced Ensemble is a performance based music ensemble where students rehearse and learn music in a variety of contemporary styles culminating in a final concert performance in Winter and Spring. Students will work on learning pieces using a variety of methods including written notation - both full arrangements and lead sheets, learning by rote and improvising. In addition there will be work on group and individual technical exercises to further their instrumental abilities. These exercises will include regular weekly assignments that will count toward the student's final grade. In addition to working on material for live performance students will be focusing on furthering student's knowledge of music theory, music literacy, instrumental technique and ear training.

# Drama

## Middle School Elective

**Drama & Theater Basics:** Fall and/or Spring (6th-8th Grade)

This course introduces Middle School students to the essentials of acting and “reacting” on stage in solo monologues, scenes, and short one-acts with other actors. Furthermore, the class introduces students to the origins of theater, as well as basic theater concepts like lighting, stagecraft, costuming, and makeup. Students also learn how to prepare for an audition and how to cold-read audition pages, in addition to learning how to develop original characters, create subtext for existing characters, and learn to work as a team in order to stage a successful production.

# Senior Program

College Seminar

Senior Project Seminar

Research Seminar

## Overview

All WDS seniors develop a year-long senior project to explore, in an in-depth manner, an area of individual interest. Students conduct research, work with a mentor and identify an expert to design a product that enhances the community. Students complete a senior research paper that provides the research-basis for their product. They also design and execute a product that has a direct impact on the community and present to a panel that includes an expert in their field of study, a WDS administrator and a faculty member.

### College Seminar

The college process for seniors at WDS is an individualized program designed to meet the needs of each graduate. For students who wish to apply to college, students will walk through the process together while simultaneously expecting students to lead the way. Students will also explore other post-graduation options for those who may not want to attend college right out of graduation. The focus of the entire college/Senior process will be on asking students to take ownership of their experience and, with support, be proactive through the application and acceptance experience. After the application submission process is complete, students will then focus on the various aspects of leaving home, campus/independent life safety, collaboration with the senior project program, financial aid, planning for graduation, and leaving home. This is an important and exciting time for each of our Seniors and the goal of this course is to provide the necessary support, academically and emotionally, for each student in every step of the process.

### Senior Project Seminar

#### Full Year Senior Seminar

In this course, students will develop, complete, and support the academic presentation for the Senior Project. Students will also discuss how to communicate information and perspectives through a variety of media and methods. Students will explore and learn media skills and media literacy to advocate for themselves and for social change. Using the Media Center, students will create their own media projects and various types of presentations.

Students can expect frequent practice with speaking and presenting in front of the class. There will be teacher and peer feedback for every assignment. Presentations will explore ideas related to their senior project as well as stand-alone topics assigned throughout the class. Teachers will also help the students work on the relationship between their project and the community. Teacher will work with students to help pick their mentor and expert and work in tandem with JD and Jon to choose and develop their senior project idea. When applicable students may use some class time to explore the Senior Product and

elements of the Paper.

### **Research Seminar**

Students explore a variety of research methods to gather information, study how best to present their findings, and discuss research methods. Students use multiple sources and mediums to move from hard copy and web pages to behavioral studies, oral histories, interviews, observations, shopping carts, lists, iconography, statistics, graphs, maps, etc. Student agency is tantamount and they have the opportunity to dive deep into their passions and interests. Students reinforce note taking skills along with extensive documentation of research. As the course develops, students choose and/or design the next steps for their research to complete their final senior research paper, the senior product and the senior project presentation.

## WDS Upper School Semester Overviews

Students in Upper School follow a comprehensive learning pathway to ensure that all students graduate WDS with the knowledge and skills needed for post-secondary learning. All students take the following sequence of courses, however, courses in history, science, and mathematics may be taught in a different order than those listed below based on student need and class structures.

### 2023-2024 Core Courses (by Grade)

Subject	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
<b>English</b>	9th Grade American Literature	10th Grade American Literature	Great Literature	Art of the Short Story (Sem 1) Poetry and Journaling (Sem 2)
<b>History</b>	Global History I	Global History II	American Government	Senior Choice*
<b>Language</b>	Spanish I	Spanish II	Spanish III	Senior Spanish
<b>Math</b>	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Personal Finance (Sem 1) College Algebra & Trigonometry (Sem 2) OR Intermediate Algebra (Sem 1 & 2)
<b>Science</b>	Biology & Lab	Chemistry & Lab	Physics	Senior Choice*
<b>Health</b>				
<b>Physical Education</b>				

\*WDS Seniors choose 2 credits of core courses to delve deeper into content. Choice classes are designed to meet the interests of Seniors and are offered for one semester.

Elective courses vary each semester. Current offerings are described by subject in the Course Descriptions section of this course guide.



## WDS Graduation Requirements

Subject	Required Credits
English	4 credits (including Senior English)
Math	4 credits
Science	3 credits
History	3 credits
Languages	3 credits (consecutive)
Physical Education	2 credits
Health	1 credit
Electives	8 credits
Senior Seminars	2 credits
Senior Electives	2 credits
Senior Project	Completion of Project Required
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>30</b>

- Full year courses that meet 3 hours each week earn 1 credit/year.
- Full year courses that meet 2 hours or less each week earn 0.5 credits/year.
- Single semester courses that meet 3 hours each week earn 0.5 credits/semester.
- WDS evaluates transfer credits on a case-by-case basis for students who were awarded credit from an accredited institution prior to enrolling at WDS.