

Seminar Descriptions
Avalon School
2011-2012

This is a list of seminars that will be offered during the year, however, additional seminars and/or guided projects may be added throughout the year.

Art

Block 1

Drawing: The art of reading and recreating light and line

Instructor: Geri Connelly

T/Th/F-studio

Graduation Standards:

I. Arts: Creation and Performance

II.Arts:Creation and Evaluation

Visual elements and principles of art will be explored in this seminar through the use a variety of drawing mediums. Basic drawing techniques and styles used in creating still life, landscape and portraits will be covered. Students will be required to problem solve and develop their ideas through the use of a sketch book assignments, completed in class drawing exercise,s readings and projects.

Block 3

Introduction to Ceramics

M/W/F 1:30-3:00

Instructor: Geri Connelly

Hand building clay forms will be the focus of this seminar. Coil, slab, pinch and press mold building techniques will be used. Historical development, physical properties and the artistic/cultural traditions of ceramics will be explored through readings, museum visits and projects. There will be lectures, demonstrations and fact-driven quizzes, of course!

Graduation Standards: Arts I. Creation and Performance, Arts II. Creation and Evaluation

Language Arts

Block 1

Absent Narratives

M/W 10:20-11:20

Instructor: Gretchen Sage-Martinson

This seminar will take a look at some of the narratives that our absent from our history books. We will take some time to discuss narrative writing, we will read some narratives from history, and then students will do research into their own family histories, conducting interviews and writing up narratives about their ancestors.

Lupe Fiasco's *The Cool*

W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Tim Quealy

This seminar will use Lupe Fiasco's concept album *The Cool* and other artists to study the poetics of hip-hop. Students will use writing and discussion to analyze several works, including traditional poems as well. Students will use songs of their choosing to write an short analytical paper.

Graduation Standards: Reading and Literature: American: Contemporary Literature, British Literature: Early to Renaissance; Historical Context; Poetry and Poetic Devices; Specific Support; and/or Writing: Writing Process

World History (see Social Studies for description)

T/TH 10:20-11:20

Instructor: Nora Whalen/Kevin Ward

Block 2

Comedy Writing

W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Tim Quealy

I'm so funny! The class where we write with the goal of creating humor and quite possibly the physical human reaction to said humor.

In this seminar, students will read, watch, and study the art of comedy, producing several original written pieces. Students will create a portfolio of funny things, including: non-fiction essays, short plays, fictional letters, speeches, character sketches, parodies, satires, fake

news articles, and a stand-up routine. Through student-run workshops, the class will practice evaluating, critiquing, and helping each other throughout the writing process. Students will also perform for the class. Class will culminate in the creation of an anthology of humorous pieces. Extensive writing required; sense of humor preferred.

Graduation Standards: Language Arts: Writing: Narrative, Descriptive, Audience and Purpose; Speaking: Interpersonal Communication; Arts: Creation and Evaluation, Creation and Performance.

Rites of Passage: Historical and Literary Perspectives

M/W 10:20-11:20

Instructor: Gretchen Sage-Martinson

Throughout history, cultural groups have developed ways to initiate their youth into adult society. Interestingly, cultures separated by both time and geography have created very similar rituals and ceremonies. In this seminar we will read about the seven common elements of coming of age rites. We will discuss what roles these rituals play in society, and what is happening in cultures that do not initiate their youth in a traditional manner. We will look at what happens in America by studying gang and military initiations, as well as analyze how and why initiation rites are so popular in American literature and movies.

Graduation Standards: Students may earn Writing: Narrative, Descriptive, Expository, Research, and/or Critical. Literature: American Modernism and/or Contemporary.

Literature: Into the Wild

T/TH 10:20-11:20

Instructor: Kevin Ward

In this seminar, students will read numerous works of literature that are mentioned in the book Into the Wild, a non-fiction story about young man in search of a different path in life. At the end of our study, we will read the book, consider its themes as well as its connections to other pieces of literature we have read, and write a short analytical paper. Students will have the option of a solo camping experience as part of our exploration of themes.

Graduation Standards: Language Arts: Reading and Literature: American Literature: National Literature and Romanticism; American Literature: Realism; American Literature: Contemporary Literature; World Literature: Pre-20th Century Literature; Literature: Specific Support; Language Arts: Writing: Writing Process; Audience and Purpose; Critical.

Guthrie Theatre's Schools on Stage

Dates and Times: TBD

Humanities Room

Instructor: Kevin Ward

For ten three-hour sessions, twenty students will meet with a Guthrie teaching artist to create a piece to be performed on the Guthrie stage. Students must be prepared to take direction from the visiting artist to create and perform this work. Five students in particular will do a good deal of the writing, and fifteen students (plus the writers) will act in the piece. On the day of the performance, students will spend all day at the Guthrie participating in workshops. That evening, the students will have dinner and see a play at the Guthrie. Students may participate in this opportunity for free but donations are appreciated

Graduation Standards: Language Arts: Reading and Literature: Drama; Historical Context; Language Arts: Writing: Narrative; Language Arts: Speaking, Listening, and Viewing: Interpersonal Communication.

Guided Project in Writing for 9th graders

M/W 10:20-10:50

Instructor: Gretchen Sage-Martinson

This guided project is aimed at 9th graders hoping to brush up on their writing skills before the 9th grade state GRAD writing exam. We will look at elements of essay writing and work through a couple of practice tests. This group will only meet twice a week together for a half an hour each session, with writing assignments to be completed between sessions.

Graduation Standards: Students may earn Writing: Narrative, Descriptive, Expository, and/or Critical.

Julius Caesar

Dates and Times TBD

Instructor: Kevin Ward

For this group project, students will study the Shakespeare play Julius Caesar for four sessions with members of The Acting Company, a group of New York actors in town to do a production of the play at the Guthrie Theater. Before meeting with members of the company, students will meet with an Avalon instructor for several sessions to read and study the play, preparing for the 5-session residency with The Acting Company. The residency is structured to be active, having the students learn by doing (in this case, acting). The course will culminate in seeing the production at the Guthrie.

Graduation Standards: Language Arts: Reading and Literature: British Literature: Early to Renaissance; Drama; Historical Context; Arts: Creation and Performance; Analysis and Interpretation

Literature Review Group Project

M/W 10:20-10:50

Instructor: Gretchen Sage-Martinson

This seminar is aimed at 11th and 12th graders who would like to read literature in a group setting. We will work together to identify which standards are most appropriate and then read and discuss the literature. Students will be expected to produce a deliverable that proves they understand each standard that we work on together. We will meet twice a week for a half an hour for discussions. Much of the reading will be done outside of the seminar.

Tales of Death and Adventure

W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Tim Quealy

This seminar will read, discuss, and analyze stories of death and adventure. Stories will be drawn from a wide range of authors, times, and backgrounds. Seminar will focus on reading skills, reading comprehension, and critical writing, as students will write several short analyses.

Graduation Standards: Reading and Literature: American: Contemporary, National Literature and Romanticism; American Realism; Critical Perspectives; Fiction; Specific Support; Writing: Critical; Writing Process

Spanish

Blocks 1-4

Spanish I

M/W/F 1:30-2:30

Instructor: Annika Bowers

This course is designed to help the student gain knowledge of basic Spanish in terms of both written and oral communication, as well as listening comprehension. We will also use culture learning theories to explore and gain a basic understanding the different cultures of Spanish speaking people. Vocabulary learned in Spanish I include colors, numbers, greetings, useful verbs, food, school materials and subjects, describing people telling time, days/months, weather sports, chores, clothes, places The students will learn and master the present tense, question words, articles, prepositions, and adjectives as part of the grammar instruction.

Graduation standards: World languages: Communication, Connections, Communities, Comparisons, Cultures

Spanish II

M/W/F 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Annika Bowers

Spanish II will continue building on the communication skills and vocabulary learned in Spanish I. The student will also work toward efficiency in verbal fluency, increased writing capabilities, and listening comprehension. An emphasis will be placed on gradually more complicated verb tenses and usage including the past tenses, the conditional, progressive, and perfect tenses. The students will also learn how to form commands and use direct object and reflexive pronouns. The vocabulary covered includes feelings, daily routine, adverbs, more chores, describing students, complaining, comparing, making plans, exercise, nutrition, traveling, and giving/getting directions, ordering food. Further exploration of Spanish speaking cultures will be a large part of the course.

Graduation standards: World languages: Communication, Connections, Communities, Comparisons, Cultures

Math

All Year

Algebra 1 (10:50); Geometry (11:35); Algebra 2 (1:30)

MCA Prep (2:30 T/TH)

Instructor: Laura Connell

Block 1 & 2

Mathematics: Advanced Topics M/W/F 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Laura Connell

Block 3 & 4

Mathematics: Pre-Calculus M/W/F 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Laura Connell

Science

Block 1

Biology: Evolution and ecology

M/W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Jo Sullivan

In the evolution seminar, students will look at how the theory of evolution came to be

understood historically and how discoveries in the twentieth century have altered the theory. Students will study the evidence for evolution such as fossils and molecular variations among diverse species, and the ways in which this evidence supports the theory of evolution and how it can be used to show probable evolutionary relationships. In the ecology seminar, students will use a hands-on approach to learning about ecology- the study of how organisms interact with each other and their environment. Students will create two small ecosystems and observe change over time. The class will also address environmental problems such as acid rain, destruction of the ozone layer, and global warming.

Graduation standards: Biology IV. Evolution, Biology II: Ecology

Chemistry : Atomic Theory

T 9:20-10:20 /TH 9:20-11:20

Instructor: Lauren Leith

(Students must be in or have had Algebra 2**)**

Students will study how the periodic table illustrates patterns in the physical and chemical properties of elements. In addition, the class will be covering atomic particles, electron positions, types of chemical bonding, writing formulas, and calculating molar mass. Chemistry discussions and labs will be conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays with outside reading and assignments.

Graduation Standards: *Chemistry: Atomic Theory*

Physical Science: Matter, Motion, Energy, Human Interactions

W/F 1:30- 2:30

Instructor: Lauren Leith

This is a guided project that will meet twice per week during blocks **1& 2** for labs. Students will work independently during the week reading and completing reviews of twelve chapters which will be checked weekly. Each week a corresponding lab will be completed to illustrate an application of the concepts covered in the textbook. This class is limited in size to a maximum of 16 students.

Graduation Standards: *Physical Science: Matter, Motion, Energy, and Humans Interacting*

Earth and Space Science: Planet Earth: A long history of climate change

T/Th 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Chris Jandro

In this seminar, students will look at the 4.5 billion-year history of the surface of the earth from a geologic perspective. How has a history of climactic turmoil been caused by natural forces, and how could humans possibly be affecting this massive system today? We will talk about the structure of the earth, earth's history, how the interior of the earth as well as outer space affect the surface greatly, and what role the water cycle plays in it all.

Graduation Standards offered: *EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE: EARTH STRUCTURE AND*

*PROCESSES, EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE: HUMAN IMPACT, EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE:
INTERDEPENDENCE WITHIN THE EARTH SYSTEM*

Block 2

Biology: Cell Biology

M/W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Jo Sullivan

In this seminar, students will compare the structures of bacterial, plant, and animal cells, and study the functions of their cell structures. Students also will study how cells use energy, how they grow, and how they reproduce. Students will look at cancer as a cellular phenomenon and study how we can use our understanding of the science of cancer to improve personal and public health.

Graduation Standards: Biology I. Cells

Chemistry:Chemical Reactions

T 9:20-10:20 /TH 9:20-11:20

Instructor: Lauren Leith

(Students must be in or have had Algebra 2**)**

Students will explore how chemical and physical properties of matter result from the ability of atoms to form bonds. In addition, the class will focus on how chemical reactions describe a chemical change in which one or more reactants are transformed into one or more products. Chemistry discussions will be conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays with outside reading and assignments.

.Graduation Standards- *Chemistry: Chemical Reactions*

Biology: Ecology and Evolution: Birds

T/Th 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Chris Jandro

In this seminar, students will study the fascinating world of bird evolution. Students will present a project on a specific group of birds, identifying the birds' ecological niche, as well as their relationship to humans. We will take 1-2 "birding" trips where we see the birds as they head South for the winter (or don't?). We will also explore the fascinating ways that birds can survive the wintertime in Minnesota.

Graduation Standards: Biology IV. Evolution, Biology II: Ecology.

Block 3

Biology: Genetics

M/W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Jo Sullivan

In this seminar, students will study how inherited characteristics are encoded by genes. They will be introduced to the principles of human genetics and explore new advances in genetics such as genetic finger printing, cloning, and genetic engineering. We also will explore the ethical, legal, and social implications of the Human Genome Project.

Graduation standards: Biology III. Genetics

Chemistry :States of Matter and Energy

T 9:20-10:20 /TH 9:20-11:20

Instructor: Lauren Leith

(Students must be in or have had Algebra 2**)**

Students will understand that states of matter can be described in terms of motion of molecules. The properties and behavior of gases can be explained using the Kinetic Molecular Theory. Boyle's law, Charles's Law and the Law of thermodynamics will be covered through lecture, discussion, demonstrations and labs. Chemistry labs and discussions will be conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays with outside reading and assignments

Graduation Standards: *Chemistry: Matter and Energy*

Physical Science: Matter, Motion, Energy, Human Interactions

W/F 1:30- 2:30

Instructor: Lauren Leith

This is a guided project that will meet twice per week during blocks **3 & 4** for labs. Students will work independently during the week reading and completing reviews of twelve chapters which will be checked weekly. Each week a corresponding lab will be completed to illustrate an application of the concepts covered in the textbook. This class is limited in size to a maximum of 16 students.

Graduation Standards: *Physical Science:Matter, Motion, Energy, and Humans Interacting*

Block 4

Biology: Human Physiology

M/W/F 9:20-10:20

Instructor: Jo Sullivan

In this seminar, students will study practical human physiology, the basic anatomy, and function of major organ systems in humans. Topics will include the nervous system, sense organs, reproduction and development, digestion, and the cardiovascular system, with an emphasis on health problems related to the topics covered. Students also will study ways in which organ systems interact to maintain homeostasis. Topics will include hormones and feedback systems.

Graduation Standards: Biology V. Human Organism

Note: Some Health standards may be met as well, depending on student projects.

Students who complete all four life science blocks will complete all of the new life science standards.

Chemistry:Applications

T 9:20-10:20 /TH 9:20-11:20

Instructor: Lauren Leith

Students will use knowledge from previous blocks, and design and conduct experiments. Students will see how chemistry is used in several ways in consumer industries. Students will research how developments in chemistry affect society and how societal concerns affect the field of chemistry. Students will also test water for different chemical properties and learn how water can become contaminated. Students will test the Mississippi River.

Graduation Standards: *Chemistry: Applications*

Students who complete a year of biology, chemistry, or physics seminars will complete all of the Practice of Science, Engineering, and Technology standards.

Earth and Space Science: The Universe: The known and unknown

T/Th 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Chris Jandro

In this seminar, students will explore the scale and structure of space that we know about, and explore those things that science is less sure about. We will explore what it will take to have humans living on other planets within our solar system, and why we are looking for life on other planets.

Graduation Standards: Earth and Space Science: The Universe

Social Studies

Block 1

United States Government: Constitutional Law

M-F 11:20-12:20

Instructor: Carrie Bakken / William Mitchell Law School Collaboration

This seminar will provide an overview of how state and federal governments function in the United States through the lens of Constitutional Law. The students will examine the structure of the United States government, the state and federal court system, the Constitution, voting rights, and civic engagement. The course will be offered in conjunction with William Mitchell

School of Law through the Marshall-Brennan Project. Requirements: Students will complete all assignments assigned by the Marshall Brennan Project. **Note: Students who complete this class will be eligible to participate in a Moot Court program through the Marshall Brennan Project.**

Graduation Standards: United States Government, I-IV

World History

T/TH 10:20-11:20

Instructor: Nora Whalen/Kevin Ward

Why are there uprisings in Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Iran, and other neighboring countries? What is happening today that can be linked to events 2000+ years ago? This seminar looks at the the history of the world with special attention to the Middle East as a central point of civilization. Students will be expected to adopt a Middle Eastern nation as part of a problem-solving simulation. An accompanying research paper is required.

Graduation Standards: Social Studies: World History: C. World Civilizations and Religions 1500 BC - 700 AD, E. Global Encounters, Exchanges and Conflicts 500 AD - 1500 AD, I. The Post-War Period, 1945 AD - Present. (in addition, several standards available depending upon the nature of the research paper); Language Arts: Writing: Writing Process; Audience and Purpose; Research; Language Arts: Speaking, Listening, and Viewing: Interpersonal Communication; Nonverbal Communication

Block 2

Economics

M/W 11:20-12:20

Instructor: Carrie Bakken

The focus of this seminar will be to provide an overview of economics. The students will study the Market Economy, the National Economy, the International Economy, and Globalization. The students will also develop skills surrounding personal resource management. Requirements: Students are required to complete all activities/homework assignments, an economics project, and a Personal Resource Management notebook.

Graduation Standards: Economics, I-V, Career Investigation (partial).

Block 3

Geography

T/TH 11:20-12:20

Instructor: Carrie Bakken

This seminar will provide a historical overview of Indigenous people and European Settlement in Minnesota. Students will explore the relationships between various populations in Minnesota and how perceptions of boundaries, resources, and immigration to the U.S. shaped early Minnesota History.

Graduation Standards: Geography: Essential Skills, Spatial Organization, and Interconnection. U.S. History: Indigenous People of North America, Three Worlds Converge, and Expansion, Innovation, and Reform

World History: Ideas that Change the World, pt. 1

T/TH 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Nora Whalen

Using Jerad Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* theories, students will explore the big ideas that surfaced throughout the world and how they sparked change, be it people such as Alexander the Great, Socrates, Fibonacci, Freud, Jesus, Mohammad, da Vinci, Einstein or concepts such as the industrial revolution, germ theory and vaccinations, human rights, or the Internet. Students will conduct independent research project on a person or idea of their choice and connect it to class readings and discussions, building on a group timeline.

Graduation Standards: A. Beginnings of Human Society & Early Civilizations, to 1000 BC; B. World Civilizations Survey, 1000 BC – 500 AD; C. World Religions Survey, 1500 BC – 700 AD; D. Early Medieval & Byzantium, 400 AD – 1000 AD; E. Global Encounters, Exchanges, and Conflicts 500 AD – 1500 AD; F. Emergence of a Global Age, 1450 AD – 1800 AD; G. Age of Empires and Revolutions, 1640 AD – 1920 AD; H. Global Conflict, 1914 AD – 1945 AD

Block 4

World History: Ideas that Change the World, pt. 2

T/TH 2:30-3:30

Instructor: Nora Whalen

See description above. This is a continuation of the seminar from block 3.

Graduation Standards: In order to earn all standards listed in block 3, students must participate for both blocks.

Technology

Block 3

The Internet and Its Application

T/TH 2:30-3:30

Computer Lab

Instructor: Chris Jandro

What is the internet? How did it come to be, and how can it be used effectively for schoolwork? In this seminar, you will learn how the internet works, and figure out what resources are currently out there to help you do effective research and manage your resources and time. By the end of this course, you will have the tools necessary to build your own website (you can even build one as a deliverable for a real independent project you are already doing).

Graduation Standards: Career and Technology: Software Application, Career and Technology: Computer Operations, Career and Technology: Information Gathering, Career and Technology: Telecommunication Networks