

STEVENSON

Tentative Semester Senior Course Descriptions 2019-2020
offerings may change

English

The Art of the Essay – Mr. Rymzo (Fall)

A lasting and relevant art form, the essay endures as a popular and useful genre of writing, executed by students, academics, writers, journalists, and politicians all over the world. Due to many essays' relative short length and topicality, it may become the type of writing you read—and compose—the most in your adult life. By applying simple concepts of observation, reason and common sense, or intellect, essayists make illuminating discoveries and explore disparate topics, examining them from myriad angles to see what they might uncover and hoping to open readers' minds to new ways of thinking about themselves and the world. Students will learn about various types of essays—exploratory, personal, political, and opinion—how to read them well, and how essayists use particular forms of argumentation, as well as rhetorical skills, to effectively persuade. Fall term students will also learn how to compose a well-crafted personal essay for college applications. Additionally, they will compose an op-ed piece on a topic of their own choosing, which will be considered for publication in *Tusitala*, the school's newspaper. Teacher and student-selected readings will complement assigned readings from *The Seagull Reader: Essays* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists*.

Coming of Age – Dr. Matabane (Fall and Spring)

This course uses fiction and non-fiction to thematically explore what it means to “come of age” throughout different eras in the United States and the world. Course readings, class discussions, analytical writing, and creative expression—informed by multimedia, popular culture and art—will help students recognize and evaluate the multiple ways coming-of-age experiences are constructed and expressed. This course will recognize the impact of the power of space and place, and will acknowledge the dynamic nature of racial-ethnic, class, gender, and religious factors. Within this framework, the class will operate in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation. Readings will draw from Satrapi's *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, and other fiction and non-fiction titles.

Gothic Literature – Dr. Hiles (Fall)

Gothic literature delights readers through its tantalizing combination of horror, secrecy, the supernatural, death, and—sometimes—romance. In this course we will trace the development of gothic fiction from its origins in eighteenth-century England to present-day expressions of the macabre on the large and small screens. Readings will draw from Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Stoker's *Dracula*, short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and Flannery O'Connor, Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*, James's *The Turn of the Screw*, and (closer to the present) Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, and Peele's *Get Out*.

Jane Austen – Dr. Enemark (Fall and Spring)

Calling all Jane Austen fans (or people who simply wish to know what all the fuss is about)! In this course, we will explore the world of Jane Austen—the grand country estates, the botched marriage proposals, the innocent misunderstandings, the devastating social snubs—that animate her novels and led to the Austen rom-com renaissance on film in the 1990s and 2000s. We will focus on three of Austen’s novels by pairing them with films: *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones*, *Sense and Sensibility* and Ang Lee’s award-winning 1995 adaptation, and *Emma* and *Clueless*. We might find time for some zombies or sea monsters, too.

The New Yorker – Mrs. Bates (Spring)

Over the course of the semester, students delve into each week’s edition of *The New Yorker*, which has arguably established itself as the nation’s preeminent weekly magazine for arts and politics. By examining the various modes of writing that appear in the magazine (satire, poetry, fiction, political essay, review, personal essay, and more), the course develops students’ own writing skills by inviting imitations of the magazine’s best writers. We will bring in additional media sources for comparison as we work to understand current events, further developing our cultural awareness and media literacy. Our reading and writing will support the important process of identifying, supporting and expressing our individual opinions, and then working earnestly to understand the different viewpoints in the room. Our culminating project will task students with interviewing a person of interest and then producing their own *New Yorker*-style profile.

The Novella – Mr. Rymzo (Spring)

The British author Ian McEwan wrote that "the novella is the perfect form of prose fiction...the modern and post-modern form par excellence...long enough for a reader to inhabit a world or a consciousness and be kept there, short enough to be read in a sitting or two and for the whole structure to be held in mind at first encounter..." He also noted that "to sit with a novella is analogous to watching a play or a longish movie." In this class, we will read iconic novellas from the 20th and 21st century and examine their adaptation to the screen. We will focus specifically on how authors structure and execute this particular form, create plot and subplot, develop character and convey theme(s) in a relatively short amount of space. Additionally, we will examine the transition of the novella to screenplay and eventually to film, seeing how the screenwriters and directors construct their adaptations. In-class and evening screenings of the films will occur. Students will be asked to keep an extensive journal throughout this discussion-oriented class and compose several informal and formal writing assignments.

Reading Disney – Dr. Hiles (Spring)

Most of us encounter the stories and characters of the Disney empire as children. But where does Disney get those stories, and what do the “Disney versions” teach us? In this course, we will investigate Disney’s powerful role in shaping the many world—physical, social, commercial—that we inhabit daily. To chart this ever-expanding cultural geography, we will examine fairy tales from all over the world, Disney’s feature-length films, and even the theme parks. Readings from cultural studies will help us develop our own critical perspectives on

Disney's representations of nature, race, gender, love, violence, progress, individualism, family, and nation. By the end of the semester, students will have developed a sophisticated understanding of the multiple, often surprising ways in which Disney is "part of your world."

Shakespeare – Mr. Schmittgens (Fall and Spring)

This elective course is designed for students who have a love of literature and drama, or are curious about the works of Shakespeare. The class offers students of different levels an opportunity to read and to discuss Shakespeare's comedies, histories and romances. While the course will cover literary analysis, we will also explore the entertainment value of the plays. We will examine the ways the plays have been portrayed in film, the history of Shakespearean theater, and live performances (field trip!). The course requires students to read critically and creatively, write reactions to the texts, and think deeply. Through the reading, both as texts and through performances, and the viewing of performances and film adaptations, we will explore Shakespeare's relevance in current times and learn to appreciate him for both his artfully written texts and his memorable meditations on the core topics of love, loyalty, power, and ambition.

Short Story – Mrs. Bates (Fall)

This course allows students to explore the craft of writing short fiction. By examining a variety of stories—from Hemingway to ZZ Packer—we study and apply salient lessons of craft. The first two-thirds of the class revolves around writing exercises, assigned readings, and discussions about how an author's choices affect the reader experience of a story. The final weeks are devoted to a classic writing workshop in which students have the opportunity to write their own short stories and engage as editors of their peers' writing.

The Story of Opera – Dr. Hiles (Spring)

Curious about the world of opera but unsure of where to start? Then this introductory course is for you. Together, we'll explore the unique ways in which operas tell stories on stage. By studying examples from the heart of the repertory, we will learn how composers and singers develop a character through sound, and how stage directors interpret a story through their design choices. We will also consider how opera has become a topic in other kinds of stories by reading fictional representations of opera performance and opera attendance in literature. Field trips may include a live performance in the Bay Area, a local movie-theater broadcast of a performance at The Metropolitan Opera, and a visit with a professional (and world famous) opera singer in our own neck of the woods. Operas may include Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Verdi's *La Traviata*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. No familiarity with opera or musical notation is necessary.

History

Afghanistan & Pakistan -- Mr. Elmore (fall)

This course will shed light on the rich and varied histories of Afghanistan and how they came to occupy the significant geopolitical role they currently hold. In particular, we will explore the role that identity, specifically the perception of self and of others, has played in shaping their history and contemporary political reality. This course will be interdisciplinary in nature, covering literary, philosophical, sociological and historical approaches to the region. Students will read both primary and secondary texts and write three 3-4-page papers over the course of the semester, with an additional scaled-down research paper at the end of the semester.

Comparative Government & Politics -- Mr. Elmore (spring)

The goal of this course is to provide students with a conceptual framework, a toolbox if you will, in order to help answer the question of who rules, and how, in our selected countries. Students will be offered three frameworks through which to view each nation we study. Each of these theories is both descriptive and normative - they describe the world and make a value judgment about what is right and wrong. The three theories are: 1) Liberal democracy or pluralism, 2) Marxism and the theory of imperialism, and 3) Elite theory. After studying our frameworks, we will survey a broad range of political systems currently in operation, looking at industrialized nations, newly industrialized nations, and less developed nations. In this course, students will read primary and secondary sources, as well as philosophical and theoretical texts establishing the foundations of political thinking. Students will also be asked to keep up with current events in our select group of countries in order to apply their understanding of political systems to contemporary issues.

Math

Statistics -- Mr. Alley (fall and spring)

This one-semester course covers topics in both descriptive and inferential statistics. Students learn to organize, present, and analyze data. Topics covered include central tendencies of a data set (mean, median, mode), spread of a data set (standard deviation and IQR), a brief study of probability and counting techniques, and inferential statistics. Students study the normal distribution, techniques in determining confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, and correlation with regression. This course will help prepare students for an introductory course in statistics at the college of their choice.

Science

Field Astronomy – Mr. Provost (fall)

Field Astronomy examines both the dynamics of planetary systems and the life and death of stars. The course will examine the history of the heliocentric and geocentric models of our solar system, Kepler's laws of planetary motion, Newton's Law of universal gravitation and the theory behind solar system dynamics. Starting with our sun, the course will examine the formation of stars and their possible fates. Special attention will be paid to the nature of light and the use of spectroscopy to measure characteristics of stars outside our solar system and determine stellar classification characteristics. Laboratory work will include observations of planets, moons, asteroids, and comets as well as classifications of stellar clusters, nebulae and supernova remnants and the observations of other galaxies. Basics in celestial mapping and telescope use will be incorporated in laboratory work. The course includes a weekly two-hour evening lab.

Marine Science – Mr. Provost (spring)

This class provides students with an introduction to marine life, and the principles of marine geology and physical and chemical oceanography that influences the distribution of that life. The course begins with a review of the basic concepts of waves, tides, and currents in preparation for a survey of the living organisms found in the world's oceans. Monterey Bay, being our home, is the focal point of our studies. The bay is an outstanding backdrop for the course curriculum as it is diverse both geologically and biologically. We take full advantage of our proximity to the ocean by taking numerous field trips to the local rocky intertidal ecosystem, bird colonies, sea otter rafts, seal and sea lion haul-outs, and to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Topics of current interest including global warming, depleted fisheries, coral bleaching, coastal erosion, and plastic pollution are presented throughout the course. Upon completing the course students are expected to be able to recognize the dominant rocky intertidal invertebrates and algae as well as the most common marine mammals in our local ecosystem and describes the threats to ecosystem balance.

Nutrition & Metabolism – Dr. Wenzel (spring)

Modern medicine has eliminated nearly every “inborn error of metabolism”. We should be the healthiest humans in the history of the world. However, the occurrence of diabetes and heart disease are significantly increasing. The plethora of diet books makes clear that the basics of nutrition can be manipulated for profit, but not necessarily to improve health. This course will build on your understanding of basic biochemistry from previous science courses to explore why salt, fat and sugar derail most attempts to lose weight. The focus of this course will be current, popular books: *Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease*, in which a pediatrician examines the role of insulin in the body, especially one constantly challenged with too much salt, fat and sugar, and *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*, in which the food industry is examined in terms of how and why processed foods have come to become an almost addictive part of our lives.

Pharmacology -- Dr. Wenzel (fall)

Pharmacology is the branch of medicine concerned with the uses, effects, and modes of action of drugs. The course is divided into two distinct halves. The first will cover therapeutic drugs. Cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death in this country and we will examine the discovery and development of such drugs. The current concern about antibiotics, specifically the growing resistance ("super-bugs") to these drugs will be a major focus. The second half will investigate drugs that are active in the brain. The mode of action and impact of these drugs on the developing brain will be studied in detail.

Sports Medicine -- Mr. Yamashita (fall)

Sports Medicine is designed to give each student a fundamental understanding of prevention and treatment of injuries and illnesses. Specific emphasis is placed on understanding the functions and interactions of the body's circulatory, muscular, skeletal, respiratory, digestive, urinary, nervous and endocrine systems. In addition, students are encouraged to explore ways that promote positive steps toward wellness and good health, and to examine behaviors and values that can reduce risks. An expected outcome of this course, is that students will heighten their awareness of the health and welfare of the human body and risk factors associated with the functions of the body.