

Core Classes

IB History of Americas HL (*Full Year, 11th Gr.*)

Guide: Nelson Inz

In History of the Americas we will investigate the history of North and South America, from European conquest to the civil rights movements of the mid-Twentieth Century. We will learn how to “create” history as a dynamic story of complex individuals and will regularly consider multiple perspectives and points of view. Students will analyze historical events and their political, social and cultural effects on society and will hone their critical thinking and analytical skills through daily readings and assignments, class discussions, essay writing, and group collaboration. Throughout the year we will experiment with how to formulate significant questions about the past; how to resolve conflicting interpretations; how to recognize values and the part they play in shaping historical understanding; and how to draw conclusions from imperfect evidence. Some of the topics we will study include colonization, slavery in the Americas, wars of independence and revolution, evolution of new governments, the Mexican Revolution, Canadian history, the Great Depression around the world, United States foreign policy in Latin America, and an array of civil rights movements. We will learn in many ways both independently and in groups including using role plays, debates, art, student-led lessons, discussions, essay writing, tests, note taking, films, guest speakers, and field trips, when possible.

IB Twentieth Century World History HL (*Full Year, 12th Gr.*)

Guide: Melanie Peterson-Nafziger

We will study the recent evolution of the world we live in today. Students in this course will learn a vast amount of new history about the world and will refine their reading, writing and research skills. We will read a wide variety of work including the award-winning book *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, historical essays and texts, speeches, letters and other primary documents, and books that students will choose. Our first major case study involves digging into understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1945-1979. We will consider the roots of the conflict; the role of outside powers in the conflict either as promoters of tension or peacemakers; the political, economic and social issues behind the dispute and its resulting wars; and the impact of the conflict on people living in the region. We will also analyze a variety of newly free countries and ponder why some countries became democracies while others became single-party states during the 20th century. In particular we’ll investigate the democratic states of Mandela’s South Africa and Nehru’s India and the authoritarian states of Nasser’s Egypt and Mao’s China.

IB English HL I (*Full Year, 11th Gr.*)

Guide: Andrea Christensen

This is a year-long college preparatory course that will attempt to provide parallels to the content presented in the IB History class as much as possible. First semester will focus on novels that touch on the issues of colonialism and slavery, and includes titles such as *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Second semester will focus on how the history of the Americas connects with Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and selections from American poets such as Langston Hughes and Emily Dickinson. Major assessments will focus on oral presentations of literature analysis.

IB English HL II (*Full Year, 12th Gr.*)

Guide: Andrea Christensen

This is a year-long college preparatory course that will attempt to provide parallels to the content presented in the IB History class as much as possible, while focusing on written literature analysis. The course will start with world literature and end with a drama genre study. World literature studied includes Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, Aleksandr Sozhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, and Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy*. Drama studied includes Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Major assessments will include two prepared world literature papers and two timed essay exams on the genre study.

Environmental Systems and Societies (*Full Year, 11th & 12th Gr.*)

Guide: Sheila Sullivan

IB Environmental Systems and Societies is a two-year course. The purpose of this course is to understand the issues facing the Earth and to reflect on our participation in the natural world. As world citizens it is important that we evaluate different viewpoints and balance risks and benefits as part of informed decision making. We will carefully use the scientific method and rules of science to emphasize the following Montessori outcomes:

- Critical analysis of information across a variety of media.
- Participation in a community of inquiry and contemplation that fosters a sense of wonder and reverence.
- Building community through peaceful relationships with self, family, society, the world and the Earth.

IB Mathematics Year One (*Full Year, 11th Gr.*)

Guide: Michael Flood

IB Mathematics Options, Year Two (*Full Year, 12th Gr.*)

Guide: Michael Flood

IB Mathematics SL I During the first year of Mathematics SL, we will start with patterns, studying sequences and series. We then work on modeling real world situations with functions, looking at linear, quadratic, power, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions and the types of situations they model. We revisit matrix algebra and close out the year studying probability.

IB Mathematics SL II: During the second year of Mathematics SL, we look deeper into statistics, study 2-D and 3-d vectors, and begin a study of calculus, learning about integration and derivation.

IB Math Studies: This Two year IB course utilizes the basic concepts and connections present in Algebra and Geometry and takes them a step further. In addition to reviewing some of the more interesting points of these two courses, Math Studies delves into Probability and Statistics, Trigonometry, and eventually the beginnings of Calculus. This course is not as intense as the SL course, but still allows for clarity of some difficult concepts.

Theory of Knowledge I (*Semester 2*)

Guide: Nelson Inz

(Required in junior year for IB Diploma)

This is an introductory course, offered each spring, that is based in questions of philosophy and epistemology. Course readings and discussions encourage critical thinking about knowledge itself to help students make sense of what they encounter in the world. Students will attempt to answer questions about the nature of knowers, areas of knowledge, and ways of knowing. The class centers on seminar discussion and written reflection in addition to an oral assessment. This class is open to all high school students.

Theory of Knowledge II (*Semester 1*)

Guide: Nelson Inz

(Required in senior year for IB Diploma)

This is a capstone course, offered each autumn, that pushes questions of philosophy and epistemology beyond the introductory level. Course readings and discussions require higher-level critical thinking about knowledge issues and their contributing factors. Students will write a culminating essay about the nature of knowers, areas of knowledge, and ways of knowing. The class centers on seminar discussion and written reflection in addition to the written assessment. This class is open to anyone who has already taken TOK I.

IB Theatre (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Nelson Inz

In this two year course IB theatre students will experience the art of theatre by participating in all aspects of the theatrical experience in very personal ways. Students will research, read, and analyze plays from a variety of historical and cultural traditions, develop conceptual interpretations for production, envision and design some technical elements, and direct actors and action for actual performance. IB Diploma candidates taking HL will be required to complete all four assessments by the end of their second year. SI students have less rigorous assessments.

IB Music Theory (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Zachary Scott

Offers the opportunity to study music as an academic discipline. Over the course of a year (or two years), students will learn the essentials of theory and music history, and apply a specialized vocabulary to the analysis of music from around the world. Students will compose, complete listening, and analyze scores. Seniors planning to test in IB music in a single year should complete an online theory course during the summer. Information is available from Caroline.

IB Visual Art (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Sam O'Brien

(IB certificate and diploma testing priority enrollment)

IB Art is an advanced course in which the process is equal to the product. Emphasis is placed on the research of art history, research of ideas, and production of studio work. The student artist will explore sculpture, drawing, painting, ceramics, photography and mixed media work. The courses link the core elements of art concepts, criticism and analysis, acquisition of technical skills, and the relationship of art to social, cultural and historical context. This is a research-based class where we analyze ideas and experiment with representing ideas. Our focus will be on the development and in-depth use of the student independent research sketchbook. You will maintain notes and documentation detailing your ideas, observations, interests, plans, problems, successes and critiques.

Beginning Spanish (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Enrique Garita

¡Bienvenidos! This course is designed to teach the fundamentals of Spanish grammar and pronunciation, basic skills in speaking, writing and understanding the spoken and written word, to introduce the Latin-American culture, geography and way of life, and to develop an appreciation for another culture and lifestyle through the study of language. As the instructor, I am looking forward to helping you discover a new realm of communicative skills, knowledge of the Spanish language, and appreciation of Hispanic culture.

Intermediate Spanish (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Enrique Garita

¡Bienvenidos! This course aims to develop and expand proficiency in four areas of Spanish language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—through a review of grammar, mastering new and more complex grammar concepts and tenses, vocabulary-building exercises, culturally relevant dialogues, and readings regarding Hispanic civilization. The emphasis of the course is on communication; you will have ample opportunities to interact in Spanish on a variety of topics.

IB Spanish SL I and II (*Full Year, 1:00*)

Guides: Enrique Garita and Emily Blue

¡Bienvenidos! The Spanish IB course is designed for students with aspirations above and beyond the typical student. They will accomplish a higher competence level in foreign language. Language, as part of culture, is continually changing and plays an essential role in the community. Through the learning process of this course, the student will be aware of these changes and will know how to react in different situations. In order to develop the 4 areas of this IB course the student must speak Spanish during the class in different situations—debate, formal and informal sceneries, and focus on daily routines, among others. The student will be asked to take into consideration the Spanish-speaking culture in forming their answers.

Physics (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Sheila Sullivan

Satisfies Science credit requirement; must pass pre-test

This is an advanced course in high school physics designed to prepare students for success in college course work. This course assumes knowledge of basic algebra and trigonometry concepts. Although large group instruction is part of this course, students are expected to be able to design and carry out lab procedures, determine steps in problem solving and carry out research independently and in small groups. Semester one topics are focused largely on mechanics. Semester two topics include optics, electricity and magnetism.

Chemistry (*Full Year, 2:00*)

Guide: Russ Heitman

The study of chemistry helps students connect the world around them to the invisible interactions of particles. Chemistry at GRS will build abstract visual and quantitative skills, so that students will be able to understand, confirm and explore unseen but fundamental parts of nature. Students will explore the behavior of matter through topics such as atomic structure, bonding, and energy. Students will also apply a chemistry perspective to current social and environmental issues.

Advanced Recording Arts (*Full Year, 1:00*)

Guide: Zack Scott

Advanced Recording Arts is a hand-on class designed to give students a recording studio experience. We will study important groundbreaking recordings and many related topics including the history of recording, acoustics, and microphone choice and placement. Students will experience every part of the recording process from choosing the music, arranging, rehearsing, planning the recording, engineering, and mixing. The class will also be responsible for recording school events as needed. The goal of the class is to create a high-quality CD of their music.

Writing Studio (*Semester 1, 2:00; Semester 2, 2:00*)

Guide: Andrea Christensen

Let your creative juices flow! Are you interested in creative writing? Possible areas of focus include (but are not limited to!): fiction/short stories, poetry, playwriting/screenwriting, creative non-fiction and satire, the possibilities are endless! This is a writing course that is designed to give you an opportunity to develop your unique goals as a writer. Throughout the course, you will receive support and guidance in a small group/workshop setting to work on your individualized writing project.

Ceramics & Sculpture (*Semester 1, 1:00; Semester 2, 1:00*)

Guide: Sam O'Brien

In this class, we'll make things that live in three dimensions. A majority of our time will be spent learning the craft of ceramics, both hand building and wheel throwing. We will also study how to draw three-dimensional forms, how to use wire, plaster, metal, wood, *and* clay to make the forms in space. We'll study artists that use sculpture to express their ideas, and we'll make at least one permanent installation at the school to beautify the campus of Great River. There will be two research assignments: a 3-5 page paper on an artist, and a presentation on a style of art—come prepared and excited to learn about 3D art and expression!

Painting with Acrylics (*Semester 1 and Semester 2*)

Guide: Randi McClure

Note: This class is open to seniors only. It is offered during core time and requires Registrar approval.

In this class we will explore the versatile nature of acrylic paint. We will learn how to build canvases, mix pigments and create compelling compositions. We will study form, perspective, balance and color theory with a focus on building technical painting skills. Types of projects will include still life, portrait, and expressionist landscape. We will study different artists weekly to gain insight into the very personal, evocative nature of painting and help each student find his/her own individual style on the canvas.

Women's Choir (*Full Year, 2:00*)**Guide: Caroline Miesle**

Women's Choir is open to all women in the A2 and A3 levels and does not require an audition. Any student who enjoys singing is welcome! Singers will strengthen their musicianship by learning a variety of music, helping to select several pieces each semester. Students in Women's Choir will also choose music to learn independently as a soloist or in a small ensemble, and may perform for the choir once or several times.

Chamber Choir (*Full Year, 7:35-8:25*)**Guide: Caroline Miesle**

Chamber Choir is a select, auditioned choir offered for elective credit as a "zero hour" class. Rehearsing Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday each week from 7:30-8:25, Chamber Choir offers students an opportunity to sing challenging music and gain more independence as musicians. Singers will learn a wide range of repertoire, including classical, world, musical theatre, jazz, and popular music, and will perform regularly throughout the year in both small ensembles and as a full choir.

Film Music and Composition (*Semester 1, 1:00*)*Guide: Caroline Miesle*

Offered as an elective for students in the A3, Film Music and Composition presents an opportunity to study the art of creating a soundtrack for movies. Students will analyze existing films to identify strategies used by well-known film composers such as John Williams, as well as how popular music or the absence of music can impact the viewer's perception. In addition, students will learn compositional techniques that can be applied with or without previous study of music. Students will re-score an existing scene and present it to the class as a culminating project.

History of American Musical Theatre (*Semester 2, 1:00*)*Guide: Caroline Miesle*

This course provides an in-depth study of the history and development of musical theatre in the United States over the past century. Available at the A3 level, students will study important composers and conventions of musicals, and watch and critique several shows over the course of the semester. The entire class will also select several scenes to perform at the end of the year. Students should be willing to actively participate in this final project, either as a performer, director, set designer, or in a theatre tech role.