

2025-2026

History

Course Offerings

Core Courses

WORLD CULTURES

ALL THIRD FORMERS

This course investigates the development of diverse cultural traditions from the dawn of civilization in the 4th millennium BCE to the formation of the Old World Web and the rise of Islam in the 6th century CE. Students will seek to understand and appreciate the development of complex societies and enduring cultural traditions from around the globe and realize their relevance in history and to our world today. Students will learn foundational skills in critical reading, analytical writing, and historical research.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION

ALL FOURTH FORMERS

This course examines the development of modernity in Europe from the late Middle Ages to the 20th century. Students will seek to understand the ideas, cultural movements, and themes of change that transformed European society into the modern age and investigate the impact of these developments on the Western tradition and the world at large. Students will learn to critically analyze art and other historical documents, write analytical essays, and conduct independent research.

AMERICAN HISTORY

FIFTH FORMERS

This course examines the roots of American society and its development into the 21st century. Students will learn the responsibilities of effective citizenship in a democracy and examine the extent to which America has held true to the ideals set forth in its founding documents. Students will learn to read, assess, and reconcile a range of perspectives on major historical controversies, write a series of well-crafted essays that tie together the strands of complex historical questions, and produce a significant historiographic research paper as part of a short seminar with their classmates.

AMERICAN HISTORY (ADVANCED)

QUALIFIED FIFTH FORMERS

The Advanced course in American History aspires to offer students an experience in college-level historical reading, thinking, and writing. Students most likely to flourish are those who enjoy and appreciate challenging reading assignments and who like to express their ideas both in writing and in discussion. Consideration for placement in the Advanced course begins with a recommendation from a current history teacher, and students must have a consistent record of academic achievement, a demonstrated passion for the study of history, and evidence of well-developed habits of scholarship to be eligible. This course will require some extra summer reading and an early demonstration of full engagement with the material.



Elective Courses

GLOBAL AFFAIRS (ADVANCED)

QUALIFIED SIXTH FORMERS

This Advanced course in Global Affairs serves as the capstone of the History Department's course offerings. Intended for ambitious sixth form students excited to do college-level work, the course will combine seminar-style study of major issues confronting our contemporary world with independent research on a global problem or challenge. Students will start the year using the "Choices Program" from Brown University to study: Authoritarianism ("The Weimer Republic and the Rise of Nazi Germany"); U.S.-Russia Relations ("Russia and the United States: Perspectives from History--Choices for Today"); and U.S.-China Relations ("China on the World Stage: Weighing the U.S. Response"). Throughout the year, students will read widely about current affairs in The Economist magazine. By mid-year, students will select topics for a major research project that will continue into the spring. A summer reading assignment will precede the course; a comprehensive final exam will conclude the course. Students must have full support and commendation from their fifth form history teacher to be eligible for this course.

ECONOMICS HONORS

Honors Economics is a year-long elective course for students who want to deeply engage with the study of economic principles. Throughout the year, we will study microeconomic and macroeconomic topics and their impact on government, businesses, society, and the lives of students. Activities will focus on the real world application of economic theory to both historic and modern scenarios. Students will explore topics as wide-ranging as designing their own business, how prices are determined (and how to pay the optimal price), environmental impacts of the market system, and how to measure and understand the fluctuations of the macroeconomy. Success in this course requires that students utilize essential skills of both the humanities and mathematics.

INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMICS AND PERSONAL FINANCE

EACH TRIMESTER

This trimester elective course will provide students with an overview of basic economic principles and their impact on our personal financial decisions. Students will be introduced to the tools of the economist and the role of consumers in their interactions with markets, businesses, and the government. These topics will inform our study of personal finance topics including budgeting, credit, loans, investing, and taxes. In addition, this course is designed to be student-driven and explore topics of interest to students regarding their financial future including being an informed consumer, buying your first car, paying for college, and future careers.

AMERICA IN THE 1950S: LIFE THROUGH THE PICTURE WINDOW HONORS

TRIMESTER 1 ONLY

This interdisciplinary course will take a deep dive into a formative decade of the modern American identity: the 1950s. We will explore America's role after World War II and how those decisions have continued to inform American foreign



policy today. We will also explore how the Cold War shaped culture at home, as a growth in suburbia and the rise of television reflected and promoted a culture of conformity for the emerging Baby Boom generation. Many, however, were starting to rebel, as we will see in the birth of Rock & Roll and the Beat poets. More importantly, we will see an expansion of the promise of the American Dream as the Civil Rights Movement gains traction. We will take a multi-faceted approach to this course, reading history and literature, listening to music, dancing (The Twist!), watching film and television, and visiting important sites in Asheville—all avenues that tell the story of this decade.

AMERICA IN THE 1980S: “TEAR DOWN THIS WALL” HONORS

TRIMESTER 2 ONLY

The 1980s were an era of vast political change both at home and abroad. Globally, the decade begins with the Iran Hostage Crisis and ends with the fall of the Berlin Wall, bookends that highlight the Reagan Revolution and the rise of the modern conservative movement. That revolution, however, did not include everyone, and we will study the AIDS crisis and the continued evolution of the Civil Rights and Women’s Rights Movements. We’ll also study the emergence of the “Yuppie” and the consumption of pop culture, including musical icons Michael Jackson and Madonna. We will take a multi-faceted approach to this course, reading history and literature, listening to music, dancing (The Moonwalk!), watching film and television, and visiting important sites in Asheville to look at the impact of urban renewal—all avenues that tell the story of this decade.

AMERICAN IN THE 2000S: “THE UNKNOWN KNOWN” AND THE WAR ON TERROR HONORS

TRIMESTER 3 ONLY

The events of September 11, 2001 changed the world. In this trimester course we will explore this moment and the disruption in the decade that follows. We will examine the War on Terror and the questions that emerge around America’s role in the world. At home, as the internet became central to American life, the rise of tech industries, the birth of social media, and the proliferation of news and media outlets contributed to a more fragmented means of understanding the world. We will examine the presidencies of George W. Bush and the historic election of the nation’s first black president, Barack Obama. This won’t be a typical history course—we will listen to Beyoncé, critique 2000s fashion trends, read from the most diverse slate of American authors yet, and consider what has been deemed the Golden Age of American Television. We will take a multi-faceted approach to this course, reading history and literature, listening to music, dancing (The Stanky Legg!), watching film and television, and visiting important sites in Asheville—all avenues that tell the story of this decade.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW HONORS

TRIMESTERS 1 AND 3

What are your constitutional rights? What does our Constitution actually say? What limitations does it place on our government system? How does a document that is over 200 years old still shape and protect our modern democracy? This course will examine the framework of the Constitution and the landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases that have interpreted it over time. We will learn about the clashes and the controversies created by this document as well as the issues it has helped resolve throughout the history of our country. We will seek to reconcile the intentions of the



framers of the Constitution with the interpretations of the highest court in the land to better understand the very foundations of our nation's system of governance and justice and its enduring relevance in our world today.

ART HISTORY

TRIMESTER 2 ONLY

Art tells the story of history. From every corner of civilization throughout history humans have produced art to document their interpretations of and experiences with the world around them. This course will embark on a journey through history to investigate various art movements and the specific pieces of art within them to reveal how people have lived, what was important to them, and what they believed. The beauty and imagination of art will illuminate a unique story of history in a way that nothing else can. This course will expose students to the colorful and exciting world of art and inspire students to discover moving and impactful works of art that promote imagination, curiosity, and a distinctive understanding of history.

AFRICAN STUDIES: COLONIALISM IN AFRICA AND RACISM IN AMERICA

TRIMESTER 2 ONLY

This course explores the intertwined histories of colonialism in Africa and racism in the United States, examining both as systems of oppression that have deeply shaped African and African American communities. Beginning with the origins and mechanisms of colonialism in Africa and the establishment of racial hierarchies in America, students will study how these systems were constructed, enforced, and justified by social, political, and economic institutions. The course will highlight the ways in which colonial and racial policies have impacted societies, influencing identity, culture, and the socioeconomic realities of these communities.

AFRICAN STUDIES: APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

TRIMESTER 3 ONLY

This course provides a comprehensive exploration of apartheid in South Africa, from its historical origins to its enduring effects on society. We will trace the development of apartheid, beginning with the roots of racial segregation established during colonial rule, and examine how apartheid laws were systematically enforced to control and divide South Africa's population. Through primary and secondary sources, students will gain insights into apartheid's structure, the laws that codified it, and the daily realities faced by different racial groups under this oppressive system.

History Course Levels

STANDARD COURSES

Standard courses follow a scope and sequence of skill progression developmentally appropriate for the grade-level for which they are offered. Available in trimester or full-year formats, standard courses adhere to the school's homework guidelines and do not require work over school breaks.

HONORS COURSES

Honors courses are more challenging in scope and expectation than standard courses but do not move at the accelerated pace of advanced courses. Honors courses can be either trimester or full-year in length and may require prerequisites and some work over school breaks.

ADVANCED COURSES

Our most challenging courses, classes with this designation are college-level in scope and expectation. Advanced courses are full-year in length and include a comprehensive final examination. They are accelerated in pace, require additional work over school breaks, and hold students to a higher standard of rigor and expectation on reading and writing assignments than honors and standard level courses. In addition to receiving commendation from their current history teacher, students must have a consistent record of achievement in prior history courses, a demonstrated passion for the study of history, and well-developed habits of scholarship to be eligible for advanced courses.

