ENGLISH

The curriculum of the English Department stresses the development of skills in reading, writing, speaking, and thinking. Small classes – on average, 12 students – provide an environment for lively discussions in which students learn to analyze challenging literature as well as to articulate their thoughts, reactions, and interpretations. A broad range of literature exposes students to ideas and experiences from around the world. Frequent and varied writing assignments demand from students a strong foundation in grammar and composition. Writing assignments train students to express themselves clearly, cogently, and confidently, while engaging in thoughtful investigation, reflection, and analysis.

- Ellen Devine, Department Head

THE SEQUENCE

In the third, fourth, and fifth forms, a student takes English 100, 200, and 300 respectively. In the sixth form, students may choose from a variety of electives. The English Department also offers one interdepartmental course during a student's fifth form year: American Studies (EN375 and HI375HO), a full-year, double-period interdisciplinary survey of American culture, which earns three course credits in both English and history. American Studies fulfills the American literature and United States history requirements.

THIRD FORM ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Year; 3 course credits EN100

Introduction to Literature introduces students to the critical reading of short stories, novels, poems, and plays. This course strives to expose students to a variety of genres, perspectives, and voices and to familiarize them with some foundational texts. The required texts for this course include The Odyssey and selections from the Bible (primarily Genesis). Examples of the other works that may be studied are Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Jane Eyre, Purple Hibiscus, and selected poems and short stories. Students develop their writing skills by composing paragraphs and essays on various topics and through their study of vocabulary and grammar.

Note: Refer to p. 37 for the writing workshop electives in English open to third formers.

FOURTH FORM ENGLISH

COMPOSITION AND LITERATURE

Year: 3 course credits EN200

Composition and Literature teaches students to write correctly and to read analytically. While training students to write both descriptively and critically, teachers emphasize grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and paragraph organization. The literature includes short stories, plays, novels, and poems. Required texts include one of Shakespeare's plays.

Note 1: Refer to p. 37 for the writing workshop electives in English open to fourth formers.

Note 2: In rare cases, fourth formers who have demonstrated enthusiasm for and talent in creative writing, and who have completed the writing workshops available to third and fourth formers, may request departmental approval to enroll in the sixth form single-term electives Reading and Writing Poetry (EN408) or Reading and Writing Short Fiction (EN441) in the spring term of their fourth form year. These electives will not fulfill the minimum elective requirement for the sixth form year.

FIFTH FORM ENGLISH

AMERICAN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Year: 3 course credits EN300

American Literature and Composition introduces students to the rich and varied multicultural heritage of American literature. Students read a broad range of works that gives voice to diverse perspectives on being American. The balance of contemporary and traditional readings enhances students' knowledge of literary techniques and movements. The course also emphasizes the development of close reading and critical writing skills.

AMERICAN STUDIES

Year: 3 course credits EN375 (must be taken with HI375HO)

This interdepartmental course for fifth form students presents a detailed study of American history, literature, and culture and fulfills the American literature and United States history requirements. The course is taught in double periods and earns three credits in both English and history.

Note: Fifth formers are eligible to take a variety of electives concurrently with their fifth form English course with the permission of the department. Single-term electives taken in the fifth form year will not fulfill the minimum elective requirement for the sixth form year.

SIXTH FORM ENGLISH

In the sixth form year, students choose from a wide range of electives. Students may complete their three credits of English in several ways: by taking one year-long elective, or one two-term elective and one single-term elective, or three single-term electives.

The year-long electives offer students an opportunity to engage in a prolonged study of material that is thematically cohesive and multidisciplinary in approach. Students who wish to take a year-long course must complete all three terms of the course in order to earn English credit in the sixth form year.

The two-term elective, Advanced Creative Writing, requires the creation of a substantial body of original work that has undergone significant workshopping and revision. By nature, this process requires significant time both for writing and revising, which is why the course is two terms long. Students who take Advanced Creative Writing may not take Reading and Writing Poetry (EN408), Reading and Writing Short Fiction (EN441), or Playwriting and Screenwriting (TA270) as their single-term elective in the spring.

The single-term electives provide students variety in their study of literature throughout the year. Students may not repeat a single-term elective within their sixth form year.

Note 1: Though every effort is made to accommodate requests for English electives, it is not always possible to schedule sixth formers into their first-choice English courses along with their other requests. Therefore, students must indicate at least two different choices per term (e.g., two different year-long electives or a total of six different single-term electives) when requesting English electives, in order to ensure appropriate scheduling of all courses and students.

Note 2: A student who has maintained a minimum average grade of A-during the first two terms of the sixth form year may be allowed to waive the spring term if the student has the approval of the current teacher, the department head, and the student's college counselor.

Note 3: A student who has been away from campus for a term is not eligible for a waiver.

Note 4: Students who wish to consider this waiver option should discuss those plans during the course selection process during the fifth form spring; see p. 9 for details.

YEAR-LONG ELECTIVES

The year-long courses offer students the opportunity to engage in a sustained and multidisciplinary study of a thematically cohesive topic. Students who are English enthusiasts are welcomed to concurrently enroll in single-term electives while taking a year-long course, but a single-term elective may not replace one of the terms of the year-long course.

THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

Year; 3 course credits EN405

In this year-long course, students explore the influence of classical Greece and Rome as the foundation of Western civilization, and how the surviving works of antiquity have shaped and informed culture from the Renaissance to contemporary times. Through the study primarily of literature, but also of historical, philosophical, and artistic works, students are introduced to some of the most influential writings of Western civilization. Special attention is paid to the following themes: What does it mean to be human? To be male or female? How should we live—what are the ideals of human conduct. (ethics/morality) and why should we observe them? Why is attaining self-knowledge necessary and arguably the goal of a meaningful life? How much of our lives are determined by powers beyond our control? Does free will exist, or is it merely a necessary illusion? If the gods exist, what should our relationship with them be? Is there cosmic justice? If not, how important is human justice? How is human consciousness both a gift but also an ordeal? If to be civilized means to repress our animal instincts, what are the costs/consequences of this repression for us? Though the pacing and focus of each term may differ somewhat between sections, the course proceeds chronologically; therefore, the course investigates classical Greek and Roman works throughout the fall and much of the winter, and then moves to the revival of the classical world in the Renaissance and beyond by exploring works of art that directly or indirectly echo the themes of the classical period. Texts studied throughout the year may include: The Iliad (excerpts), Herodotus' Histories (excerpts), Thucydides' History of The Peloponnesian War (excerpts), Agamemnon, Antigone, Medea, Oedipus Rex, The Bacchae, Lysistrata, The Aeneid (excerpts), selected poems of Ovid and Horace, Dante's Inferno, Shakespeare's King Lear, Peter Shaffer's Equus, Mary Zimmerman's Metamorphoses, and Pat Barker's Silence of the Girls.

THE MODERN SPIRIT: THE LITERATURE AND CULTURE OF THE WESTERN WORLD FROM THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTION THROUGH THE AGE OF ANXIETY

Year: 3 course credits EN480

Beginning with the Romantic revolt against the Enlightenment in the late 18th to mid-19th centuries, continuing with the advent of realism and Modernism's "shock of the new" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and ending with the "Age of Anxiety" of the post-World War II era, this year-long humanities course investigates the great cultural revolutions of the past 200 plus years. Each term, students will explore the zeitgeist—the spirit of each age—through some characteristic works of literature, art, music, film, philosophy, and social theory with the goal of coming to a deeper understanding of the modern sensibility. Literary works will include such novels as Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther, Shelley's Frankenstein, Bronte's Wuthering Heights, West's The Return of the Private, Gide's The Immoralist, and Kafka's The Metamorphosis; lyric poetry of the Romantic and Modernist periods; plays such as Ibsen's A Doll's House and Sartre's No Exit; films such as Battleship Potemkin, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Modern Times, The Triumph of the Will, and Dr. Strangelove; musical works from composers such as Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Stravinsky, Miles Davis, Joni Mitchell, and Bob Dylan; philosophical works from such thinkers as Nietzsche and Freud; and art from such movements as Romanticism, Impressionism, Cubism, Expressionism, Post Expressionism, and Pop Art. While students who have knowledge of or are involved in the arts are encouraged to sign up for this course, all students who have an interest in the multidisciplinary approach of a humanities course are welcomed.

THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK: POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Year: 3 course credits EN485

There are clashes in Gaza. Statues across public spaces are dismantled in South Africa and in the American South. An Indian writer won England's most prestigious literary prize, the Booker of Bookers. Retribution, reconciliation, violence, and ghosts haunt both the postcolonial world and its literature. After centuries of foreign rule, those who come from places that were part of a European empire have written back to their own people and their former masters. Their literature is rich, and their use of the old master language is astounding. Their texts hold the most significant development in world letters since the mid-20th century when, throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas, countries that had existed under colonial rule rebelled and the majority gained independence. In this course, students study the vast and diverse topics associated with the creation and eventual disintegration of the colonial projects of Europe. Multidisciplinary in approach, students examine literature, history, film, philosophy, theory, oral history, and art. This course

explores the inspiration, justification, and manifestation of colonization as well as the resistance to this project. Students will examine works produced by both the colonizing and colonized cultures. Students develop familiarity with theoretical terms and concepts and employ them to understand the tension reflected in the works studied, and to gain insight into the lasting effects for the contemporary global landscape. Writers studied may include: Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua), Amié Césaire (Martinique), Salman Rushdie (India), Nadine Gordimer (South Africa), and Toni Morrison (US), among others. This course fulfills the requirement in contemporary global studies.

JOURNALISM AND NONFICTION STORYTELLING

Year: 3 course credits MD375

Nonfiction storytelling, whether it is daily journalism, long-form magazine writing, personal essays, opinion pieces, radio broadcasts, or another variety, is invariably based in fact. The creator is circumscribed by what actually happened, and yet these works can be as gripping and nuanced as any work of fiction. Unlike a novelist, a nonfiction storyteller cannot invent a character or fabricate a cliff-hanging plot twist. Like a novelist, a nonfiction storyteller is free to experiment with form, detail, diction, syntax, metaphor, and the like. Understanding this dynamic is key to the work of this course. Students study the foundational elements of a fact-based story. What makes such a story compelling, provocative, or simply, fun? How does one go about uncovering and relaying such a narrative? How can elements like rhetoric, structure, and data enhance a story? How can stories change the world? Students analyze short and long nonfiction, both contemporary and canonical, and work individually and collaboratively on storytelling projects that address current issues. They engage in a diversity of narrative forms—the written word, as well as infographics, podcasts, photojournalism, and video—and study a group of writers that likely includes James Baldwin, Joan Didion, Ian Frazier, Janet Malcolm, John McPhee, Dorothy Parker, David Foster Wallace, Tom Wolfe, and others. Students also practice accepted datagathering techniques, employing statistics to strengthen the stories they tell. Students share their work with their classmates regularly, providing and receiving appropriate feedback.

TWO-TERM ELECTIVES

ADVANCED CREATIVE WRITING

Fall and Winter terms; 2 course credits EN490

This course offers students, who have experience with creative writing, the opportunity to craft a substantial body of writing while gaining experience in the demands and rewards of the writing process. The course begins with the exploration of and experimentation with genre, as students identify, explore, and present specific types of writing they would like to share with their peers. Genres may include but are not limited to slam/spoken word poetry, stream of consciousness, flash fiction, rhymed and metered poetry, dramatic monologues, short dramatic scenes, and personal essays. The workshop is the heart of the class: students are regularly required to read their work aloud and have their work critiqued in a structured, formal, and productive fashion. Students not only periodically lead workshops on their peers' manuscripts, but are also expected to edit, comment upon, and offer suggestions for improvement in every session. Students devote the last weeks of the fall and all of the winter term to composing and revising their final project. Students devise, plan, and work steadily on completing a portfolio of revised and polished writing that has incorporated the feedback received in the workshop. The portfolio may include short stories, a chapbook of poems, a novella, a play, or a combination of multiple genres. Students consult the instructor regarding their individual plans, but the final choice of what will be included in the portfolio is theirs. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to submit their work to publications, both on campus and beyond. The course culminates in a public reading in which students share portions of their work. This course is intended for sixth form students, but exceptional fifth form candidates will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Open to students who have successfully completed EN501, TA270, EN408, EN441, or who have earned departmental approval by submitting a sample of original creative work to the English department head.

SINGLE-TERM ELECTIVES

Students who wish to take single-term electives must enroll in a minimum of one elective per term. Students who are English enthusiasts are welcomed to enroll in more than one elective in any given term, but they may not use the additional course to fulfill the minimum requirement for a different term.

ARABIC LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

Spring term; 1 course credit EN402

What do paganism, the Qur'an, and contemporary Arabic music have in common? What facts still pervading Arab culture should Westerners know if they want to understand the Arab world? What remarkable things happened when Jews, Christians, and

Muslims met in medieval Spain? What do the emerging voices of Arab women say about their world? How have colonialism and the global war on terror affected and influenced literature in the Middle East and in the diaspora? To answer these questions, students will read literature with themes such as: women's writing, Black Islam and hip hop, borders/walls/prison cells, and the everydayness of war. This survey course of Arabic literature in English examines works ranging from the pagan pre-Islamic world, the Qur'an and the cultured courts of Islamic Spain to contemporary writings by Lebanese novelists, stateless poets from Palestine and Kuwait, and American Muslims from Brooklyn and Detroit. This course fulfills the requirement in contemporary global studies.

Note: This course is required for students in the Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies Program. Students may complete this course for the sixth form English credit in the spring of their sixth form year.

READING AND WRITING POETRY

All terms: 1 course credit EN408

This course is for those who know they enjoy reading and writing poetry as well as those who are new to this literary form. Students will study, discuss and write about various works of poetry as well as compose original work. Students will experiment with writing in strict poetic forms such as the sonnet, villanelle and sestina, as well as in some of the free forms of contemporary poetry.

SHAKESPEARE: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

All terms; 1 course credit EN411

Did Shakespeare really die in 1616? Biographies say he did, but in many ways, he is very much healthy and alive today. Our language is full of words ("bandit," "bedazzled," "dwindle") and phrases ("wild-goose chase," "my mind's eye") that he coined. There are new novels based on his plays and new television shows based on his life. There are new films and poems inspired by Shakespeare, and there are, above all, always new productions of his plays. Audiences, actors, and readers never tire of Shakespeare's works. This course will examine several of his plays in depth and visit films, plays, novels, and television shows based on Shakespeare. What keeps Shakespeare's works so fresh, relevant, and entertaining after four centuries? What is it about his language, his characters, and his thinking that intrigues us? How is it that Shakespeare continues to speak to our hearts and our minds? As Ben Jonson wrote, "He was not of an age but for all time!"

CONTEMPORARY WORLD LITERATURE

All terms: 1 course credit EN415

This course explores recent literature published around the world. Students consider how the specifics of geography, ethnicity, language, gender, economics, and other factors combine to create compelling stories. What is distinctive about the experiences of these fictional characters from faraway places? What is universal? The course pays special attention to the real-world backdrop of each text studied and asks students to examine how their own cultural perspectives inform both their understanding of the world the literature depicts and the world in which they live. Though the works studied may vary by section, examples of authors previously featured in this course include: Adichie, Adiga, Murakami, and Roy. This course fulfills the requirement in contemporary global studies.

NIGHTMARE NOVELS: MODERN DYSTOPIAN FICTION

All terms; 1 course credit EN420

One of the most popular literary genres at the present time are dystopias: stories that depict worlds that are catastrophic and nightmarish in their presentation of flawed morality and social values. In the words of Tobias Carroll, "right now, plenty of people have dystopia on the brain. It's also a logical response to what appears to be an increase in authoritarian governments and totalitarian practices across the globe." In this course, students will read, discuss, and analyze some of the significant dystopian novels of the modern era. Though the works studied may vary by section, examples of texts that may be featured include: George Orwell's Animal House or 1984, Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, Burgess's A Clockwork Orange, Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and Atwood's A Handmaid's Tale. The course will consider the historical context of these works, as well as relevant works in other media, such as film, art, music, and television.

STAGED REALITIES: MODERN DRAMA TO VIRTUAL REALITY All terms: 1 course credit EN436

"We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are," wrote Anaïs Nin, voicing a widely shared and very modern perception of reality. From Freud and Nietzsche to Einstein and Sartre, modern thinkers have grappled with these essential questions: What is reality, and how can we be sure that the world we perceive as reality is not merely an illusion, a dream, or a construction of our own imaginations? While these questions have been at the heart of theater since antiquity, modern dramatists and filmmakers have pushed this further, asking: How do we perceive reality? How can theater and film best simulate reality, and does it need to? And, perhaps most important, whose version of reality gets to be staged or filmed? From the realists (mirroring life on stage) through the futurists, expressionists, epic theater artists, and

absurdists (shattering that mirror), each wave of artists advanced its own vision of the world. Modernist work is irreverent, frightening, and often funny, as it explores the visible and invisible systems that drive our desires and behaviors, both as individuals and as societies. With the rise of virtual reality, a new set of worlds is being created and a new set of questions asked: How can and should VR be used in live stage performances? Can we, as avatar-actors, enter the drama and drive the plot? What is the difference between a communal theatrical experience and a performance designed for an audience of one? Is our world so different from the dystopian future in Ready Player One, where humans spend their lives escaping into a simulated reality? This course explores modernist reflections of reality through theater and film, and in the end, virtual reality. Core plays and films may include: Ibsen's A Doll's House, O'Neill's The Hairy Ape, Lang's Metropolis, Eisenstein's The Battleship Potemkin, Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, Chaplin's Modern Times, Disney's Fantasia, Beckett's Waiting for Gadot, Wilson's Fences, Kushner's Angels in America, Ruhl's Eurydice, Nottage's Sweat, Baker's The Flick, and Cline and Spielberg's Ready Player One.

READING AND WRITING SHORT FICTION

All terms: 1 course credit EN441

This course is designed for students who have an interest in the reading and writing of short fiction. Students will study, discuss, and write about various works of fiction as well as compose their own original work. Students will study theories of writing, read examples of various types of short fiction by published authors, and offer their own writing for examination and discussion by the class. Students will be encouraged to experiment with different styles while also working on strengthening their own creative voices. This class is intended primarily for students who are new to creative writing, though experienced creative writers are welcomed.

NARRATIVE, POWER, AND THE SELF: LITERATURE AND AMERICAN IDENTITY

All terms; 1 course credit EN476

This course provides students the opportunity to consider and explore the varied notions of American identity through the diverse contemporary literary landscape. Students read a range of authors whose works investigate the relationship between literature, culture, and American identities. The course considers the historical, political and cultural influences that have shaped how America is depicted as well as the role of the narrative in the construction and representation of national, group, and personal identities. This course grapples with such questions as: What are the differences and similarities expressed in these identities? What do those similarities and differences indicate about the authors, their experiences, and America as a whole? Authors studied may include Julia Alvarez, Alison Bechdel, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Junot Diaz, Jeffrey Eugenides, Jonathan Franzen, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jhumpa Lahiri, Toni Morrison, and others based on the interests of both the students and teacher.

SATIRE: LITERATURE OF PROTEST AND CHANGE

All terms; 1 course credit EN477

Disruptive, uncomfortable, and often funny, satire provides keen commentary on the social, political and cultural context from which it originates. This course exposes students to a variety of satires from different historical and cultural contexts and questions whether satire can effect change. In addition, students investigate the modes and tools of satirical texts—understatement, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, etc.—in order to gain a deeper sense of how satires are successfully created and executed. The course studies satire in a variety of forms and media such as novels, plays, television shows, movies, websites, and blogs.

PANDORA'S BOX: HUMANS AND MACHINES

All terms; 1 course credit EN478

Human beings have always been interested in the impact of technology on human life. Even the Ancient Greeks imagined robots that would serve humans and free them from the drudgery of daily life. But they also imagined machines possessing consciousness, one of the defining traits of what makes us human. Thus, anxiety about the boundaries between humans and machines has a long history, though it has taken on a new urgency today, as we constantly rely on and interact with machines. Examining fiction, non-fiction, and films, we will explore what it means to be human by asking two major questions: First, are humans just biological machines (or "neural computers") with a complex engineering designed by evolution and ultimately with mechanical explanations of our mental lives? In other words, can human emotions be explained in terms of

evolutionary selection as Steven Pinker argues? Or are we more than that because of consciousness and subjectivity? Second, as we see artificially designed and programmed machines that do more and more of what we do, what is the relationship between biological machines like us and the artificially built, nonbiological machines that we create? Are we in danger of losing our humanity as technology takes over our lives, as genuine human interactions diminish, and we lose contact with nature? Will we become the tools of our tools as Thoreau once feared? Can powerful Artificial Intelligence systems be aligned with human values? Will AI evolve eventually into creatures who come back to haunt their creators? Are we on the cusp of an enhancement revolution where new technologies will soon allow people to control and fundamentally change their bodies and minds? Will the "Singularity," predicted by futurist/inventor Ray Kurzweil, finally happen, where humans and machines merge into a new species some time in this century? What will be the impact of AI on the workplace, warfare, human relationships? These are all critical questions that will be addressed in the 21st century and explored in this course. Core texts may include: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Steven Pinker's How the Mind Works, E. M. Forster's The Machine Stops, Isaac Asimov's I, Robot, and Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep. The course may also include some of the following films: Her, Ex Machina, 2001: A Space Odyssey, and The Matrix.

All terms; 1 course credit FN479

Intentionally broad in scope, Expository Writing offers students the opportunity to sharpen writing skills that they can apply in all academic disciplines and beyond the classroom. The course focuses on students' ability to hone writing skills while cultivating their powers of analysis, argumentation, description, and narration. Therefore, a major goal of the course is to provide students with various strategies that they can use to create desired effects with words. Students read a variety of short texts and use them as models for frequent and varied writing assignments. Close study of these texts helps students to become better critical readers and to apply professionals' strategies to their own writing process. Written assignments may include personal essays, reading responses, opinion pieces, cultural critiques, and formal arguments. Through regular revision and reflection, students develop a deeper understanding of themselves as writers and thinkers.

Note: Some students may receive specific recommendation from the department to take the course.

WRITING WORKSHOP COURSES

Writing workshops focus on the creation of original writing by each student and the regular exchange of feedback regarding that work among the participants in the class. While these classes may study short stories, novels, and poems by a variety of authors as examples and ideals of craft, the original writing created by each of the students serves as the primary text studied and discussed in class.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the writing workshop courses do not fulfill the English department graduation requirements.

INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

Spring term; 1 course credit EN501

This term elective explores a variety of genres and introduces students to the craft of writing imaginative prose and poetry. Students are asked to examine the literature from the writer's perspective and to compose their own original poems, scenes, and stories, incorporating the ideas and themes inspired by the texts. The class is frequently run as a workshop with students sharing and critiquing each other's work. The exact nature of this course and the texts studied in any given term, will be shaped by the interests and inclinations of the students and instructor. Open to third and fourth formers.

Spring term; 1 course credit TA270

Students in this course learn how to write a story and transform it into a camera-ready script. Analyzing a range of produced screenplays, from The City of God to Crash, students investigate strategies for effective exposition, characterization, pacing, dialogue, and visual storytelling. Through writing exercises and workshops of each other's materials in class, students expand their screenwriting techniques and develop their individual voices as writers. In seminar, students discuss the screenwriting process—from the outline and treatment through the draft and the pitch. As a final project, each student writes a 15-minute screenplay of professional standard and pitches it to the class. Open to fourth, fifth, and sixth formers.

Note: A primary purpose of this course is to prepare students who wish to participate in the annual Choate Fringe Festival; therefore, fourth and fifth formers have priority over sixth formers for enrollment in the class. With the permission of the department, sixth formers may receive English credit for this course. This course, however, may not be used to fulfill the sixth form arts requirement and the spring term English requirement simultaneously.