



Course Descriptions

English

Literature and Composition Levels I-IV

Spring Ridge Academy's English Literature and Composition course is a Common Core-aligned English curriculum focused on developing reading and writing mastery and excellent collaboration skills in a rigorous, professional environment. Most classes are divided in half, where the first part of the class is dedicated to direct-instruction on topics pertinent to the quarter's objectives or based on student needs while the second half of the class is reserved for students to work on their individual projects and meet with teachers for one-on-one instruction. Students develop toward mastery in four key areas:

Reading: Individual students choose works of literature to read and analyze in terms of theme and the quarter analysis target (plot, character, language, and atmosphere). This allows for individuation based on diverse student needs in text difficulty, length, and genre while providing a framework to keep students on track and moving forward. Students have the opportunity to develop and examine personal literary interests while developing reading comprehension and analysis skills, which they demonstrate in student-designed assessments that allow for success in multiple learning styles. Reading comprehension, a basic skill, and literary analysis, an advanced skill, are practiced by all students, but the comparative weight of the two changes as a student progresses through the grade levels. While a 9th-grade student's reading grade comprises 50% comprehension and 50% analysis, a 12-grade student's grade is 80% analysis. This sets the framework for appropriately challenges at all grade levels.

Writing: Students work within each of the four writing genres (informative, narrative, poetic, and argumentative) to develop toward mastery of the unique skills required in each. As with reading, students design writing assignments in terms of length, topic, and due date based on their individual needs and interests, while meeting quarter deadlines and satisfying requirements for the focus genre. All writing for the class emphasizes the planning and revision process, challenging even the most skilled writers to develop and grow in proportion to their abilities.

Collaboration: Students will be required to work in small and large groups to achieve a common goal and complete and present a project. These projects are based on quarter objectives in reading and writing. The goal is for students to learn how to work with others and through issues while using their verbal and written communication skills. The project culminates in a presentation to practice public speaking skills.

Productivity, Preparedness, and Professionalism: Teachers will work with students to recognize their ability to organize their time and materials effectively while practicing professional behavior. Because the class is individualized for each student, they will need to manage their calendar to ensure that they meet due dates, bring appropriate materials to class, and participate in workshops. Students meet with teachers weekly to discuss their progress in the class.

AP Literature and Composition

AP English Literature and Composition is a college-level course that requires commitment, resolve, time, and a willingness to engage in classroom discussion, readings, and lots of writing. The course will refine students' writing skills and deepen their critical thinking. Each quarter will emphasize a different method of analysis—character, literary criticism, and setting and structure—until the final quarter, which will examine how to interpret a work based on multiple analyses.

This course will challenge students to explicate and analyze short and long poems, novels, short stories, and dramas. These works stem mostly from 16th century to contemporary British and American writers. However, students will also engage older western texts from the classical and medieval eras. Students will be required to read works deliberately and with care and present new analyses each class based on different literary elements. Students should expect to read and annotate every night.

Writing is an integral part of the course. Writings will be in response to literary works or identification and analysis of literary devices (including dialogue). Students will be writing short, long, and timed essays to reinforce the readings. The majority of the essays will be timed initially, and then students will go through an extensive revision process that results in well-organized expository, analytical, and literary argumentative essays that clearly develop and argue a thesis statement using appropriate style and mechanics. All essays submitted to the teacher will receive both specific written feedback and rubric-based feedback on revising sentence structure and word choice to improve clarity and emphasize meaning; structure and organization; support of claim by balancing the use of evidential summary, paraphrase, and quotations; and the use of rhetorical strategies for an academic audience, including controlling tone and voice.

Shakespeare

Shakespeare is a one-semester class that celebrates the works of the undisputed king of the English language through reading, discussion, viewing plays (recorded and live), lecture, writing, and performance. Students will read six plays, selections from the sonnets and narrative poems, and critical interpretations of Shakespeare's work while learning to appreciate and interpret Shakespeare's unique style and the conventions of Elizabethan poetry.

Film as Literature

Film as Literature is a one-semester class that examines the application of critical theory to film through viewing, lecture, discussion, written reflection, and essay writing. Students will view twelve important films in the semester-long class while learning the terminology and methods of film studies. Each film will be accompanied by themed lectures and discussion, and students will be assigned eight essays to give them an opportunity to practice the skills they are learning. Every class, students reflect on the films they are watching and the topics we are discussing in their film journal, which also contains their discussion notes.

The films we will view are subject to change based on film availability and the needs of the students, but the basic list with discussion themes stands as follows:

Quarter One

Strangers on a Train (1951), Alfred Hitchcock; Intro to critical theory, mise-en-scene
Wings of Desire (1987), Wim Wenders; Cinematography, shots, and camera movement
Battleship Potemkin (1925), Sergei Eisenstein; Editing
Black Orpheus (1959), Marcel Camus; Narrative Structure, Sound
Young Frankenstein (1974), Mel Brooks; Genre I: Comedy, Performance
Cleo from 5 to 7 (1962), Agnès Varda; Prepare for final exam I

Quarter Two

Minority Report (2002), Steven Spielberg; Genre II: Science Fiction
Throne of Blood (1957), Akira Kurosawa; Genre III: Samurai/Western
Sunset Boulevard (1950), Billy Wilder; Writing for the Screen
The Great Dictator (1940), Charles Chaplin; Satire
L'Avventura (1960), Michelangelo Antonioni; Problem Narratives
The Birds (1963) Alfred Hitchcock; Prepare for final exam II

Math

Mathematics is used mainly for expressing problems in such a manner that a solution can be deduced. Mathematical “sentences” are constructed to describe a particular problem; then it is possible to “solve” these sentences and, hence, solve the problem. Developing the ability to recognize and categorize a situation, express it in mathematical sentences and solve these sentences is the primary objective of the mathematics department. Therefore, our goal is to develop the ability to model real-world problems and develop a strategy to solve these problems.

Mathematics at Spring Ridge Academy is seen as a language, having its own set of symbols to express meaning. We try to emphasize that it is more than an accounting tool but rather a language of problem-solving for life and the sciences.

Algebra I

This course involves evaluation of basic algebraic expressions, solving linear equations and inequalities, solving linear systems, factoring quadratic expressions, rational and irrational numbers, graphing and word problems.

Algebra II

This course involves evaluation of advanced algebraic expressions, solving linear equations and inequalities, solving linear systems, solving quadratic equations, rational, irrational numbers and complex numbers, matrix logic and problem-solving using matrices, graphing and world problems, families of graphs and functions, exponential and logarithmic functions and equations. We also explore conics sections, rational expressions and equations, arithmetic and geometric sequences, and discrete mathematics and probability. If time permits, we explore trigonometric relations.

Geometry

This course develops the student’s ability to reason and to understand and presents the concept of deductive proof through the language of geometry and geometric figures, using parallels, congruent triangles and their application, quadrilaterals, similar figures, right angles, and beginning trigonometry, circles, polygons, area, and volume.

Introduction to Statistics

Introduction to statistics is a college-level math course that provides many examples and exercises that cover a wide variety of different and interesting statistical applications to develop statistical literacy to better understand professional journal articles and reference works. This overview allows for a connection to a variety of disciplines ranging from social sciences of psychology and sociology to areas such as education, the allied health fields, business, economics, engineering, the humanities, the physical sciences, journalism, communications, and liberal arts.

AP Calculus

AP Calculus is designed as a 5th-year high school mathematics course. This course is equivalent to a typical first-semester college Calculus course. Topics covered will include limits, derivatives and their

applications, and integrals and their applications. Students may receive college credit by taking the Advanced Placement Exam.

Pre-Calculus

Spring Ridge Academy divides pre-calculus into two separate one-semester classes (Trigonometry and Advanced Math) that can be taken after Algebra II in any order.

Pre-Calculus reviews the basic trigonometric ratios as examined in algebra and geometry and introduces the student to trigonometric function as derived from the unit circle; the graphs of trigonometric functions including phase shifts, amplitude modulation and translations in both degree and radian measure; trigonometric identities and expansions; and, mathematics in polar coordinates. Students are also introduced to the principles calculus through transcendental functions of logarithms and exponents; continuity, end behavior and critical points; sequences and series; and conversion between rectangular, polar cylindrical and spherical coordinate systems. There are application problems designed by civil engineers, in which the students write papers describing their approach to solving. Also, students complete projects involving modeling motion using parametric vectors.

Science

Biology

Biology is taught by emphasizing individual discovery through activities, lab exercises, and projects. This course explores, but it is not limited to, cell theory and structure, genetics, introductory anatomy and physiology, botany, cycles, and systems. Biology is taught as an emergent class allowing the current events in the biological world, as well as student interest, to direct units. The class is also a collaborative effort to drive student voice and leadership. The content and skills covered in this class provide an ability to directly connect the subject with personal and real-life situations. The class also provides access to live creatures, so students may learn the needs and requirements of life for a multitude of species.

Chemistry

In this course, students become more aware and knowledgeable about the world around us through the study of the scientific method, atomic structure and theory, energy changes and an introduction to organic chemistry. Topics covered include the periodic table, atomic mass, the mole, ionic and covalent bonding, polyatomic bonding, Lewis dot structure, stoichiometry, acids and bases, solubility and equilibria, and organic chemistry nomenclature including alkanes, alkenes, alkynes and amines. Laboratory exercises provide hands-on experiences in standard laboratory procedures.

Physics

Physics is an extremely hands-on course that allows students to put theory into practice. Problem-based learning projects take content and information from a theoretical level and apply it in the physical world. This course covers, but is not limited to, content including systems, forces, laws of motion, kinematics, momentum, collision, power, and work. This course also provides necessary skills such as teamwork in complex lab exercises, systems thinking, communication, trial and error, and using the scientific method. The use of lab notebooks and write ups are the main source of analysis in this course.

Social Studies

World History

This year-long course centers on the development of mankind from the earliest traces of humanity through the present. The course will include significant trends that form a basis for the political, social, economic, and spiritual systems of today's societies. Students will be asked to read and react to a variety of media sources about world history and current events.

United States History

This course explores the growth of the United States from the arrival of the continent's first inhabitants to modern times. The class covers the country's social, cultural and political history over the period of two semesters. The first half of the year is spent studying US History to 1861 and the second half from the Civil War to the present. Because of the unique and rich native American heritage in the area surrounding SRA, time is spent exploring the ancient cultures of the southwest including field trips to thousand-year-old Anasazi ruins.

The purpose of the course is to expose the students to the vibrant history of the United States and to give the students an understanding of the diverse nature of this country and the bountiful cultural heritage of which they are the recipients.

AP US History

This two-semester course is designed to give students a college-level learning experience and to prepare for the Advanced Placement (AP) exam in May. The objectives of this very demanding course are to gain knowledge and understanding of United States history; to improve college-level skills in critical reading, writing, and thinking, and; to prepare for the exam. There will be a strong focus on using historical thinking skills to develop strong critical reading and writing practices, as well as mastering a large amount of factual information. We will examine material from approximately 1490 to the present. There will be an extensive review and practice before the AP exam is administered in the spring.

Government

An examination of the United States Constitution and the purpose, structure, and responsibilities of government are highlighted in this one-semester course. Students are introduced to the system of representative democracy as exemplified in the American system of government.

Students examine the meaning of the Constitution and its application in modern America at the federal, state, and local levels. As such, current events are incorporated into the course as they relate to Constitutional issues. This enables the students to apply the concepts that they are studying to real world events. Students read relevant articles primarily from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and discuss and debate the constitutional issues in a group setting.

Economics

This one-semester course introduces the students to the understanding of the basic concepts and terminology of microeconomics and macroeconomics. Through a variety of media, students will explore current events and relate them to their economics lessons.

Electives

Foreign Language

At Spring Ridge, we utilize an online curriculum for foreign language with support from an in-classroom paraprofessional. Students access to world languages is more robust than it has ever been, and we want to honor our students interests and experiences that have led to a chosen foreign language.

For more details on our approach to foreign language, please contact our principal, Justin Zych.

Artistic Movement

Our Artistic Movement class is a playful and connection-building class. The focus of the class is on becoming comfortable and familiar with our bodies and the many ways we can move them to gain better physical and emotional well-being. The course is a combination of traditional yoga, acrobatic yoga, modern dance technique and dance improvisation. We study yoga asana, the basics of yoga philosophy and meditation techniques. We strength train and learn how to give and take weight with a yoga partner, making trust, communication and team work essential. Students learn the basics of modern dance technique and also experience improvisation and dancing for the sake of self-expression. All students participate in choreographing dance pieces and acro yoga routines that are performed at the end of each semester. Our class environment is fun and light-hearted and is perfect for students of all levels and abilities.

Animation

A one semester course that has students using creative techniques from the beginnings of man's desire to make images move to: cel animation, stop motion, claymation, cutout/collage, and computer animation while, at the same time, studying the history of animated film. Instead of using film cameras and animation stands (the class will learn all about those), the students will create animation employing photography, video capture, editing, drawing, computer animation, and audio/music composition applications on Apple iPad Pros.

Art Appreciation

In this course, art history serves as the springboard for the students to explore various art techniques and materials utilized by the artists of the various periods of history covered. For example, students will study Japanese art and try their hand at block printing. Then we will look at French Impressionist art and see how the artists of that period, like Toulouse-Lautrec and Monet, were heavily influenced by Japanese wood block prints. As a result, students will be able to broaden their art skills while gaining a deepening understanding of art history.

Advanced Drawing & Architecture

“You can’t do sketches enough. Sketch everything and keep your curiosity fresh.” --John Singer Sargent

“Drawing is the basis of art. A bad painter cannot draw. But one who draws well can always paint.” -
-Arshile Gorky

“Drawing is the honesty of the art. There is no possibility of cheating.” --Salvador Dali

Advanced drawing focuses on the practice of drawing realistic forms employing classical techniques and tools: basic shapes, shading, contour drawing, plein air sketching, using pencils, charcoal, conte crayon, pen & ink. The students are taught to reduce subjects to basic shape, then build upon those shapes in layers into the finished drawing.

In addition, the class will be studying the history of architecture, developing a design project, and architectural drawings. Then, each student will build a model of their design from those drawings.

Sketchbooks will be required for homework assignments, to jot design ideas, and to draw from life.

Art Within

Art Within is a class centered on the student’s personal experiences and emotions. A wide variety of material is used to explore their life experiences and themselves. Projects include a physical timeline from birth to the present, their ‘stuff’ those personal experiences and behaviors which they present in, sculpted as a physical manifestation and painted. A story about how they defeat their self-limiting beliefs based upon their own strengths they know they possess, and making a weaving which represents this story, a symbolic self-portrait in multimedia, and many more projects. Class time consists of some lecture, discussion and practice.

Physical Conditioning (PC)

This course provides a supportive and challenging environment for students to gain awareness of the importance of physical fitness. Using only body weight and functional fitness movements—such as squats and sit ups—functional fitness emphasizes the importance of full body movements and skills that transfer to the physical demands of everyday life.

PC coaches students through a pre-warm up/ mobility and stretching, a warm up, and a workout to target 10 recognized domains of fitness: cardio/respiratory endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, agility, balance, and accuracy. Workouts are performed both individually and as a group, with the focus varied throughout the week.

The teacher provides clear expectations to ensure safety. The standards of each fitness movement are shown at the beginning of the class and each student is observed throughout the class to ensure proper form and engagement. Through participation in this class, students have the opportunity to develop awareness of their physical bodies and experience the benefit that physical fitness has on their overall wellbeing and emotional health.