



SHINING MOUNTAIN
WALDORF SCHOOL



SHINING MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

Curriculum Guide



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Welcome to **SHINING MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL**



Our campus in the beautiful Boulder valley is a dynamic space where creativity, exploration, and individuality flourish.

As you step into our community, you will find a place where your unique voice matters, your ideas are heard and respected, and where you will be challenged to become your truest self.

We invite you to get to know our vibrant community. Please schedule a tour to see our brand-new campus. We look forward to seeing the positive impact your voice and passion can bring to our school.

—**Meg Gardner**, School Director



ABOUT SHINING MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

Shining Mountain High School (SMHS) provides students with a vibrant, inclusive, and life-changing education. Our teachers and trained specialists create classroom experiences where high school students are actively engaged in their education and achieve more than they ever imagined possible.

Shining Mountain High School classrooms are an energetic mix of academic depth, artistic integration, project learning, dialogue, and debate.

Small class sizes and close teacher-student relationships provide an optimal learning environment where students are seen as individuals and are encouraged to explore their passions. Our goal is to enable students to become balanced, life-affirming, and compassionate individuals who have the skills and confidence needed to thrive and contribute in an unknowable and accelerating future.



PURPOSE

Our purpose is to unleash the capacities of young people to imagine and create a better world.

MISSION

Our mission is to cultivate intellectually curious students who have a strong sense of self, compassion for others, and the tenacity to live to their fullest human potential.

We value and commit to:

Cultivating an inspiring and creative learning community

Nurturing meaningful relationships and true sense of belonging

Fostering a connection to our natural environment

Promoting global citizenship and local engagement

Encouraging academic engagement, innovation, and intellectual risk

Acting with empathy, compassion, and authenticity



The four pillars of our program:

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Hands-on learning in and beyond the classroom provides students with unforgettable, life-changing experiences.

EXPLORE & CAPSTONE PROJECT

A four-year self-directed and mentor-supported learning program, **SMHS Explore** allows students to pursue individual interests in depth. It culminates in a capstone or passion project, followed by a semester-long fieldwork opportunity.

ARTS INTEGRATION

Fine, practical, and performing arts are central to a Shining Mountain education. Artistic methods are woven into core subjects to enrich learning, enhance recall, and inspire innovative work.

GLOBAL AND LOCAL IMPACT

Our curriculum challenges students to think critically, problem solve, and take action for positive change.



ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY AND REQUIREMENTS

Throughout a student's high school years, they'll be exposed to a wide range of subject disciplines, activities, and experiences taught by academic specialists. The learning approach is designed to stretch each student's thinking and to expand and inspire future academic and life choices.

A Shining Mountain High School Diploma

A SMHS diploma signifies that a student has surpassed college academic requirements and excelled across intellectual and artistic disciplines. Graduates have the confidence and self-knowledge to succeed in higher education and beyond.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM:

- 4 years of **English**
- 3.75 years of **Science**
- 4 years of a **World Language**
- 1 year of **Health & Physical Education**
- 4 years of **Mathematics**
- 2.75 years of **Social Studies**
- 4 years of **Arts & Music**



COLLEGE AND BEYOND

Professors who have taught Waldorf students across many academic disciplines and across a wide range of campuses—from State Universities to Ivy League—note that **Waldorf graduates have the ability to integrate thinking**; to assimilate information as opposed to memorizing isolated facts; to be flexible, creative, and **willing to take intellectual risks**; and are **leaders with high ethical and moral standards** who take initiative and are passionate to reach their goals. Waldorf graduates **are highly sought after in higher education**.

—ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA

College & Career Counseling

All Shining Mountain High School students participate in a multi-year college and career advisory program.



Stats at a Glance:



98% of SMHS grads surveyed **graduated from college**, far exceeding the national average.



51% of SMHS alum undergrads **graduate college with honors**.



37% **attend graduate school** and obtain Masters or PhDs.



35% of working alums surveyed **are self-employed**, over double the national average.



SMHS grads **over-index in Life & Physical sciences** compared to national averages.



COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

- Academy of Art, San Francisco (CA)
- American University (DC)
- Antioch College (OH)
- Arizona State (AZ)
- Barnard College (NY)
- Beloit College (WI)
- Berkeley College of Music (CA)
- Boston University (MA)
- Bryn Mawr (PA)
- Cal Poly University (CA)
- Chapman University (CA)
- Clark University (MA)
- Colby College (ME)
- Colgate University (NY)
- College of Santa Fe (NM)
- College of Wooster (OH)
- Colorado College (CO)
- Colorado School of Mines (CO)
- Colorado State University (CO)
- Connecticut College (CT)
- Cornell University (NY)
- Denver University (CO)
- Duke University (NC)
- Earlham College (IN)
- Eckerd College (FL)
- Fort Lewis College (CO)
- Franklin and Marshall College (PA)
- George Mason University (VA)
- George Washington University (DC)
- Georgetown University (DC)
- Goucher College (MD)
- Guilford College (NC)
- Hampshire College (MA)
- Harvard University (MA)
- Hawaii Pacific University (HI)
- Ithaca College (NY)
- Lewis and Clark College (OR)
- Linfield College (OR)
- Loyola University/New Orleans (LA)
- Manhattanville College (NY)
- McDaniel College (MD)
- Middlebury College (CT)
- Mills College (CA)
- Mt. Holyoke College (MA)
- New York University (NYC)
- New Mexico School of Mining and Technology (NM)
- Northeastern University (MA)
- Northwestern University (IL)
- Oberlin College (OH)
- Ohio State (OH)
- Parsons School of Design (NY)
- Pitzer College (CA)
- Reed College (OR)
- Regis College (CO)
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (NY)
- Rhode Island School of Design (RI)
- Princeton University (NJ)
- Saint John's College (MD & NM)
- Santa Clara University (CA)
- Sarah Lawrence College (NY)
- Savannah College of Art & Design (GA)
- School of Mines (CO)
- Seattle University (WA)
- Simon Fraser University (BC)
- Skidmore College (NY)
- Smith College (MA)
- Southern Methodist University (TX)
- Texas A & M (Corpus Christi) (TX)
- Tufts University (MA)
- Tulane University (LA)
- Union College (NY)
- University of Arizona (AZ)
- University of British Columbia (BC)
- University of California (CA)
 - at Berkeley
 - at Irvine
 - at San Francisco
 - at Santa Barbara
 - at Santa Cruz
- University of Chicago (IL)
- University of Colorado at Boulder
- University of Colorado at Denver
- University of Kentucky (KT)
- University of Massachusetts at Amherst (MA)
- University of Michigan (MI)
- University of Montana (MT)
- University of Oregon (OR)
- University of Portland (OR)
- University of Puget Sound (WA)
- University of Redlands (CA)
- University of Rochester (NY)
- University of San Francisco (CA)
- University of Vermont (VM)
- Vanderbilt University (TN)
- Vassar College (NY)
- Villanova University (PA)
- Warren Wilson College (NC)
- Washington State University (WA)
- Wellesley College (MA)
- Wheaton College (MA)
- Willamette University (OR)
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute (MA)
- Yale University (CT)

CLASS FORMAT AND GRADING

Curriculum Overview

- MORNING LESSON

90-min class • 5 days a week for 3-4 weeks

Subjects include: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Social Studies and History, All School Play
- TRACK CLASSES

50-min class • 4 days a week all year

Subjects include: English and Mathematics
- TRIBUTARIES

70-min class • 4-8 weeks each semester, 2-5 days per week

Subjects include: Spanish, Art, Music, Physical Education and Movement/Eurythmy, and STEAM
- CLASS MEETING

65-min • Once per week

Subjects include: Study Skills, Social/Emotional Learning and Support, Cultural Agreements

Note: not all courses are offered in a single year



Grading

The GPA is computed cumulatively. Grades are not weighted. Due to the small size of our high school, SMHS does not assign rank to our students.

GRADE			GPA		
93+	A	4.0	73+	C	2.0
90+	A-		70+	C-	
87+	B+		67+	D+	
83+	B	3.0	63+	D	1.0
80+	B-		60+	D-	
77+	C+		NCR	No credit received	

PASS/FAIL COURSES
Student-centered with a high passing standard. Students establish personal goals to excel.



COURSES BY DISCIPLINE

LIFE AND EARTH SCIENCE

Anatomy

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course provides a scientific exploration of human anatomy, focusing on key body systems that enable essential functions. Emphasis is placed on the functional anatomy of the musculoskeletal system, the nervous system and senses, and the circulatory and respiratory systems. Additionally, students engage in observations and reflections on the human skeleton, with opportunities for comparative studies of human and animal skulls to deepen understanding of structural differences.

Astronomy

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course explores the profound influence astronomy has had on the development of mathematics, science, and philosophy throughout history. Students gain knowledge about the universe, celestial bodies, and the theoretical principles that shape our understanding of space-time and geometry. The course covers the structure and scale of the universe, classifying and characterizing important celestial objects based on their unique properties. Topics include the motions of the earth, moon, sun, and stars, such as rotation, revolution, orbital dynamics, and the life cycles of stars.

Botany

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

An experiential exploration of the plant kingdom through an analytical lens. Students study the classification of life into kingdoms, focusing on the hierarchical system of plant classification. The course covers general characteristics of plants, examining the life cycles of various plant groups and their evolutionary progression. Students explore plant families, structure and anatomy, growth and reproduction, photosynthesis, and metabolism.

Climatology

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

A comprehensive study of Earth's climate, focusing on descriptive, physical, observational, and applied aspects of climatology. The class explores the atmosphere's role in regulating global climate, examines the causes and processes behind climatic variations, and investigates the impact of climate change on biological and physical systems. Students learn about the structure and composition of the atmosphere and the fundamental processes driving Earth's climate. They also identify the sources and effects of greenhouse gases, analyze natural and anthropogenic causes of climate change, and compare their influences. The course also covers strategies for mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change on ecosystems and physical systems.

Embryology

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

Embryology offers students an in-depth exploration of the origins of human life and the stages of prenatal development. Focusing on the core of embryology, the course begins with the union of male and female gametes, examining the question: How do two cells become one? Students trace the intricate process of human embryonic development, following the transformation of the zygote through various stages of growth and differentiation into more complex forms.

Paleontology

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

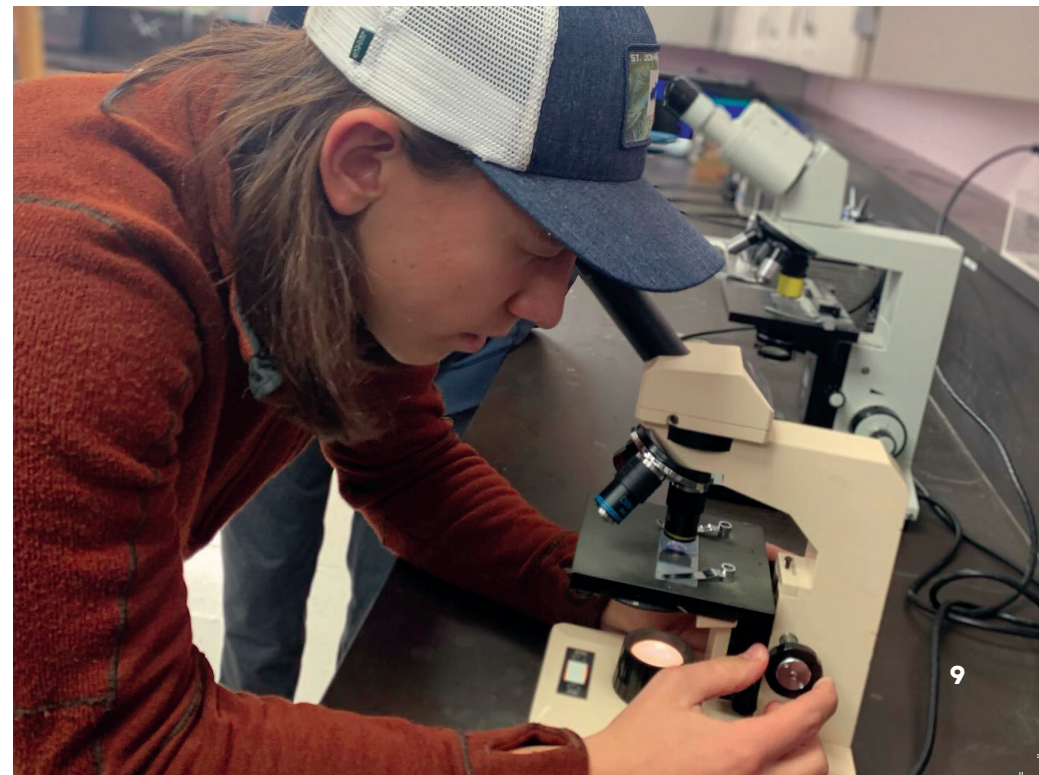
This course explores the history of life on Earth through the lens of fossil records, focusing on descriptive, physical, and observational aspects of paleontology. The primary goal is to encourage students to “think about time” and

early life processes, analyzing how fossils provide insights into the evolution of organisms. Students investigate how organisms interact and evolve based on phylogenetic evidence and how fossils reveal evolutionary relationships. The course also examines how changing environments and the extinction of species have impacted other organisms throughout Earth's history.

Zoology

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

This course introduces students to the study of animals, focusing on their classification, behaviors, and evolutionary relationships. Students gain an understanding of the diversity of animal life through the principles of evolution, exploring the vast array of species and the adaptations that have shaped their development.



PHYSICAL SCIENCE AND CHEMISTRY

Chemistry Acids and Bases

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

In this course, students explore fundamental chemical principles through lectures, discussions, demonstrations, labs, and investigations. Key topics include an introduction to the elements and the periodic table, chemical reactions, and the properties of solutions. Students study the characteristics of acids, bases, and salts, the pH scale, and neutralization reactions, developing a solid understanding of these basic chemical concepts.

Chemistry of Elements

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

This experience-based course focuses on the scientific history and structure of the atom and the periodic table. Students explore elements commonly found in the human body, important non-metals, alkali and alkaline earth metals, halogens, and other metals and semi-metals. Through experiments and theoretical discussions, students learn the properties of elements like hydrogen, oxygen, magnesium, iron, copper, lead, sulfur, chlorine, and sodium, gaining a deeper understanding of the role elements play in both living organisms and the physical world.

Mechanics

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

Delve into the study of motion through observation, experimentation, measurement, and calculation. Students explore the connection between physics and mathematics by solving algebraic equations and investigating concepts like momentum, impulse, and kinetic and potential energy. By replicating Galileo's experiments with pendulums and rolling marbles, students explore speed, acceleration, inertia, and gravity. Newton's Three Laws of Motion are introduced, leading to new insights into falling bodies, projectiles, drag, lift, and uniform circular motion, as observed in planetary movements.

Optics

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

Optics has played a key role in the development of math, science, and philosophy throughout history. This course connects students' visual experiences with the scientific understanding of light and color, and the functioning of the human eye. Students will study and explain principles of reflection, refraction, and diffraction, and learn how these principles apply to different lenses and mirrors, deepening their understanding of the nature of light.





Organic Chemistry

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course examines the chemical processes within living organisms and focuses on the transformations that occur inside plants. Students explore the relationship between photosynthesis and respiration and the substances derived from plants. Building on concepts from eighth-grade chemistry, this course connects students to the formation of the organic compounds found in living bodies as well as their significance in modern industrial processes.

Thermal Physics

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

In this course, students develop scientific and computational thinking skills by exploring concepts related to heat transfer, thermodynamics, energy, and material science. Students are challenged to explain everyday phenomena through the lens of thermal physics. The course covers fundamental concepts such as temperature, heat, energy, and entropy, and explores the historical and engineering developments behind thermal-driven work in industrial and commercial applications.

MATHEMATICS

Data and Debate

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course integrates data science, statistics, and debate skills. Students learn introductory statistics and explore more advanced concepts of inference while building skills to find, analyze, and interact with data on topics of personal interest. In the second half of the course, they apply these skills to construct and support arguments on complex topics with no clear right or wrong answers. Working in groups, students engage in debates while outside faculty members judge and assess their ability to make convincing, data-supported claims.

Math: Algebra 1B / Geometry A

10 Credits • Grade 9 • Track Class

This course combines algebra and geometry, exploring both strands independently before merging them, as happened historically with the development of coordinate geometry. In algebra, students deepen their understanding of expressions, linear and quadratic equations, and systems of equations. In geometry, they observe, make conjectures, and attempt informal proofs. Eventually, students explore measurement and graphing through the lens of coordinate geometry, blending algebraic and geometric concepts.

Math: Algebra 2A / Geometry B

10 Credits • Grade 10 • Track Class

This course explores advanced topics in algebra, proof geometry, analytic geometry, and trigonometry. Students begin with units in advanced algebra and Euclidean geometry, then move to analytic geometry where algebraic concepts are visualized on the coordinate grid. Topics include the study of functions and conics, along with introductions to trigonometry and logarithms, preparing students for future work in advanced mathematics.

MATHEMATICS (Cont.)

Math: Trigonometry / Analysis

10 Credits • Grade 11 • Track Class

This course covers advanced algebra, trigonometry, and the study of functions, sequences, and series. Students revisit logarithms for solving exponential equations and explore non-right triangle trigonometry, the unit circle, and trigonometric identities. The course deepens the study of functions, including rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions, while introducing sequences, series, and limits to prepare for further work in calculus and applied mathematics.

Math: Projective Geometry

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

In projective geometry, a hallmark of Waldorf high school mathematics, students rethink what they once considered to be truth, when the bedrock of Euclidean geometry and the geometric vantage point we are conditioned to know is called into question. By suspending Euclid's fifth postulate, students enter the mind-altering field of projective geometry, constructing and analyzing triangles of points and lines. The class examines key theorems from Desargues, Pascal, Brianchon, and Pappus, and discovers concepts like prospectivities, projectivities, and conics. Students reflect on the historical context and significance of projective geometry, gaining new perspectives on the nature of space and geometry.

Math: Analysis / Calculus

10 Credits • Grade 12 • Track Class

In this course, students delve into calculus and advanced functions, learning how pure and applied mathematics inform each other. They analyze composite and inverse functions before exploring the historical development of calculus. With a focus on the powerful concepts of limits and infinity, students

derive methods for differentiation and integration, building a toolkit of techniques for solving complex problems and analyzing curves with precision.

Personal Finance

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Tributary

This course empowers students with essential personal finance skills, covering topics like income, rent, budgeting, banking, credit, loans, and financial planning. Practical exercises include creating amortization tables, analyzing college costs, and crafting a basic business plan with AI technology. The course also fosters critical thinking skills inspired by Daniel Kahneman's "Thinking, Fast and Slow" and encourages students to reflect on decision-making processes and develop mastery over their financial choices.



STEAM

Architecture

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

This course offers an exploration into architectural design, focusing on how we shape our built environment. Emulating a traditional college-level architecture studio, students are given a site to design a building and asked to consider the needs of the residents along with cultural, environmental, societal, and economic factors. Over the course of the block, students move through multiple stages of design, from conceptual to practical, and produce floor plans, elevations, sections, perspectives, and models. The course also integrates skills related to data, statistics, and debate, as students engage in data-driven design decisions and advanced inferences about their projects.

Photography and Photo Editing

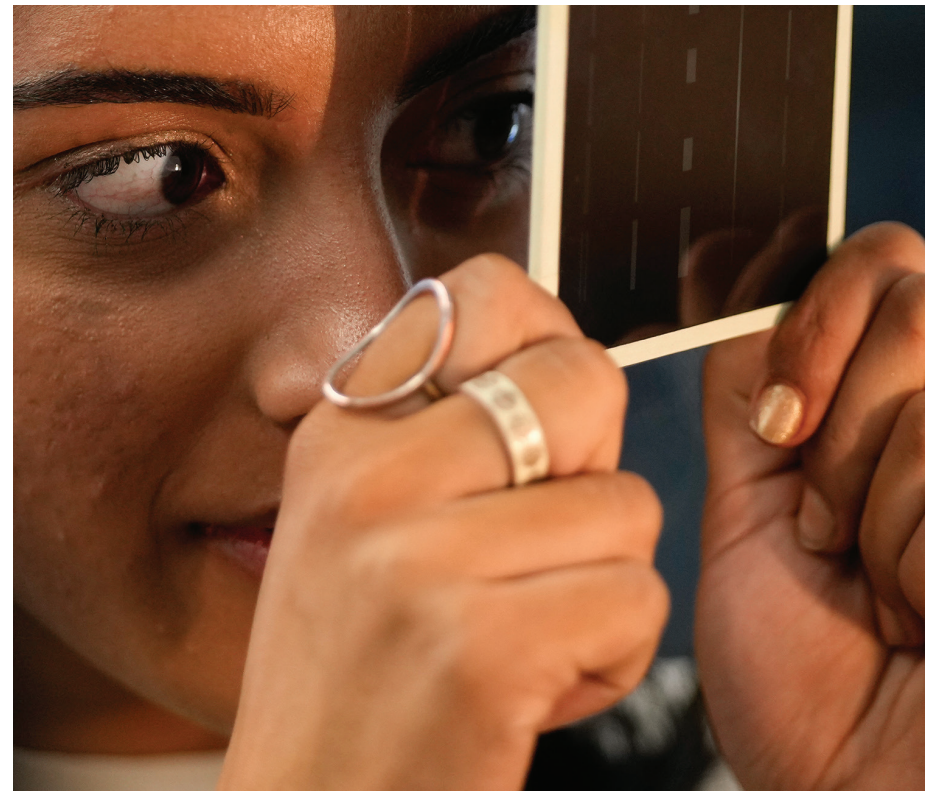
2.5 Credits • Grade 9-12 • Tributary

In this course, students explore the art of photography using digital 35mm cameras, aiming to create images that are both technically skilled and meaningful. Each student selects a personal theme to guide their work, and as the course progresses, they experiment with techniques in composition, lighting, point of view, and photo editing. The course culminates in a final project, which may be presented as a display, book, or portfolio, showcasing their thematic exploration and technical development.

Robotics and Computing, I & 2

5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

This STEAM course immerses students in the intersection of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics, encouraging them to work collaboratively on projects that simulate a startup environment. The goal is to develop technical skills while contributing to a shared creative vision. Students are introduced to computational and theoretical tools used in



industries ranging from biotech to environmental research, while incorporating their own individual interests into their designs. The course emphasizes teamwork, communication, and innovation as students work together to design and build their own robotic or computing-based solutions.

Technology in Music

2.5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

This STEAM class explores the fusion of music and technology, equipping students with the tools and skills to create and produce music digitally. Students learn to use a variety of music software and hardware types, experimenting with composition, editing, and mixing techniques. Through hands-on projects, they gain practical experience in digital music production while also studying the history and evolution of music technology. By understanding past innovations, students are encouraged to push the boundaries of musical expression and develop their own unique sound.

HISTORY, CIVICS, AND GEOGRAPHY

Ancient History: Peru, 5000bp-2100bp

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

In this course, students explore the ancient cultures of Peru, focusing on the evolution of civilization across 2900 years. Starting with the Caral Supe (Norte Chico) culture, one of the earliest pre-ceramic, urban societies, students trace the development of key Peruvian cultures such as the Chauvin, Mochica, and Nazca. Each culture is studied in terms of its contributions to Peruvian cultural richness and historical significance. Students also gain a deep understanding of South American geography, with a focus on coastal Peru, the Peruvian Andes, and the Atacama Desert.

Music that Shaped America

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course explores the vital role music has played in shaping American culture and society. Students examine a variety of musical genres, movements, and artists, analyzing their historical contexts and the influence of music on social and political events in the United States. By the end of the course, students will have gained an appreciation for how music not only reflects but also actively shapes the political, social, and cultural landscape of America.

United States History: Chicano Borderlands

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course investigates the complex history of the Southwest U.S. by examining the Chicano experience from both historical and philosophical perspectives. Students explore the history of the Southwest starting with the Aztec homeland of Aztlán, moving through the Spanish Conquest, the Mexican-American War, and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Focusing on the city of Boulder, Colorado, students study the impacts of shifting borders, language, and cultural change on the region and its people.

United States Government & Civics

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

Learn the foundations of the U.S. government, starting with the influence of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy on democratic principles. Students examine the core documents of American democracy, such as the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and analyze how these documents have stood the test of time. They also explore the workings of the three branches of government, using current political events as case studies to examine topics like the Electoral College, term limits, campaign financing, and citizenship. *This course serves as a foundation for the debate block in Grades 9 and 10.*

United States History of Colonialism

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

Rising from the foundational work in their history of philosophy block, students delve into the history and ongoing effects of colonialism, focusing on the Oceti Sakowin (Lakota, Santee Dakota, and Yanktonai). Through this lens, students examine the intersection of Euro-American and Indigenous worldviews and the conflicts arising from colonial conquest. By studying the Lakota experience, students gain insight into the broader themes of colonialism, its motivations, and its devastating consequences.

United States History: 1st Nation Indigenous Peoples

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

In this course, students explore the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples from a global, national, and local perspective. Through texts such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), students gain an understanding of self-determination and analyze the varying levels of Indigenous autonomy



in relation to nation-states. The course examines the struggles, resilience, and ongoing processes of regeneration and reconciliation experienced by Indigenous cultures.

US History: Civil War through Vietnam

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

This course does not focus on history as merely a sequence of wars, despite what the title might suggest. Instead, students explore the trends, cycles, and recurring themes that shaped the nascent United States from the post-Civil War era, including the challenging process of reunification through to the far-reaching consequences of the Vietnam War, which laid the groundwork for the modern era. They examine the evolution of U.S. governance and identity through the lenses of social class, American imperialism, and the nation's self-appointed role as a global peacemaker and enforcer, particularly in the aftermath of World War II, among other critical themes.

Modern World History

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

This course compares the political and social histories of six countries: Iran, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Russia, Nigeria, and China. Students learn how countries are compared through various indexes, such as the Economist's Democracy Index. They also engage in the creation of a fictional travel log documenting their visits to these countries and complete a policy comparison between two of the nations, focusing on a policy issue of their choice.

World History: History of Technology

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

Students explore the transformative role of technology in shaping human history. By examining key technological innovations, from the Clovis point to AI, students consider both the positive advancements and unintended consequences of technological progress. The course centers on the Antikythera Mechanism, the world's first computer, as a case study of ancient technology's surprising complexity. Students investigate how technology has changed humanity across time and its potential impact on future societies.

World History Through Art

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

This course examines the evolution of human expression through art, from the Neolithic period to the Renaissance and Baroque eras. Students analyze representative works of art as windows into the cultures that produced them, gaining insight into the worldviews and philosophies that shaped these societies. A significant portion of the course is devoted to observing, describing, and creating art, helping students connect to the historical context through hands-on experience.

HISTORY, CIVICS, AND GEOGRAPHY (Cont.)

World History Through Modern Art

2.5 credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

This course covers the transformative period of modern art from 1863 to 1970, focusing on the profound impact of industrialism, capitalism, and the aftermath of global conflicts on artistic expression. The course highlights the contributions of artists, many of whom were pivotal to the Modern Art Movement but often overlooked in history. Students examine modern art as a reflection of truth to nature, art for art's sake, and as a form of political commentary.

World History: Introduction to Philosophical Thought

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Morning Lesson

How do we think? Do we sup on the words of others, and sort them into piles of “yea” and “nay?” Or do we sift ideas for meaning, holding them to the light, and against one another? This block aims to answer these questions by way of an international tour of thinkers. From Socrates to Winona LaDuke and Lao Tzu to Marcus Aurelius, we ask, “What is thought?” Through discussion, thought, and projects, students gain an understanding of philosophical ideas and see that many diverse world views are both possible and legitimate.

World History: Ukraine & Russia

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Morning Lesson

Explore the cultural and historical dynamics between Russia and Ukraine through literature and historical context. Studying folk tales, music, poetry, and short stories, students gain a deeper understanding of the socio-political and cultural factors that have shaped the conflict between these two nations. The course emphasizes the intersection of East and West in Russia and explores how historical events and cultural expression have shaped the identities of both Russia and Ukraine.



LANGUAGE ARTS

English Language Arts

10 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Track Class

English language arts focuses on developing essential writing skills—both expository and creative—that serve as a foundation for academic success and lifelong communication, along with fostering a deep engagement with literature across genres. This dual focus equips students with the tools to express themselves effectively while broadening their horizons through exposure to diverse writers, cultures, and ideas. Such exploration not only enhances vocabulary and inspires young writers but also cultivates curiosity and a lifelong appreciation for literature.

Grades 9 and 10: Nature Writing, Debate and Media Discernment, The Art of Poetry and Creative Writing, The Novel

Grades 11 and 12: The Art of Poetry, Spoken Word, Protest and Civil Rights, The Personal Essay, Short Story, Travel Writing and Memoir, The Novel

LANGUAGE ARTS: SPANISH

Spanish: Novice High

10 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

Students lay a strong foundation in the Spanish language while cultivating an awareness of cultural differences. The focus is on building proficiency through communication on topics related to themselves, their community, and issues in the Spanish-speaking world. This is a communicative class where students practice active listening, interpreting messages, and expressing meaning in both personal and practical contexts. As beginning learners, students are equipped with tools and strategies to grow their language skills quickly and effectively while developing their bilingual abilities.

Cultural topics are discussed using the simple indicative tenses, and a variety of teacher and student-selected vocabulary.

Spanish: Intermediate High

10 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

Students continue to expand their communication skills and cultural knowledge. Through listening, speaking, reading, and writing about everyday topics, personal interests, and course material, students strengthen their control over language, spelling, and clarity in most situations. More student output is expected at this level, with longer and more complex readings

and discussions. Students at this stage should be comfortable using all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—to express meaning and emotion in Spanish, moving beyond basic language use to more nuanced communication in the indicative, imperative, and subjunctive moods. Students study literature, film, and music of Spanish-speaking countries.

Experience Spanish Language Studies Abroad

2.5 Credits • Grades 9-12

A key goal of Shining Mountain's Spanish program is to help students become multilingual communicators in the Americas while fostering social awareness through studying cultural identity, food systems, and language. As part of this initiative, we partner with companies like *Where There Be Dragons* to offer an immersive travel experience to Spanish-speaking countries in Central and South America.

This program provides students with targeted cultural engagement, leadership opportunities, and a chance to exercise personal responsibility. Participants foster direct relationships with local people and the environment, developing global competencies, self-awareness, and a deeper insight into the interconnectedness of land, language, identity, and worldview that will serve them both academically and in their personal lives back home.



VISUAL AND PRACTICAL ARTS

Black & White

2.5 Credits • Grade 9 • Tributary

This foundational course introduces students to the essential principles of drawing, painting, and composition. Students develop their skills in key techniques such as line, shape, form, and shading while learning about perspective, proportion, and visual structure. Emphasizing observational drawing, the course challenges students to understand and render form, depth, shadows, and light. The final project allows students to showcase their creativity through an original artwork, incorporating the skills they've acquired to create dynamic and visually compelling pieces.

Blacksmithing

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Tributary

In this course, students learn the art of blacksmithing through the creation of two projects: a ladle and a hook. Along the way, students acquire the skills to bend, flatten, texture, and twist steel while working safely around hot forges and steel. The course also includes the craft of copper work, where students will forge a copper ladle scoop and secure it to a handle with copper rivets, honing their skills in both metalwork and craftsmanship.

Collage-Encaustics

2.5 Credits • Grade 10 • Tributary

This course combines collage techniques with encaustic painting, which uses beeswax and resin to create textured, layered works of art. Students learn how to create symbolic collages while mastering the process of encaustic painting on wood panels. The class emphasizes precision and thoughtfulness in each step of creation, from cutting and assembling the collage to painting and fusing layers with encaustic materials. Students complete two projects that allow them to explore and refine these mixed-media techniques.

Color Theory

2.5 Credits • Grade 10 • Tributary

In this course, students explore the science behind color mixing and the relationship between different hues. They experiment with various media, including pencils, pastels, watercolors, and acrylic paints, to develop a deep understanding of color's role in creating form, depth, and light. Through exercises and projects, students learn to use color to convey shadows, reflections, and three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface. The final project involves creating a painting that incorporates these techniques to render lifelike depth and light.

Figure Drawing

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Tributary

In this course, students focus on the techniques and principles of figure drawing. They practice observing and rendering the human body, developing their understanding of proportion, form, and anatomy. Through exercises and studio practice, students refine their skills and culminate in a final project that showcases their ability to represent the human form with accuracy and expressive detail.

Linoleum Printmaking

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Tributary

In this course, students explore the history and artistic movements of printmaking while learning the process of designing, carving, and printing linoleum blocks. They create a design that reflects their personal interests and works within the style of the medium. Students will carve their linoleum block, revise their work as needed, and produce at least five final prints, all signed and numbered. The course emphasizes creativity, precision, and the technical skills required to bring their designs to life through printmaking.

Marble Sculpting

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Tributary

In this course, students sculpt and polish a 25-pound piece of alabaster using hand chisels, rasps, hammers, and sandpaper. Working directly with the stone, students learn to extract forms rather than impose them, connecting with the material and the natural world in a tangible way. The course emphasizes both the technical skill required to work with hard stone and the artistic process of bringing a block of marble to life through careful shaping and polishing.

Portrait Painting

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Tributary

This course focuses on the techniques of portrait painting, emphasizing the study of the head's structure and the expressive potential of facial features. Students examine portraits from various historical periods, including contemporary works, to understand what makes a compelling portrait. They learn and practice key painting techniques, including color theory, brushwork, and composition, applying them to create their own portraits. The final project requires students to produce a portrait that showcases their understanding of these techniques.

Woodworking: Bending and Lamination

2.5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

This hands-on course introduces students to techniques for bending and curving wood, including one-part and two-part molds, and vacuum pressing. Students learn about different wood species and the importance of adhesive selection for different projects. The course encourages collaborative design as students work together to create a group sculpture that showcases their understanding of form, function, and design, which will be displayed on campus.



Wood Sculpture

2.5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

In this course, students explore three-dimensional shapes and forms in wood by creating sculptures from solid blocks of wood. They use a variety of hand and power tools, such as saws, chisels, rasps, gouges, and drills, to shape their sculptures. The course places a strong emphasis on tool safety and effectiveness, with each student selecting the tools best suited for their individual designs. Students gain practical experience and confidence in wood carving, culminating in the creation of their own sculptural artwork.

Clay Busts

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Tributary

This course introduces students to the art of sculpting a three-dimensional human bust from low-fired clay. Using their classmates and mirrors as references, students learn to observe and capture the proportions and relationships of facial features. The course emphasizes the importance of observation, precision, and the unique qualities of each individual's facial structure. By the end of the course, students create a hollow human bust that reflects their artistic skill and understanding of facial anatomy.

PERFORMING ARTS

All School Theatre

2.5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Morning Lesson

This hands-on course provides students with the opportunity to participate in the production of an all-student high school play, culminating in a performance for the school community. Students can contribute as performers, technicians, or set crew members. The course covers essential theatrical skills such as character study, line memorization, speech, movement, and performance techniques. Emphasizing collaboration, students work together to bring the play to life, gaining an appreciation for theater as a collective art form that thrives on teamwork and mutual support.

Music Ensemble

2.5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

This non-auditioned ensemble course brings together musicians from Grades 9-12 to explore and develop their musical talents in a supportive group setting. Students work on vocal and instrumental skills, music literacy, rhythm, and performance techniques. The repertoire includes two-, three-, and four-part harmonies, as well as exploration of guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, and various percussion instruments. Through regular practice and performances, students deepen their understanding of music theory, enhance their musicianship, and experience the dynamics of playing in an ensemble and fusing layers with encaustic materials. Students complete two projects that allow them to explore and refine these mixed-media techniques.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Eurythmy

.25-5 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

Unique to Waldorf education, eurythmy integrates movement, spatial awareness, language, poetry, and music into a unified artistic expression. In this course, students engage in exercises that cultivate leadership, initiative, self-awareness, and awareness of others. Emphasis is placed on developing presence through movement. As part of an ensemble, students work together to prepare for and perform at the annual all-school Michaelmas festival.

Rock Climbing

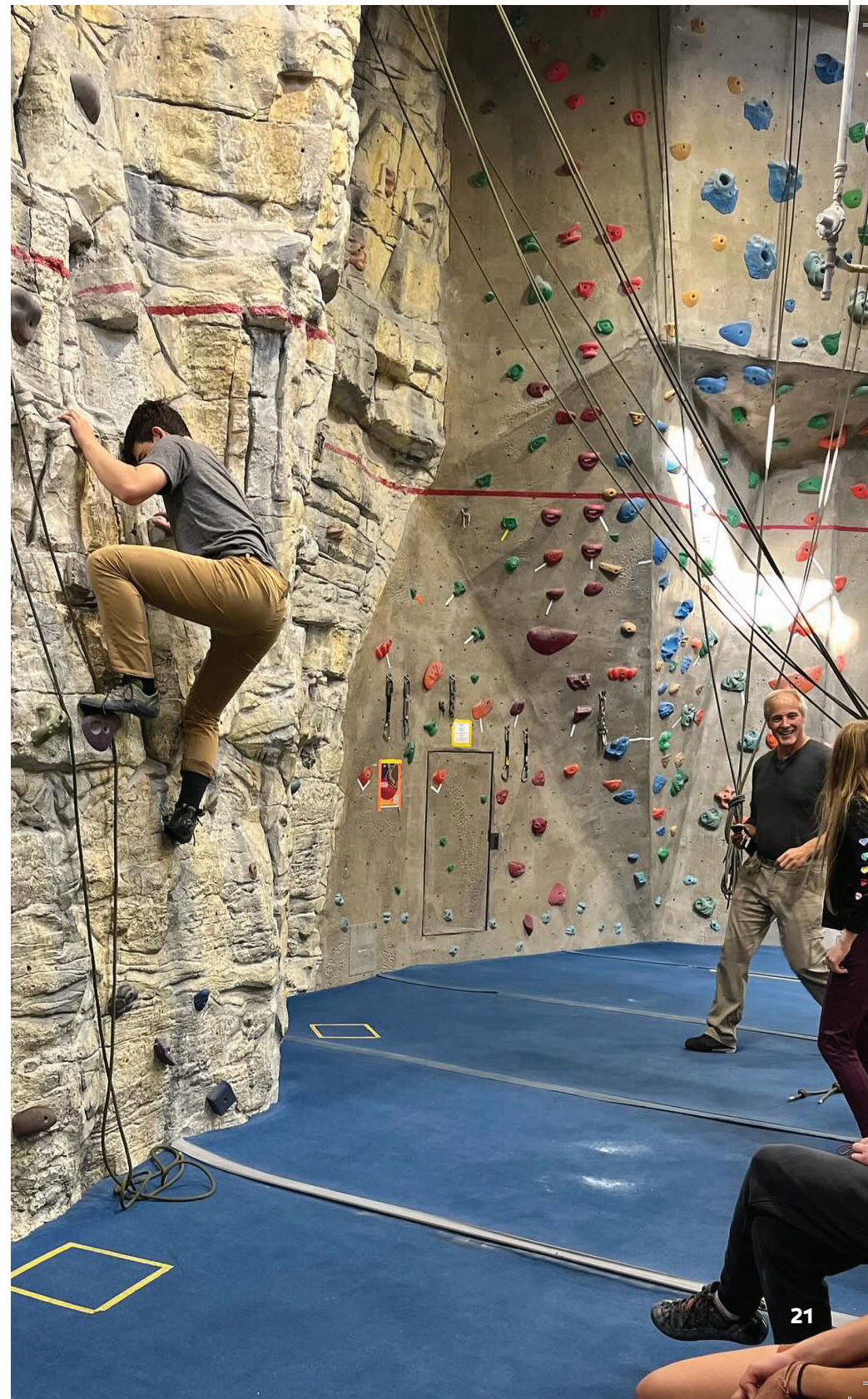
.25 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

This course is designed to introduce students to rock climbing, while benefiting all participants, regardless of level. Instruction covers essential climbing techniques, terminology, bouldering, top-roping, belaying, and more. The goal is not only to build physical fitness but also to equip students with the skills and confidence necessary to climb safely and enjoyably.

Yoga

.25 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Tributary

Yoga classes at Shining Mountain are thoughtfully designed to enhance physical fitness, mental clarity, and emotional well-being. Open to students of all levels, from beginners to experienced, the class includes various yoga styles focusing on breath control, flexibility, and strength. Students practice mindfulness techniques to help reduce stress, regulate their nervous systems, and promote overall wellness.



SENIOR EXPERIENCES

Senior Capstone Project

7.5 Credits • Grade 12

The Senior Capstone Project is a six-month commitment where students explore and learn a subject in-depth. This may involve intensifying an area they have already been pursuing or delving into something entirely new. Each student is paired with a mentor who is experienced in the field they wish to study. The process begins in the spring of their junior year, with students submitting a proposal outlining their project's scope, goals, timeline, and mentor selection. Over the course of the year, they will work on the project independently, seeking guidance as needed. In the spring of their senior year, students prepare their presentation, speech, and any visuals for the final presentation. The project culminates in a presentation to an audience of parents, students, faculty, and mentors in March.

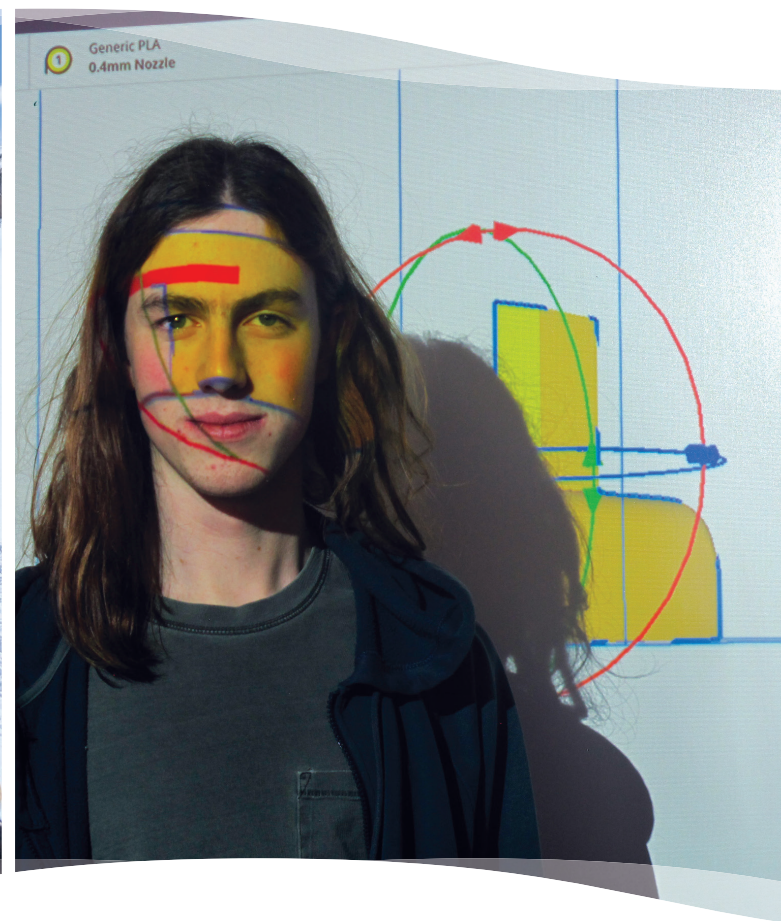
Senior Seminar

7.5 Credits • Grade 12

This two-week course serves as a reflective experience, examining the traditional curriculum, philosophical foundations, and principles of Waldorf education from kindergarten through Grade 12. Students explore human development, ages 0-21, as understood by founder Rudolf Steiner. They discuss his life's challenges and contributions before reflecting on their own biographies—considering significant events, influences, and their personal growth.







SHINING MOUNTAIN
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