



SHINING MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

Curriculum Guide

2026 - 2027

SHINING MOUNTAIN
WALDORF SCHOOL
Pre-K to 12th Grade

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Welcome to
SHINING MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL



Meg Gardner
School Director

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 you are challenged to become your truest self.

We invite you to get to know our vibrant community by scheduling a campus tour. We look forward to seeing the positive impact your voice and passion will bring to our school.





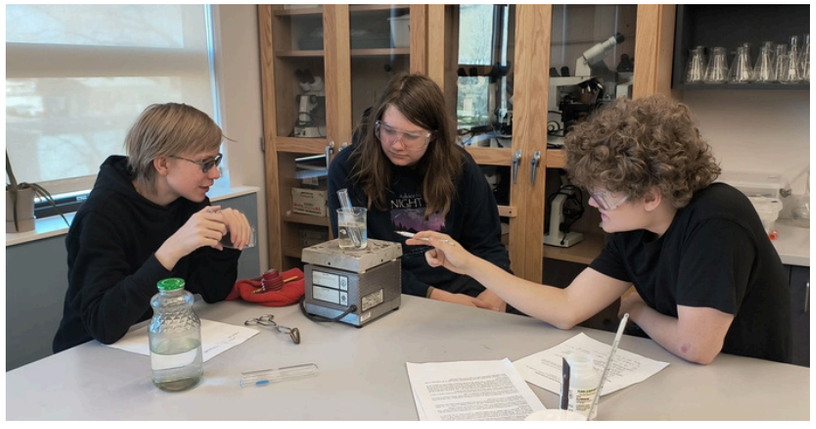
ABOUT SHINING MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

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 stay actively engaged and achieve more than they ever imagined possible.

Shining Mountain High School classrooms blend 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 STAND BEHIND:

- 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 LIVING ELEMENTS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Our development as human beings is a constant, renewing endeavor. Our high school students are making their way through the final, intensive work of adolescence. The Living Elements address the interdependent pathways of growth, both academic and personal, to which both teacher and student devote themselves. As they move through high school, the student experiences these pathways as an ever-maturing being moving toward adulthood.



DISCOVERY OF SELF
Know thyself; know the world

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE
The discovery is in the doing

INTEGRATION OF THE ARTS
The creative process matters

Discovery of Self

Along with a focus on strong academic and social competencies, Shining Mountain commits to working with the adolescent to foster the development of self-knowledge. Developing an understanding of one's relationship to risk, motivation, resilience, interdependent thinking, and collaboration forms the foundational layer of the lifelong journey of "know thyself". We work toward developing, strengthening, and synthesizing this undertaking throughout the four years.

Learning through Experience

At Shining Mountain, the commitment is in the doing. We ask our students to take an active role in their learning. They cultivate wonder, seek meaning, engage their will, and effectively communicate. Experiential learning brings the academic experience alive within the student, which in turn awakens them to their place in the world.

Integration of the Arts

Fine, practical, and performing arts are central to a Shining Mountain education, yet the creative process goes beyond the arts as they are traditionally understood. When each discipline is approached as a creative endeavor, experiential knowledge is deepened through a revelation of the unseen and the discovery of its intrinsic value. A creative interaction with the processes enriches learning, strengthens recall, and inspires original and innovative work.

Shining Mountain Waldorf High School provides a dedicated, four-year college readiness process. In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum, we guide students through every step of college preparation.

Juniors and seniors are offered the (P)SAT and ACT exams twice yearly on campus and have access to AP course audits and exams. English classes begin the school year with a month dedicated to drafting college essays for the Common Application.

In partnership with Manette Ansay of Standout College Advising, we offer a comprehensive four-year College Application Process curriculum for students, as well as informational sessions for Middle School parents. On-site college counseling provides foundational support for seniors completing applications, while Ms. Ansay is available to families seeking deeper guidance.

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



GRAD 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.

42% of Waldorf grads major in science-related fields—more than double the national average.*

*Survey of Waldorf Graduates, Phase II, Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007)





COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

American University (DC)
Antioch College (OH)
Bard College (NY)
Barnard College (NY)
Beloit College (WI)
Boston University (MA)
Bryn Mawr (PA)
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 (New York, NY)
New Mexico School of Mining
and Technology (NM)
Northeastern University (MA)
Northwestern University (IL)
Oberlin College (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 at Berkeley (CA)
University of California at Irvine (CA)
University of California at Santa Barbara (CA)
University of California at Santa Cruz (CA)
University of Chicago (IL)
University of Colorado at Boulder (CO)
University of Colorado at Denver (CO)
University of Kentucky (KY)
University of Massachusetts at Amherst (MA)
University of Michigan (MI)
University of Montana
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)
Vassar College (NY)
Villanova University (PA)
Warren Wilson College (NC)
Washington State University (WA)
Wellesley College (MA)
Wheaton College (MA)
Whitman College (WA)
Willamette University (OR)
Worcester Polytechnic Institute (MA)
Yale University (CT)

CLASS FORMAT AND SCHEDULE

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

MAIN LESSON	90 min • 5 days a week for 4 weeks Subjects include: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Social Studies and History, All School Play
TRACK CLASSES	50 min • 4 days a week all year Subjects include: English and Mathematics
CLASS MEETING	65 min • Once per week Subjects include: Study Skills, Social/Emotional Learning and Support, Cultural Agreements
MUSIC/ART	85 min • 3 days per week
STEAM	70 min • 5 days per week
SPANISH	70 min • 5 days per week
LIFE SKILLS & WELLBEING	70 min • 2 days per week Subjects include: Social Emotional Learning, Physical Education, Health, Personal Finance

DAILY BLOCK SCHEDULE M, T, W, F

8:20 – 9:50 90 min	Main Lesson
9:50 – 10 10 min	Break
10 – 11:10 70 min	Spanish or STEAM
11:10 – 11:20 10 min	Break
11:20 – 12:10 50 min	Math 11/12 English 9/10
12:10 – 1:00 50 min	Lunch
1:00 – 1:50 50 min	Math 9/10 English 11/12
1:55 – 3:20 85 min	Music / Arts (M/W/F) Life Skills & Wellbeing(T/Th)
3:20 – 3:25 5 min	Group Goodbye

**Early dismissal Thursdays*
Math/English replaced with Class Meeting



COURSES BY DISCIPLINE

LIFE AND EARTH SCIENCE

Anatomy

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

This course provides a scientifi c 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 refl ections 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 • Main Lesson

This course explores the profound influence astronomy has had on the development of mathematics, science, and philosophy throughout history. Students learn about the universe, celestial bodies, and the theoretical principles that shape our understanding of space-time and geometry. The course covers the universe's structure and scale, 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 • Main Lesson

An experiential exploration of the plant kingdom through an analytical lens. Students study the classification of life into kingdoms, focusing on the hierar- chical system of plant classifi cation. 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.

LIFE AND EARTH SCIENCE (Cont.)

Climate Modeling

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

Models are fundamental to modern decision-making. This is perhaps no more true than in the context of our planet's climate, which has become a focus of not only environmental but also social and political debate particularly because of how prominent modeling is in climate science. Using climate as a case study, this course explores statistical inference and prediction. It covers everything from simple frequentist estimates of probabilistic outcomes all the way to complex Bayesian counterfactuals and models aiming for Artificial General Intelligence. This progression in complexity is contextualized with historical breakthroughs and the people behind them that have made modeling such an indispensable part of the scientific method.

Embryology

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main 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 • Main Lesson

This course explores the history of life on Earth through fossil records, focusing on the 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 reveal evolutionary relationships and insights into how organisms interact. Students investigate phylogenetic evidence and examine how changing environments and species extinctions have impacted life throughout Earth’s history.

Zoology

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main 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 • Main 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 • Main 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.

Electricity & Magnetism

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main Lesson

The mysteries of matter are explored by working through the phenomena associated with electricity and magnetism. These two phenomena are central to our modern everyday lives, but challenging to build intuition for because they act at a distance through fields, and the math that describes them is often first encountered in college. This course focuses on a conceptual understanding of that theory while building intuition through experiments and important real-world applications ranging from circuits to EKGs to guitar pickups to the way adders turn current into computation.

Mechanics

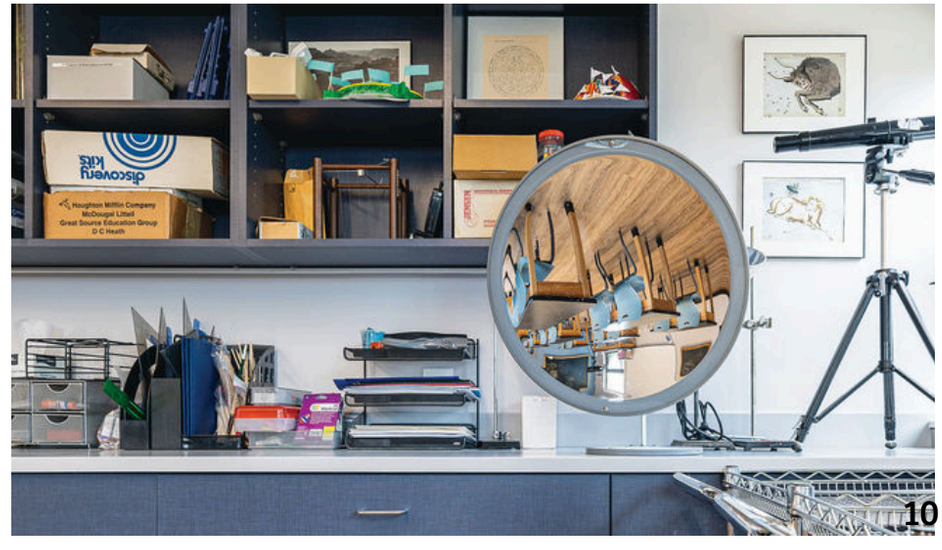
2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

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 • Main 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 • Main 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 • Main 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 • Main 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 • Main 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: Calculus

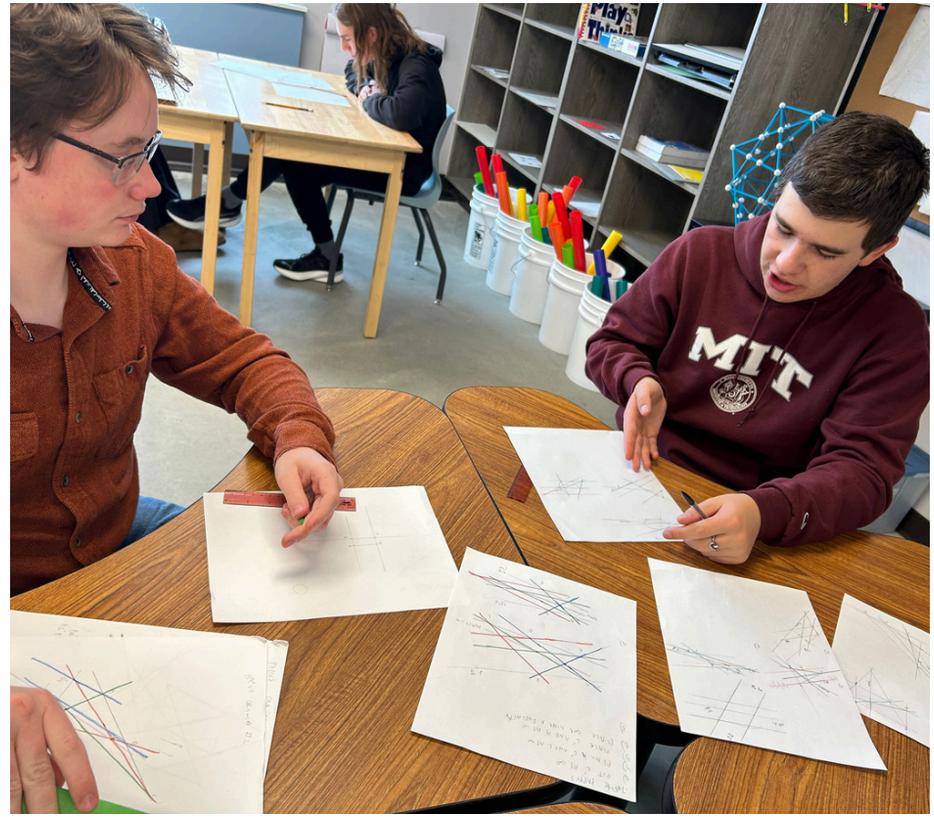
10 Credits • Grade 12 • Track Class

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

1 Credit • Grades 11 or 12

This course begins by looking at the culture of borrowing, lending, and investing within the United States since WWII. Students compare and contrast this with other countries in the world to get a sense of both the gifts and the challenges of personal finance within our country.
In weeks two and three, students study topics in personal finance to understand the fundamentals of borrowing, spending (budgeting), anticipated expenses (college, taxes, health care), saving, and investing. Beyond the calculations and analysis of these topics, students examine the psychology of financial actions and identify common behaviors that might hinder or help one's financial picture. After building this foundation, students move into case study work—both fictional and actual—in which they analyze finances through a numeric and behavioral lens.



STEAM

Animation

5 Credits • Grades 9-12

Animation is the addition of movement to art. This brings 2D drawings and 3D models to life, imbuing them with a story. These animated stories are some of the most powerful pieces of modern communication. This block explores that historical context while building the capacity to create animations using free open source state-of-the-art software used by animators in studios around the world. The course moves from learning to animate 2D drawings with Krita, to real-world stop-motion shorts, to fully animated 3D movies made in Blender and shown at an in-school film festival during the next block party.

Bioinformatics

5 Credits • Grades 9-12

The objective of this course is to introduce students to the fundamental concepts, tools, and applications of bioinformatics by exploring how biological data is stored, analyzed, and interpreted using computational methods. Through hands-on activities with real scientific databases and software, students will learn to read and compare DNA, RNA and protein sequences, investigate genetic variation, explore evolutionary relationships, and understand how computational tools support modern research in genomics, medicine, and drug discovery. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply basic bioinformatics techniques, interpret biological datasets, and appreciate the role of data-driven approaches in solving real-world biological problems.

Data & Databases

5 Credits • Grades 9-12

This course builds skills to use data in the context of scientific research. It covers different kinds of data, from basic ways computers store numbers and text all the way to complex relational databases that are the backbone of modern technology. It also covers how to interact with these kinds of data, even when they are on remote servers requiring terminal access. Collaborative tools are emphasized using Git to track and share work throughout the course. And, an historical context of these computing tools is explored to build an understanding of the ways we interact with all the data around us.



Energy

5 Credits • Grades 9-12

This interdisciplinary course examines energy as a fundamental component of human society from physical, environmental, and ethical perspectives. It explores the physics of energy conservation and transformation across common sources of power generation. The impacts on Earth's biosphere are also explored through a lens of sustainability initiatives. Students then work to develop an energy plan for a city of their choice, where they propose changes to energy sources and utilization in the context of ethical considerations around human welfare amidst ever-increasing demands for energy.

STEAM Studio

5 Credits • Grades 9-12

STEAM Studio asks students to imagine themselves as the founder of a startup. What does their new company make? This block is an intentionally open space for building, integrating skills and tools from science, technology, engineering, art, and math. STEAM is as much about communication and collaboration as it is about technical skills, which is why the goal of this course is to learn useful real-world technical skills in the context of a shared creative vision. Throughout the course students grow their scientific literacy using peer-reviewed primary literature to survey tools used in everything from biotech to environmental research, while working to integrate the goals of their own startup project.

HISTORY, CIVICS, AND GEOGRAPHY

Geography and Human Migration

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main Lesson

This course picks up where the other geography course terminates. We understand the why of landscape formation. Now we look at how the Earth's specific geographical features have dictated where, and how, humans have moved across the globe for the last million years. We will also look at instances where humans refused the 'easy' way to their destination and attacked the landscape head-on (think Hannibal and the Alps). Finally, we will examine how landscape has shaped culture and language.

Geography/Geology: Tectonics, Hotspots & Landscape

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

Basic Geographical and Geological principles will be covered in this course. We will also strive to see the world as a geographic whole after many history courses focused on regional areas. Following that, we will examine how two great forces, tectonic movement and volcanic activity, shape the landscape, and continue to do so in real time. From the Deccan Traps in India to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, we will scour the globe for interesting and dynamic earth-shaping forces, and superimpose them on the world landscape we know today.

Prehistoric Peru, 5000bp-2100bp

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main 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.

United States Government & Civics

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main 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: A New Country/A New World, 1790-1918

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

This block explores how the nascent United States established itself, formed its government, and navigated early foundational decisions. It spans the Federalist-Jeffersonian era, westward expansion (and broken treaties with First Nations), and the growing enslaved population leading into the Civil War. Finally, the course traces the nation's rise as an industrial powerhouse, examining imperialist expansion and the shift away from neutrality to enter WWI.

United States History: First Nations Peoples

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

In this course, students explore the histories and cultures of First Nations 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.

HISTORY, CIVICS, AND GEOGRAPHY (Cont.)

United States History: We the People, successes and challenges: 1948-present

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main Lesson

Entering the post-war era, the United States establishes itself as the dominant world power, rivaled only by one other: the USSR. As we examine different seminal events of this period, we will see where Americans have insisted on their right to decide the direction of their country (such as the Civil Rights Era), and where the powers that be overrode that right. (nuclear proliferation). This is a challenging period of history, as time seems to travel faster with the ever-changing democratic landscape of modern America.

US Civics: Assessing the Constitution for the 21st Century

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main Lesson

Our Constitution was written in 1787, 238 years ago. It has changed little since its inception, with the exception of 17 added amendments (post-Bill of Rights), and is the longest-standing document of its kind in the world. In contrast, France has had 10 distinct constitutions and governments (including five republics, two empires, a monarchy, and two dictatorships). Our task is to see how well the US Constitution holds up to the 21st-century profile and needs of the American public. While the students have become sophisticated observers and assessors of myriad philosophies, governments, and historical cycles, they are largely unchained to ideologies, voting stances, and the machinations of politics. Here they can apply both critical examination and some objectivity to the examination of the Constitution vis-á-vis modern times.

US History through Architecture: Immigration and Migration

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

This course examines the history of the United States through the lens of architecture, focusing on how immigration and migration have shaped the nation’s built environment from the colonial period to the present. Students will explore how American history is embedded not just in events, but in the buildings and spaces that shape everyday life. They will gain a deeper understanding of how architecture reflects cultural identity, adaptation, and historical change.



US History: Water in the West

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

The aridity of the Western United States, especially the Colorado Plateau, drives a fierce battle over water and who gets it. Major rivers, such as the Colorado and Rio Grande, have been wrestled under control through dams, reservoirs, and release schedules. In this course, students will gain a basic understanding of the geology and geography of the West. They will understand the indigenous view of water alongside the extractive view of those who control it, as well as present-day policy. Finally, we will examine nature's own responses to controlled water sources, vis-à-vis climate change. We will use the foothills behind our school to understand the Boulder watershed and flood zones, in order to create a microcosm of this larger picture of water use in the West.

World History: History of Technology

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main 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 unin- tended 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.

HISTORY, CIVICS, AND GEOGRAPHY (Cont.)

World History: History of the Middle East, 1900-present

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main Lesson

Americans know little about the Middle East, currently or historically, yet much of today's world events are tied directly to the region. This course, offered every 4 years, strives to shed light on how the Middle East came onto the world stage, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries- at first through the manipulations of colonial and other powers, but then as independent nations and coalitions in their own right. Knowledge of Islam, Coptic Christianity, and Judaism also plays vastly important roles. Students will come away with a means to interpret what lies behind current headlines and come to conclusions based on their newfound knowledge

World History: Introduction to Philosophical Thought

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main 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: On Freedom/On Tyranny: Europe 1918-1948

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main Lesson

This course examines a specific historical period as a case study for broader application across time and geography. The latter part of the course fosters recognition and consciousness as students mature into global citizens. The central focus compares two frameworks for understanding tyranny: "Freedom from..." and "Freedom to..." The former is a constrained, static pathway serving an individual or single group, relying on deception, scapegoating ("they or those people"), and control through fear or retribution. The latter represents true freedom, enabling individuals to remain sovereign to their values, manifest them alongside others, build common ground, and develop empathy and self-realization.

World History Through Art

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10 • Main 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.

World History Through Modern Art

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12 • Main 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.



LANGUAGE ARTS

English Language Arts

10 Credits • Grades 9-12 • Track Lesson

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

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 familiar, engaging, and novel topics. The overarching goal is to experience and use Spanish in order to interpret and express meaning in our lives and the lives of those around us. Students will practice close listening, engage in storytelling, ask questions of others, and express themselves as best as possible. As beginning learners, students are equipped with tools and strategies to develop their bilingual abilities effectively and confidently.

The course is centered on four units each year. Each unit features common phrases and frequent verbs combined with engaging content. Students show their speaking abilities through daily participation as well as oral exams. Through pre-teaching vocabulary, discussion of videos, co-created stories, novels, and ample conversation, students acquire the present indicative and simple past tenses as well as a variety of vocabulary.

Spanish: Intermediate High

10 Credits • Grades 9-12

Students continue to expand their communication skills and cultural knowledge in Intermediate Spanish. A highly communicative approach and immersive environment helps students acquire more vocabulary and ensure more clarity. Lengthier output is expected at this level, and more complex readings are introduced. Students read college-level literature such as “El Ahogado Más Hermoso del Mundo” and other stories by prominent and relevant authors. 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.

The course is centered on four units each year. Students study literature, film, and music of Spanish-speaking countries, and compare them to their own cultures. Participation looks different than the Novice class in that they hold “tertulias” - seminars where the students themselves bring topics of conversation and lead discussions.

VISUAL AND PRACTICAL ARTS

2D Arts

Black & White

1.25 Credits • Grade 9

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.

Color Theory

1.25 Credits • Grade 10

This course explores both the science and expressive potential of color, with an emphasis on painting. Students study the color wheel, Josef Albers' color exercises, and examples from a range of artists to understand color relationships and applications, and how color can convey form, depth and light. The course also investigates the psychological, cultural and symbolic significance of color, culminating in a final painting that expresses a self-defined idea through intentional use of color.

Drawing from Observation

1.25 Credits • Grades 11 or 12

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of drawing through sustained observation of the world around them. Working directly from still life, objects, and landscape, students will develop the ability to translate what they see onto the page with accuracy and intention, moving between pencil, charcoal, and ink. The course culminates in a final drawing of the student's choice with the goal of synthesizing the techniques, materials, and concepts explored throughout the class.

Portrait Painting

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12

This course focuses on the techniques of portrait painting, emphasizing the study of the head's structure and the expressive potential of different facial features. Students learn and practice a variety of approaches to portraiture, examining portraits from various historical periods, including contemporary work, to understand what elements contribute to a compelling portrait. This includes the intentional use of symbols, composition and brushwork. For their final project, 11th graders produce an acrylic portrait that showcases their understanding of these techniques, while 12th graders complete a self-portrait in oil.

Printmaking

1.25 Credits • Grades 9 or 10

Students will discover the expressive possibilities of printmaking through a variety of printmaking processes and techniques. By the end of the class students will have experienced and understand the differences between relief, intaglio and monoprint techniques. The course emphasizes experimentation, craftsmanship, and culminates with a project of the student's choice.



3D Arts

Blacksmithing

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 or 10

This course introduces students to blacksmithing. Students learn to forge a tapered metal tip—squaring, octagonalizing, and rounding the tip to completion. They then forge a hook and leaf key ring and, time permitting, an ornament, roasting fork, or hairpin. Through these projects, students bend, flatten, texture, and twist steel. Working with furnaces and hammering metal requires willful movement, concentration, and understanding of the material.

Ceramics

1.25 Credits • Grades 9 or 10

In this course students explore the art of hand building with clay using techniques such as pinching, coiling, and slab construction. Students experiment with form, texture, and design to create both functional and sculptural pieces. The study of past and current ceramic work serves as a springboard for student ideas and creativity.

Clay Busts

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12

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

Stained Glass

1.25 Credits • Grades 11 or 12

This course introduces students to stained glass, exploring light, color, and structure using the copper foil method. Students learn glass cutting, grinding, foiling, and soldering to craft geometric and organic designs. Through this tactile process, students develop fine motor skills, spatial awareness, and concentration, culminating in a finished stained glass panel.



Stone Carving

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12

This course introduces the principles of Direct Stone Carving, where students work directly with a stone's characteristics and their imagination to draw out a personal form. They learn the fundamentals of carving using hammers, chisels, files, and sandpaper. Through subtraction, students use these tools to create a polished sculpture, working directly with the shape and physical properties of the stone to craft their form.

Woodworking: Creating Function Items

1.25 Credits • Grades 9 - 10

In this course, students create functional items for the home using a wide variety of woodworking techniques, incorporating traditional joinery, carving, and bent wood elements. The course emphasizes tool safety and effectiveness, with students selecting the tools best suited for their designs while focusing on functionality and overall aesthetics. Students gain practical experience and confidence as they take a project from initial idea to fully realized finished product.

Woodworking: Abstract Sculpture

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 - 12

In this course, students explore three-dimensional shapes and forms by creating sculptures from solid blocks of wood or laminated pieces. They use a variety of hand and power tools, such as saws, chisels, rasps, gouges, and drills, to shape their pieces. The course emphasizes 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 an original sculptural artwork.

Digital Art

Vector Illustration

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

This course approaches the computer and digital software as dynamic tools for artistic expression. Students begin by exploring the foundational distinctions between vector and raster graphics, building a technical understanding of resolution, scalability, and digital media. Through daily hands-on exercises in Adobe Illustrator, students develop mastery over core design tools and techniques, culminating in a creative final project during the fourth week that synthesizes all the skills and concepts acquired throughout the course.

Raster Imaging

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

This course approaches the computer and digital software as dynamic tools for artistic expression using Adobe Photoshop. Students learn to perform precise image corrections and enhancements while mastering special photo-editing techniques through daily hands-on exercises. The course culminates in a creative final project during the fourth week, allowing students to synthesize and apply all of the tools, techniques, and artistic skills acquired throughout the first three weeks.

Layout Design

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

This course approaches the computer and digital software as dynamic tools for artistic expression using Adobe InDesign. Students begin by learning the structural foundations of page layout, exploring how to effectively utilize grids and create balanced, basic four-page designs. Through daily hands-on layout exercises, students refine their eye for typography, alignment, and composition, culminating in a creative final project where they design and produce their own digital four-page zine.

Digital Photography

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

This course approaches the digital camera as a dynamic creative tool to capture moments in time. Students master the foundational controls of manual photography—focusing on aperture, exposure, and ISO—to build a strong technical baseline for proper image capture. In the final week, the focus shifts toward specialized creative techniques, exploring low-light photography, light painting with flashlights in the dark, and other innovative visual methods.



THEATRE

All School Theatre

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12 • Main 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

Modern Band

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

Students explore music theory and performance skills on a chosen instrument. Orchestral musicians refine sight-reading, performance abilities, and music theory to arrange string parts for modern music. Non-orchestral musicians focus on practical music theory, tablature, and ensemble performance skills. These efforts culminate in a performance at the Spring Concert.

Soundscapes of America — Blues and Rock and Roll

1.25 Credits • Grades 9 or 10

Students follow the sounds of the American landscape from its African and European roots to the Mississippi Delta, Appalachian hills, and 20th-century cities. From field hollers and work songs to blues, bluegrass, rock and roll, and beyond, students listen and learn to emulate the sounds of American roots music through performance.

Music and Technology

2.5 Credits • Grades 11 or 12

students learn the relationship between music and technology through a hands-on approach. From soldering cables to designing and constructing instruments, students gain practical skills to assemble, maintain, and build electronic instruments. A heavy dose of history informs students of technological advancements in music over the years.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education

2.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

Students at Shining Mountain are challenged to engage their bodies through sport and exercise with the goal of creating a lifelong relationship with physical fitness. Focusing on teamwork, supportive participation, and willingness to compete, PE is about connecting to your body, while connecting with classmates in a supportive and encouraging way.

5 metrics of Physical Education

- Preparation
- Engagement
- Gamesmanship
- Respect
- Safety

Sports and Games

- Pickleball
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Kickball
- Deck Hockey
- Capture the Flag
- Gaga Ball
- And more...

PE Field Trips

- Paddleboarding
- Bowling
- Ice Skating
- Batting Cages
- Hiking
- And more...

SENIOR EXPERIENCES

Senior Capstone Project

7.5 Credits • Grade 12

The Senior Capstone Project is a six-month commitment where students explore a subject in depth, either expanding on an existing interest or investigating an entirely new field. Each student is paired with an experienced mentor in their chosen field.

The process begins in spring of junior year with a proposal outlining project scope, goals, timeline, and mentor selection. Students work independently throughout senior year with ongoing guidance. In the spring, students prepare their speech and visual materials, culminating in a final presentation to parents, peers, faculty, and mentors in March.

Senior Seminar

7.5 Credits • Grade 12

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

High School Solo Track

7.5 Credits • Grades 9 - 12

American youth are generally not offered a formal rite of passage marking the transition to adolescence beyond obtaining a driver's permit or license. The High School Faculty believes a shared rite of passage is vital to help students mark this pivotal developmental milestone.

Solos are an integral part of every high school year, becoming increasingly introspective and longer as students progress, culminating in a 24-hour solo. Each fall, students undertake a short solo during the Fall Retreat, followed by a longer solo during the Spring trip. Preparation occurs in grade-level SEL courses, where contemplative conversations develop self-reflection skills. All solos take place in natural settings within safety parameters.



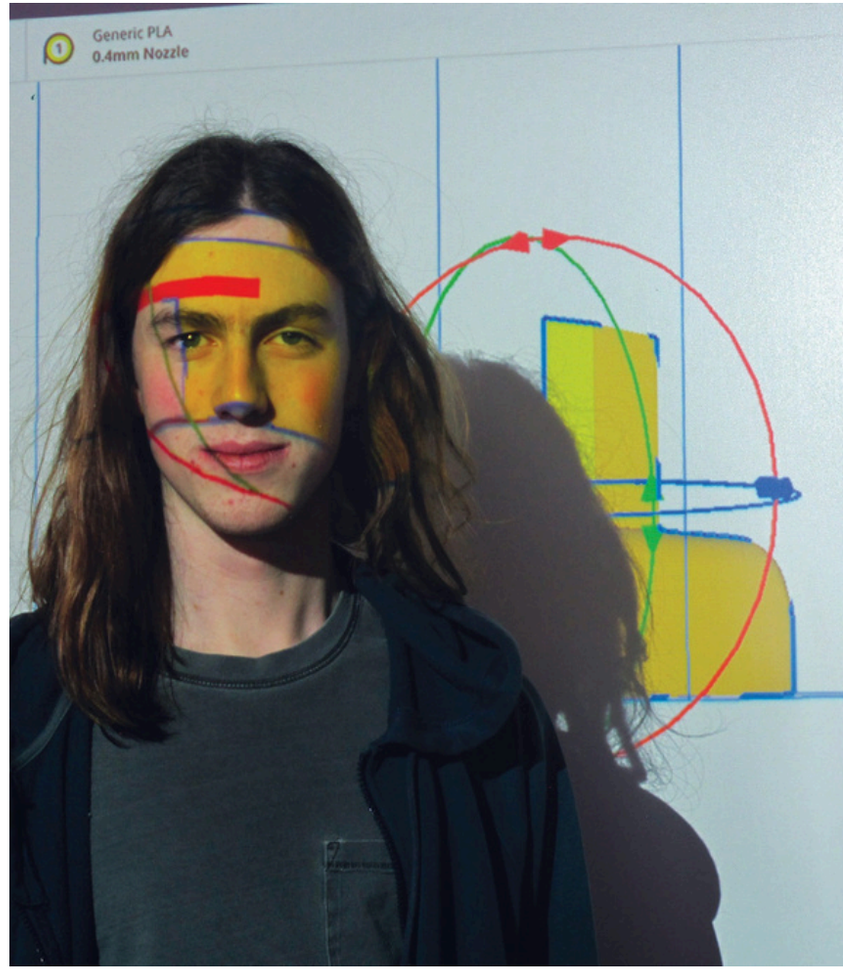




Students Respond: What might one see if they walked into the High School this week?

- The music class discussing the origin of the Blues
- The Data and Debate class trying to figure out the behavior of polar bears
- Debate over the difference between safety and civil liberties in History
- Teachers and students talking at lunch about responsibility and AI
- Respectful discussions about politics in America
- You would notice that everyone, regardless of grade, knows each other





SHINING MOUNTAIN
WALDORF SCHOOL

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