



Menlo School US World Languages

Student Perspectives - 2017

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The comments below were taken from student surveys. Please keep the ratings score in context, for example, Sophomores might consider a class or assignment as more rigorous than a Senior.

AP Latin

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

This course is a lot of fun. Tests are in the same style as the AP class, but there's not such a mad rush to get through so much material. Interestingly enough you still end up reading a lot, but it's a little less stressful.

This course is a lot of fun and the reading Magis choose is interesting and relevant.

The syllabus is very diverse, ranging from mythological stories to dirty poems.

I would recommend this course to students that...

I would recommend this course to students who enjoyed reading Vergil in AP.

Enjoy reading Latin and would like to do more literary analysis with Latin.

Can work and learn on their own and have a full grasp of the language and grammar.

Likes to be challenged, enjoys learning languages, and is willing to push themselves to continue with Latin past the AP curriculum.

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

I wouldn't recommend this to students who think it will be a super easy class because it's not. It's more relaxed than AP, but you do still have to earn your honors credit.

Struggle with Latin grammar or don't like Latin.

Are looking for an easy class.

Don't enjoy reading Latin prose or poetry.

Highlights from the course and/or specific skills that I learned:

Reading Ovid and Catullus is a lot of fun.

How to translate Latin poetry and different meters.

Through AP and post-AP, I have developed an appreciation for Latin that I never thought I would achieve.

Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):
3.75

Average "Amount of Homework" Rating (1-5):
2.5

Advanced Seminar in Spanish Language & Culture

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

It is very independent learning.

It has no tests or quizzes - it's based on oral presentations and essays.

You will learn a lot about Latin culture.

There is a lot of project based work that you do in class and on your own time.

Very interactive and involved class. Will help you improve your spoken spanish a lot. And the occasional essays will help keep your writing up to speed as well.

I would include that we watch a lot of insightful movies to help deepen their knowledge about social issues and make their spanish skills greater.

I would recommend this course to students that...

Want to delve deeper into spanish culture beyond learning grammar.

Are interested in how spanish culture is manifested in the world.

Enjoy connecting current events to things they learn in class.

Want to improve their fluency in Spanish and are ready to participate and interact during class.

Want to expand their knowledge and understanding of the current events while expanding their vocabulary in Spanish.

Are interested in continuing learning about the Spanish language and culture.

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

Are not driven to have a real world application of the language.

Don't like practicing their oral abilities.

Want a purely textbook-based class.

Are skilled at writing but lack in speaking experience.

Want a very structured experience in their classes and do not want to experience working with a more flexible and relaxed class plan.

Do not like watching films in Spanish or want to hear a lot of Spanish vocab.

Highlights from the course and/or specific skills that I learned:

The projects where we researched certain problems about Spanish-speaking countries.

We learned how to write more formal and scholarly papers.

My speaking ability has definitely improved over the course of this year.

I liked learning the Spanish-speaking culture through film.

We learned a lot and my speaking has improved a lot, especially during the presentations and talking throughout the class. I highly recommend it for people who enjoy Spanish and want to expand their fluency.

Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):

3

Average "Amount of

Homework" Rating (1-5): 2.5

Advanced Seminar Topics in French

Instructor: Edwige Gamache

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

There is a lot of speaking involved in this class, including presentations. Be prepared to present in French a fair amount.

You will learn lots about the history of France and French culture that I did not expect to learn before I had this class. All of the movies we watch are French movies that

have some sort of relevance. You will learn about colonies of France and decolonization, all through great movies.

There is a lot of presenting and speaking in this class about French and francophone cultures across the world.

We have learned so much about the history of France and French colonies, and Madame Gamache always makes sure we can relate it to modern times.

I would recommend this course to students that...

Enjoy watching movies and enjoy learning about France and its culture. This class is all about learning through the movies we watch, and Madame Gamache does an awesome job helping to teach us about the French culture in the movies.

Want to continue to learn and expand their knowledge about not only the French language but of the culture and history as well.

I would recommend this course to students that enjoy speaking French and love doing individual projects.

Enjoy learning visually through films and giving presentations. We watch a lot of French movies and documentaries in this class and if you can understand French pretty well, it is a great way to learn.

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

Struggle to understand or speak French. I wish I could speak a little better than I could because it would allow me to really fully immerse myself in this course. Ideally you'd be fluent or close to fluent I think to get the most out of this course.

Aren't willing to put in the work, because it's a class in another language, so it is already challenging but to watch movies and documentaries and have to analyze them can be difficult yet very rewarding.

Want a French class with a very structured curriculum involving tests and quizzes and learning new vocab and verb tenses. This class is much more about independent essays and presentations and learning from movies and French news.

Highlights from the course and/or specific skills that I learned:

In the first semester I was able to connect what I learned through watching films on decolonization and I was able to present on the subject as well as write about it for my final essay.

One of my favorite movies of all time is James Cameron's *Avatar*. We got to watch the French version in this class and write a paper about how the colonization paralleled the colonization done by the French empire.

I learned a lot about French culture after immigration because of multiple individual projects I completed this year. By working by myself I was able to learn much more about the culture than if I had a group or teacher guiding me through.

My favorite part of the course was actually our first semester final. We watched a lot of documentaries and movies about colonization and for the final we watched *Avatar* in French and then related that to the colonization of the French empire in an essay on the day of the final. *Avatar* is one of my favorite movies and I had never really thought about the colonization in that way but I really enjoyed that.

Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):
3

Average "Amount of Homework" Rating (1-5):
3

Advanced Seminar Topics in Mandarin

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

The course consists of mostly talking and speaking the language.

We spend a lot of class discussing our thoughts about articles, topics, and TV shows or movies that we watch.

This class takes a hands-on, experience-based approach to education. Unlike most classes, instead of reading out of a textbook, students are able to experience and fully understand cultural aspects of China.

The class is extremely engaging and gives each student the opportunity to explore topics related to each unit that interests him/her.

I would recommend this course to students that...

Want to maintain their Chinese level and learn about China's culture.

Want to learn about culture and current events in China, Taiwan, and other parts of Asia.

Wish to improve their conversational and writing skills in Chinese, and would like to engage in conversations about Ancient and modern China.

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

Are not willing to put in work at home.

Do not like reading books or watching TV shows or movies.

Can't speak an adequate amount of Chinese for this class.

Still need to improve their Chinese skills on a fundamental level.

Highlights from the course and/or specific skills that I learned:

We learned about Confucius and his philosophies.

I think I've improved a lot in speaking and being able to hold a full conversation.

In general, this class emphasizes a growth mindset, and students are able to learn from experience.

One highlight from the class so far was creating a children's book in Chinese; it was a very fun and practical activity that I enjoyed very much.

Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):
3.5

Average "Amount of Homework" Rating (1-5): 4