May Term Junior Class Descriptions

Course Name: Storytelling
Course Instructors: Ms. Ramsey & Mr. Cesarotti
Course Description: Through our stories, we share our dreams, our triumphs, our fears, our lessons, our worries, and our truths. It is through listening to story that we are able to walk with another person, cultivate understanding, and exercise compassion. This course will help you get to know yourself as a storyteller. Each student will be invited into a magical week of creativity, work-shopping, lessons, and practice. Along the way, they’ll meet brilliant guest speakers, practice different genres and styles of storytelling, and practice crafting their tales. Stories are ritualistic, primal, and essential as we seek to create meaning and purpose in our lives.

Course Name: Outbreak!
Course Instructors: Dr. Akers and Dr. Weaver
Course Description: A study of human epidemics provides opportunities to view infections through many different lenses. In this class, we will explore different epidemics that have had profound effects on human societies. We will examine the biological mechanisms and cultural and political impacts of historical epidemics like the plague and modern infections such as HIV and Zika virus. We will also explore non-biological epidemics such as computer viruses, viral Internet memes and “fake news.” The course will revolve around discussions, activities and outside speakers and/or field trips. The week will culminate in a student-directed project.

Course Name: Gender Studies in Horror Films
Instructor: Mr. Wetherell
Course Description: In this course, we will focus deeply on one aspect of horror films: the role of women in horror. Horror is a unique genre. It is one of the few film genres where
the majority of protagonists are female and (until recently) the majority of viewers are male. This dynamic poses some interesting questions and observations about the role of women in society and in horror films themselves. For example, why have women been more typically casts as victims in horror films? What are the differences between male and female “monsters” in horror films and what do they say about us as viewers? We will not be watching “gory” horror films – many of the films might be considered tame by today's horror film standards. Additionally, in this course we will read and discuss high-level critical analyses and essays of horror films and the genre itself. Lastly, this course will require you to do some self-reflection on the role of women in society and what personally makes you feel uncomfortable. This course will be challenging and it will be a worthwhile experience.

Course Name: Time Capsule  
Course Instructors: Dr. Hanson and Mr. Robbins  
Course Description: What's the future going to be like? What's important to remember? These are the central questions we'll explore as students create a time capsule of 2018 for 2068. Students will spend the week deciding what to send to themselves 50 years from now. They'll spend most of the time gathering and making things like objects, video clips, images, etc. then try to convince their peers that these are worth including in the time capsule. Students will be challenged to determine the most important things from Menlo, from the local community and from the wider world. On the last day, we'll make final decisions and create a physical capsule that will include objects and digital multimedia, then the main copy will be given to the alumni office to be opened at the 50th class reunion.

Course Name: Forensics  
Course Instructor: Dr. McCauley  
Course Description: In this lab-based course, students will conduct numerous experiments that crime investigators use to analyze crime scenes. Students will develop fingerprints, cast footprints, detect and analyze blood spatter, analyze fibers, and identify drugs, poisons, and explosives. We may also visit the San Mateo Forensic Laboratory and hear from lawyers to discuss the power and pitfalls of forensic evidence in the court. The final day culminates with students applying their forensic techniques and deductive reasoning skills to solve a final crime scenario.
Course Name: You are the CEO of you: leadership, entrepreneurship, and girl power!
Course Instructor: Dr. Arnberg
Course Description: If current trends continue, by 2018 the information technology industry will only be able to fill half of its available jobs. Engineers are the second largest STEM occupational group, but 1 in 7 engineers is female and even fewer females hold executive positions. In this course, we will build community and work collaboratively to identify a social need/problem, propose potential solutions, build a technology-based solution prototype, generate a mission statement and business plan, and ultimately create a pitch story! The focus of this course will be on students finding their own voices by working with and empowering students on their team. This course will include day trips to local companies and a final pitch presentation.

Course Name: Machine Learning
Course Instructors: Ms. Lax, Mr. Steinberg, Mr. Thibodeaux
Course Description: Machine Learning plays an increasingly critical role in nearly every aspect of modern life. This course will study tools for finding patterns in complex data, explain how machines learn, examine key applications of Artificial Intelligence, and discuss the social benefits, ethical issues, and potential problems of an AI-dominated society. Students will use technology to implement AI algorithms, supplement their technical work with complementary reading and discussion, build a project aimed at solving a real-life problem, and test their solutions against the work of other problem solvers from around the world.
Course Name: Shelter
Course Instructors: Dr. Dann and Mr. Allard
Course Description: The United Nations has stipulated that housing is a “human right” yet on any given night ~100 million people sleep without shelter and as many as 1.6 billion people have inadequate housing. This course will explore shelter from all different perspectives: Historical, evolutionary, cultural, socioeconomic, and structural. The primary objective of the week will be to build an actual shelter that stays within the constraints of a particular geographic region (desert, rainforest, etc.). On the final night you will be required to spend one night in your shelter (and survive the conditions of your region!). This is a hands on course that will require extensive, daily physical activity. All participants must be certified on Whitaker Lab tools prior to the start of the course and the sleepover on June 1st is mandatory.

Course Name: Take 5 Jazz Workshop
Course Instructors: Ms. Hanson & Mr. Formato
Course Description: Learn how to appreciate AND participate in one of our country’s greatest creations. In this course, we’ll explore how jazz emerged in early 20th Century New Orleans, and in the next 100 years continuously adapted to wave after wave of social and artistic forces to serve as a distinctly homegrown American artform. Students will learn to identify styles such as the hot bebop of the East Coast greats like Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk, and the California cool of Chet Baker and Dave Brubeck, whose biggest hit gave this course its name. We’ll venture out to hear live jazz performed locally. We will experiment ourselves with the help of musicians and jazz experts with the essential features of jazz music: swing rhythm, group interaction and improvisation. Students will come away from the week enriched with new vocabulary, new skills and musical experiences. No prerequisites (but curiosity) required.
Course Name: Isms of Art
Course Instructors: Ms. Tennyson, Ms. Gertmenian, Dr. Ollikainen
Course Description: Discover your inner “ism!” This course is designed with the novice and experienced artists in mind. Learn about the early Western Modernist art movements, the “ism”s of the late 19th- and early 20th-c. Each day we will do individual and group art projects related to the historical movement we study. Students will learn basic art techniques, both traditional and digital, from collage to basic drawing skills to painting to three-dimensional constructions. By experiencing new techniques to stretch your creativity, students of all ability levels will gain new paths to self-expression, build visual literacy skills, and learn by doing.
Course Name: Bioethics  
Course Instructors: Ms. King & Mr. Bowen  
Course Description: This course will look at some of the cutting edge science going on around the world through the lens of ethics. This course will rely heavily on debate and case studies. Potential topics include CRISPR and gene editing, cloning, designer babies, prenatal screening and abortion and genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

Course Name: Electronic Music Production  
Course Instructors: Ms. Sanden & Mr. Kitajima  
Course Description: Learn the fundamentals of music composition and production, in order to create beats, songs, and harmonies like what you hear on the radio. This is a hands-on course where you will make your own music using GarageBand, recorded sounds, and a MIDI keyboard. Your creations will be grounded in music theory, which we will use to explore which chords and harmonic principles cause songs to stick in your head. You will also learn audio-editing skills such as mixing different songs together, dubbing and creating soundtracks for film, and editing podcasts  

*No previous experience required.*