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Course Descriptions Academic Year 2022-2023

Pacem’s primary courses are intended for students ages 10 – 18. Classes for older students cover material at a more sophisticated level and require more homework to be completed outside of class. Classes are intended for students of the age range indicated. Students outside the given age range may take a class with instructor permission. Please contact us if you have questions about which classes are most appropriate for your child. Please refer to the weekly class schedule for class times.

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Language Arts, Literature, and Writing

Teachers will be in touch throughout the year about acquiring books for literature class. Because we want to give families as many purchase options as possible to keep costs down (used books, libraries, e-books, etc.) we have chosen not to charge a book fee and buy books as a school. We can help if the cost of books poses an economic hardship.

Golden Dome and more

(level 1/ages 10-13) (1 credit)

TBA

Using this year's Golden Dome Award book list and the Green Mountain Book Award list as a starting point, students will explore fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. They'll also explore a variety of genres. Students will read some stories together and will discuss literature components like character traits, character motivations, and story messages. They'll also make independent reading selections and create responses to these. While each response to reading could have artistic and creative components, students also will practice academic writing skills like summarizing and evaluating, and they'll begin to build analytical writing skills. Students will design, write, revise, and polish all substantial projects. They'll complete polished submissions for the *Pacem Literary Journal*. Students enrolled full-time at Pacem will select 2 pieces to include in their Pacem Writing Portfolio.

Each year, content and projects differ, depending on students' needs, so students may take this class multiple years.

Please be advised that this class may have reading homework.

Explorations

(level 2/ages 12-14) (1 credit)

Laura McCaffrey

Literature: In this class, students will read about the explorations of both characters and people, as well as the ways such explorations may differ in diverse American and world cultures. Students will collaboratively select literature to read and discuss, as well as make genre selections.

Discussion and Writing: Students will work on close reading analysis, as well as presentation and discussion skills. Depending on student interest, they may self-design creative writing projects. Students will keep a journal comprised of short informal pieces, as well as complete an academic literature response essay, a short story, a poem, and an expository piece. With guidance, they will use the drafting process to develop and complete all major projects. Students will revise and complete polished submissions for the *Pacem Literary Journal*. Students enrolled full-time at Pacem will select 2 pieces to include in their Pacem Portfolio.

Each year, content and projects differ, depending on students' needs, so students may take this class multiple years.

Please be advised that this class will have reading homework.

The Essay and Our Favorite Genres

(level 3/ ages 14-16) (1 credit)

Laura McCaffrey

Literature: During the first semester, students will explore a variety of creative nonfiction as well as fiction. Students will read essays from *Best American Essays*, *National Geographic*, *The New Yorker*, *Yankee Magazine*, *Teen Ink*, *Orion*, *The New York Times*, and similar publications. They will also listen to at least one audio essay from *Teen Radio Diaries* or *This American Life*. While reading personal/memoir essays, they will read graphic memoirs like Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. During the second semester, the class or each individual student will pick genres to focus on. Students may select any genre—fantasy, science fiction, classics, environmental writing, or whatever else inspires them.

Discussion and Writing: Students will write shorter reflective and analytical responses to a number of different kinds of essays. They also will craft at least 4 complete essays: analytical, narrative, opinion, and reflective. If students choose, they could create essays in diverse formats, such as audio, video, or comics formats. They may also develop other creative projects, particularly in response to their genre studies. With guidance, they will use the drafting process to develop and complete all major projects. Students will complete polished submissions for the *Pacem Literary Journal*. Full-time students will also select at least 2 pieces for their Pacem Portfolio.

Each year, content and projects differ, depending on students' needs, so students may take this class multiple years.

Please be advised that this course will have reading and writing homework.

American Literature: Who Are We?

(level 4/ ages 15-18) (1 credit)

Laura McCaffrey

Literature: In this class, we'll explore who we are as Americans, and how we make sense of our "American-ness" in our literature, including the identity of indigenous writers and their relationships to the United States. We'll look at literature from a variety of eras, and we'll also explore how contemporary literature comments on or reflects enduring themes. Students will make some literature selections, particularly of contemporary literature.

Discussion and Writing: Discussions will focus on the forms and structures of texts, as well as figurative and symbolic aspects. Students will also draw connections between chosen texts and other literature, their own lives, and world events. Students will regularly write shorter reflective and analytical responses to readings. They'll also craft at least one short story, one poem or speech, one expository essay, and one literary analysis essay. By the end of the year, students will develop a project that presents their answer to the question "Who Are We?" in relation to themselves and their identity as Americans. This project will include a creative writing component. With guidance, they will use the drafting process to develop and complete

all major projects. From all their pieces, they'll select submissions for the annual *Pacem Literary Journal*. Students enrolled full-time at Pacem will select 2 pieces to include in their Pacem Portfolio.

Please be advised that this class will have reading and writing homework.

Math

Teachers will be in touch throughout the year about acquiring texts for math tutorials. Because we want to give families as many purchase options as possible to keep costs down we have chosen not to charge a book fee and buy books as a school. We can help if the cost of books poses an economic hardship.

Real World Math and Beyond

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (1 credit)

Ryan Johns

This class addresses all topics typically taught in the middle school math curriculum in the context of real-world and hands-on activities designed to build and practice fundamental math concepts and skills in a relevant, interesting, and cohesive way. Activities are planned so that all students can learn at their current levels while working towards mastery of fundamental skills and concepts. Students explore, practice, and apply concepts and procedures through investigations, games, problem solving tasks, and group projects. Students develop and apply skills in problem solving, reasoning, and mathematical communication. Themes and projects vary from year to year so that students can continue to take this class until they are ready for beginning algebra. Themes may include the following: architecture and geometry, math of the Universe, statistics, mapmaking, games of strategy and chance, and banking and finance. In addition to group projects, students will work on basic math skills at their own pace using either a written or computer-based curriculum. This class does involve regular homework. Our expectation is that students entering this class have a solid foundation in basic computation and are familiar with multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The content of this course is very flexible and will be tailored to the needs of individual students.

Math Tutorial

(level 2-4/ages 12-18) (1 credit)

Lexi Shear/Paul Wallich

Pacem believes it is essential for students to have the time to work at their own pace in order to reach their full creative and intellectual potential. This belief is emphasized in Pacem's Math Tutorial, which caters to the individualized study of mathematics. In this class, students set and work toward individual goals. In such a small classroom, our one-on-one math discussions and active use of the whiteboard to work through challenging problems often engages other students and exposes all the students to a wide variety of math levels, from fractions to calculus. In addition, students who are at similar levels will occasionally work together on longer term projects and group challenges that focus on creative problem-solving and mathematical reasoning.

Students and parents will meet with the instructor at the beginning of the year to outline expectations and discuss curriculum. Depending on student interest and skill level we have several curricula that we have worked with. These include Open-Up Resources, Art of Problem Solving, Singapore Math, and others. Students will be expected to complete homework in addition to working during class time. Occasionally our students use a combination of the computer-based Khan Academy with a written text.

In general, we recommend Math Tutorial for students who are ready for pre-algebra and beyond. There are two sections of this class. The choice of which section to enroll in is determined by the schedule of the other classes a student is taking.

Culture, History, and Peace Studies (CHPS)

CHPS classes weave social science content and a variety of academic skills together while examining key questions about how human beings live together, locally and globally, today and in history.

US History Alive!

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

This class will bring United States history to life through hands-on experiential activities. Students will travel through time to significant historical periods and events, experiencing what life was like and how historical events affected individuals. In the process, we will seek to untangle some of the thorny issues and questions that have plagued people at different times in history. Creative and academic writing, literature, oral presentations, field trips, and visual arts will all be included. Projects may take the shape of role-plays, simulations, debates, skits, videos, museum exhibits, games, scrapbooks, etc. Students will have input into the specific topics/periods of focus as well as types of projects.

Peace from the Inside Out

(level 2-3/ages 12-15) (1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

This class focuses on concepts, skills, and information that lay the foundation for Pacem's future CHPS classes and for active participation in Pacem's Student Circle and community life. It includes important life skills and critical thinking as well as academic skills. Students will explore how to live more peacefully, including learning conflict resolution techniques and potentially starting a peer mediation program at Pacem. They will investigate problems in the local community and hear from the people working to solve them through interviews, guest speakers, and possibly field trips and/or a short volunteer project. They will be introduced to aspects of nonviolent social change in history through peacemaker biography projects and an in-depth unit on a historic movement for nonviolent social change. Throughout the semester,

we will discuss current events that relate to peace, conflict resolution, and related social issues. Peacemakers and activists, both living and historic, will serve as inspiration for students as they explore how they might contribute to a more peaceful world. Activities will include journaling, essay writing, readings, class discussions, role-playing, interviewing, oral presentations, group decision-making practice, and projects.

Nonviolence and Social Change through Time

(level 3-4/ages 14-18) (1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

This class looks at peace, nonviolence, and social change in 20th and 21st century world history as well as in our community and daily lives.

We'll look at the ways in which people and groups worldwide have used nonviolent strategies to achieve political independence, resist dictators and invaders, and gain civil and human rights. We will touch on the roots of nonviolence in world religions, study the work of Gandhi, and look at other world movements such as resistance to dictatorships in Latin America, the Solidarity movement in Poland, and the campaign against apartheid in South Africa. We'll discuss nonviolence as a moral stance and a political tactic, including the ethics of civil disobedience, the question of a "just war," when/if the ends justify the means, etc.

We will bring these same ideas to bear on contemporary local and global issues and the problems and conflicts in our community and daily lives. We'll investigate problems in the local community and reach out to groups and individuals who are working to solve them. We'll also discuss service and activism and what's involved in doing this kind of work. We'll look at conflicts in our own lives and the skills needed to solve them peacefully. This includes explicit training and practice in conflict resolution techniques and the sociocratic decision-making process used in Pacem's circles. It may also include the creation of a peer mediation program. Throughout the year, we'll discuss current events that relate to peace, conflict resolution, and social change worldwide.

Activities will include discussions (with an emphasis on critical inquiry and applying class themes to historical events), readings, journaling, academic writing, oral presentations, conflict resolution role-playing, possibly a debate, and creative projects.

Science

Science courses at Pacem are lab and activity based courses focusing on inquiry, investigation, and research. All of our science courses cover, in an age-appropriate manner, the scientific method, observation, data analysis, scientific writing, and research. Environmental sustainability is a thread woven in throughout the curriculum, as is knowledge and understanding of the local environment.

How the Universe Works

(level 1/ages 10-13) (1 credit)

Ryan Johns

Together we will explore the mechanics of our universe. Through hands-on experimentation, research projects and class discussion we will build a foundation of understanding of the universe around us and its many complicated parts and pieces. We will test the laws of physics and the integrity of structures through building models and replicas. As we build on our understanding of the physical, we also will incorporate electronics and magnetism into our picture of how the universe behaves. Once we have built a solid foundation of physics, we can then expand out to investigate how the Earth and the solar system was formed and now behaves, and then out farther to understand stars, other galaxies, and black holes. Topics covered will include:

- Motion, forces, and Newton's laws as applied to everyday objects
- Kinetic and potential energy and friction
- Electricity, circuits, and magnetism
- Motion of planets and moons
- History of the solar system and universe
- Understanding of the scale of the solar system

Science of Food and Water

(level 2/ages 12-14) (1 credit)

Ryan Johns

We eat food and drink water every day, but do we really understand why? How do these foods and liquids play a role in creating the amazing people that we all are? This class will incorporate frequent field trips to places like the wastewater treatment plant, compost facilities, professional kitchens, water testing facilities, etc. We will create nets to collect and sort macroinvertebrates as a way of testing water quality in our local rivers and streams. We will look into and explore what makes some things safe to eat and some toxic and what really happens when a food rots and then becomes inedible. Finally, students will expand their understanding of matter by looking closely at the chemistry of food. Topics will include nutrition, cooking chemistry, and agriculture. This class includes projects, activities, experiments, reading scientific literature, scientific writing, and potential field trips to farms, rivers, and municipal water plants.

Physical Science

(level 3/ages 14-16) (1 credit)

Lexi Shear

Why do things float? How can we describe motion? Why are ice skates slippery? What is a rainbow? How does a motor work? Physics holds the answers to these and other questions,

both mundane and profound. In this course, we will start by discussing measurement and how measurement helps us to understand what things are made of. From there, we'll investigate the nature of motion, energy, electricity, sound, and light. These are the fundamental laws that explain our universe and determine the behavior of everything we see in the world around us. In every topic we will base our learning on projects, experimentation, discussion, and research. This course is intended for younger high school students. Increasingly science educators are promoting the study of physics as the first foray into high school science. From this, the more abstract sciences of chemistry and biology follow naturally. This will be a project-based conceptual physics course. We'll focus on observing and understanding natural phenomena without using math. For students who wish there will be some opportunities to understand physical phenomena more quantitatively. Students should expect to complete regular homework assignments.

Newton to Einstein

(level 4/ages 15-18) (1 credit)

Lexi Shear

This is a physics course intended for older high school students. In this class, we will seek to understand physical phenomena both qualitatively and quantitatively. We will start with an in-depth study of motion beginning with measurement and graphing of velocity. Next will measure acceleration due to gravity (without the aid of apples!) and use that to launch our discussion of acceleration. From there, we'll experiment in detail with Newton's Laws, momentum, and angular momentum. With a solid understanding of how things move, we will progress to a deep understanding of energy, work, and power. In the spring we'll investigate electricity and magnetism, waves and the properties of sound and light, and we'll end with a discussion of Einstein's theory of relativity. Much of our learning will come from experiments. For students with mathematical background, we will focus more on data collection and analysis. Students who are not as confident in their math skills will approach topics more conceptually. We will be sure to leave ample time for exploration of topics of particular interest to students. Students should expect to complete regular homework assignments.

Makerspace Classes

The two classes below will make use of Pacem's makerspace. These shorter term offerings are a great way to become familiar with the opportunities that our tech equipment has to offer and are a great way for homeschoolers to get a taste of Pacem's community.

Makerspace Skills

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (.25 credit, fall term only)

Paul Wallich

The goal of this course is to supply students' natural creativity with the basic skills needed to use Pacem's makerspace and its equipment, so that they can successfully carry out projects of their own devising. (Students don't need to come with a project in mind – in fact, that would likely be premature.) Most skills will require at least some computer use, and some may require learning very basic ideas of computer programming. Access to a computer outside of class will be important for students to make progress. This class may include the following:

- **Laser Engraving and Cutting:** Students will learn to cut shapes and engrave images, including techniques for making multi-color images on ceramic tile. They will also learn how to construct 3D objects with laser-cut parts, using finger joints, scoring and folding, live hinges, and slicing and stacking.
- **3D Printing:** We will cover the basics of 3D design and the mechanics of 3D printing. Students will learn about different kinds of 3D printing materials, design adjustments, and mechanics (and possibly experiment with ceramics printing and vacuum forming!)
- **Soft and Wearable Circuits:** We will cover the basics of incorporating simple circuits – mostly batteries, switches and LEDs – into objects made of paper, cardstock and fabric.
- There are many other project possibilities that we may explore depending on student interest, including arrays of programmable LEDs, motors and other actuators, and various kinds of sensors.

Experimental Engineering

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (.25 credit, spring term only)

Paul Wallich

Making things is fun. When students learn to think analytically about what they're making rather than just jumping in with tape, glue, and other bits, it can ultimately be even more fun, and even useful. The back-of-the-envelope course will tour a few areas of engineering. Students will construct a variety of items. First, they'll make predictions about the performance of their constructions, and then test them to see how they perform!

We'll start with simple structural engineering – beams, columns, and other structures built with laser-cut sticks and 3D-printed connectors. It's easy enough to measure how much force it takes to bend or break a small stick, and students can learn how and why things they build from such parts may fail long before most of the individual pieces. We'll explore the limits of such simple structures, with an emphasis on both concepts and construction.

Next, we will turn to solar energy, in the form of small photovoltaic cells. These cells have a maximum current rating, but how often do they actually produce that much electricity? Students can explore the effectiveness of tracking the sun across the sky, or of adding concentrators (lenses or reflectors) that direct additional light onto a cell. They'll see how well actual performance matches simple back-of-the-envelope calculations.

Finally, the class will turn to basic electronic logic devices to learn about the 1's and 0's at the foundation of digital electronics. Students will be able to build small binary adders, multipliers and other simple circuits of their own design. They will get a feel for how such gadgets work, and for the combination of abstract and concrete thinking required to make them.

Computer Programming Independent Study

(level 2-4/ages 12-18) (.5-1 credit)

Paul Wallich

If there is student interest, a computer programming course will be offered at a time mutually agreeable to instructor and students. The focus of this class will be determined by the students and instructor.

Interdisciplinary Student-Directed Projects

Student-directed project work is at the heart of Pacem’s curriculum. It reflects our strong belief in emergent learning—giving students time to focus on a topic of study that develops out of their own interests and passions, while providing teacher guidance and an intellectually inspiring atmosphere. The project process stretches students’ ability to use inquiry and research, organize and present information, write, make interdisciplinary connections, channel their creativity, and see an idea through from concept to completion. It encourages students to be invested in their own learning and guides them towards ownership and responsibility for the process. It provides a meaningful context for learning and practicing research skills, writing, and other forms of communication and allows each student to build on existing strengths to learn new skills and information. Students learn about the subject they have chosen to explore, about the process of research and project work, and often about the media they choose to use to present their project.

Student-Directed Project: From Inspiration to Presentation

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (.5-1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

Imagine the learning potential of studying a topic of great personal interest with the guidance and support to follow your questions and realize your vision! This is a powerful and compelling way to learn and practice new research and communication skills at the middle school level. Students choose a project of personal interest each semester and set their own project goals. At this level, a small group project with more teacher guidance is an option for those who want or need more direction. These projects can span all curricular areas. The teacher helps to guide students in a rich, interdisciplinary, in-depth exploration of their chosen topics, including suggesting related fields of study to explore and helping find and use available resources including experts, field study, and other field trips. Through individual conferences, mini-lessons, and group discussions, students receive support and instruction as needed in organization, research, and writing skills (including goal-setting, brainstorming and refining ideas, evaluating sources, note taking and organization, Internet research, bibliographies, time management, display ideas, and editing).

Each student creates a final display or portfolio of work, which is shown at a culminating Presentation Celebration. Past creations have been as diverse as the following: a song and music video about youth voice, a model of a black hole, a scrapbook of paintings of places in Italy, a treehouse, a recycled fashion exhibit, a stop-motion animation movie about Galileo, a 3-D map of Middle Earth, and an active maple sugaring operation. These displays reflect the individual talents, creativity, self-expression, and learning styles of the students as they share their learning with the community.

Students taking “Makerspace Skills” and “Engineering” may take project for .5 credit in the first block on Thursday.

Student-Directed Project: From Inspiration to Presentation

(level 3-4/ages 14-18) (1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

Imagine the learning potential of studying a topic of great personal interest with guidance and support to follow your questions and realize your vision! This is a powerful and compelling way to learn and practice the research and communication skills that are essential to lifelong learning, higher education, and many work environments. Students choose a project of personal interest each semester or for the whole school year and set their own project goals. These projects span all curricular areas. The teacher helps to guide students in a rich, interdisciplinary, in-depth exploration of their chosen topics, including suggesting related fields of study to explore and helping find and use available resources including experts, field study, and other field trips. Through individual conferences, mini-lessons, and group discussions, students receive support and instruction as needed in organization, research, and writing skills (including goal-setting, brainstorming and refining ideas, evaluating sources, note taking and organization, Internet research, bibliographies and citations, time management, display ideas, and editing). Many projects at the high school level include research as well as nonfiction writing.

Each student creates a final display or portfolio of work, which is shown at a culminating Presentation Celebration. Past creations have been as diverse as the following: a Pacem theater group, a fiction story set in Japan, a slideshow about prejudice, hand-sewn costumes, animated and live-action short films, a robot, a model of a sustainable homestead, and a computer built from parts. These displays reflect the individual talents, creativity, self-expression, and learning styles of the students as they share their learning with the community.

Community Classroom

(level 2-4/ages 12-18) (1 credit)

Pacem Faculty

Community Classroom provides a powerful opportunity for our students to learn real-world skills outside the walls of the school building and to understand the relevance of their education to the broader community through service projects, service learning opportunities, internships, and large-scale community projects. It provides a meaningful way for them to explore and pursue areas of passionate interest, even when the subject may not be well suited to classroom learning.

Students can do individual or small group projects. They will begin by identifying needs within the greater community and their own personal interests. From this list, they will develop a discrete community service project that they will tackle over the course of the year or the semester. Working with community partners and Pacem staff, students will identify and develop possible solutions to the need, and then they will put their plan into action!

Older students might choose an opportunity to intern independently with an area business or professional mentor to explore possible career interests or create a long-term volunteer relationship with a nonprofit.

Past community classroom projects have included volunteering at a local soup kitchen and creating a radio piece about the people there; volunteering at a dog rescue, educating people about the problem of abandoned animals, and collecting supplies for local animal shelters; and volunteering at a local preschool

Capstone Project

(level 4/ages 16-18) (1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

Imagine the learning potential of creating a major piece of work with guidance and support to follow your questions and realize your vision! The Capstone Project is an opportunity for our oldest students to bring together many of the skills they have developed over their high school years in the study of something personally inspiring, and to show the Pacem community what they can do. It is required for students in their final year of high school who wish to receive a Pacem diploma and is an option for students the previous year as well. This is a more in-depth and challenging project experience in which students pursue a passionate interest with guidance from a mentor, chosen by the student if possible. They set their own goals and progress towards them very independently, meeting with their mentor once or twice a month as needed.

The Capstone Project is expected to include at least one major substantial, well-developed, in-depth piece of work, which can take a variety of forms. The length and scope are determined by student and advisor based on the student's interests, needs, and goals (students doing a Capstone Project before their final year of high school may choose to do two shorter main pieces instead). Students complete other components in addition to the major work. In total, the Capstone Project must include nonfiction writing, research, learning from an expert in the field (if possible), at least two means of communication in addition to writing, a teaching component, and presentations to the Pacem community or other appropriate audience, including at least one oral presentation. For example, one student studied urban sustainability and sustainable design, and his project included the following: designing and building a bioshelter and using it to raise food, writing a research paper to accompany the structure, taking a course on permaculture at Yestermorrow, teaching workshops at Pacem about computer assisted design, and presentations to the Pacem community.

Note that although this is on the schedule for a particular block of time, meetings with the advisor may be arranged outside of this time block as needed. It is expected significant amounts of work will be done outside the scheduled class time.

Fine and Performing Art

Studio art classes at Pacem give students a solid foundation of technique and design principles while still allowing for personal self-expression. Students also are exposed to both historic and contemporary artists as inspiration for their own work, and connections are made to topics of study in literature and CHPS classes where possible. Performing arts are taught in the context of Thursday Workshops. In addition to a variety of topics based on student interest, we will produce a full-length play in the spring semester.

Art Studio

All our art studio classes use the elements and principles of design as the foundation for creating and discussing art. Elements include line, texture, value, color, and shape. Principles of design include contrast, rhythm, balance, scale, and emphasis. Students are exposed to a wide variety of artists both historical and contemporary. With this inspiration, they create their own vision that illustrates their understanding of the concepts presented. The class will be divided into four broad units described below. It may be possible to take just one segment with permission of the instructor.

Art Studio 1

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (1 credit)

Bonnie Hooper

Students will begin the year by practicing drawing skills. The class will be modified according to the abilities of the students. Less experienced students will learn basic drawing techniques. More experienced students will focus on drawing complex still lifes and textures and different surface areas. The remainder of the school year will be learning about principles and elements of art through a variety of different mediums and projects.

Advanced Art Studio

(level 3-4/ages 14-18) (1 credit)

Bonnie Hooper

Students will begin the school year with an intensive exploration of different media including mixed media. We will also explore three-dimensional design. Students will have the opportunity to work on projects and areas of their own choosing. Juniors and Seniors who wish to develop a specialized portfolio for applying for college will have the opportunity to work on their own individual projects.

Foreign Language

At Pacem, we believe that speaking a foreign language is an important part of understanding other cultures, peoples, and parts of the world, as well as a skill that students may need in their future life and work. This understanding, in turn is critical for fostering global peace and understanding which is central to our mission. French and Spanish are the languages students most often wish to learn, however, tutorials in other languages, including Latin or Japanese, may be possible as well.

Middle School Spanish

(level 1-2/ages 10-14) (1 credit)

Beth Merrill

Spanish is the third most commonly spoken language in the world today. Learn this important language through an immersion process. Class time will include games, dialogs, music, creative writing, cultural studies, and performances as well as grammatical skills to create a solid foundation and reinforce what is learned. There will be some homework in order to continue practicing between classes. This course is appropriate for beginner and intermediate level students.

Foreign Language Tutorial (French and Spanish)

(level 2-4/ages 12-18) (1 credit)

Nikki Matheson (French) and Beth Merrill (Spanish)

In order to accommodate learners at a wide variety of different levels, Foreign Languages at Pacem are taught on a tutorial model. We will use the Middlebury Interactive Languages online program as the base of our curriculum. Students will divide their time between working independently at their own pace through the online material with the help of a Pacem teacher, conversing with each other and their teacher to gain fluency, and engaging in longer term reading, writing, and cultural projects. Projects will be determined by student and teacher interest. Homework in addition to class time will be expected to practice vocabulary, read, and gain fluency. This course may be taken by beginner, intermediate, or advanced language students.

Independent Study

(level 1-4/ages 10-18) (1 credit)

Pacem Faculty

In any subject area, students may work with a faculty advisor to design an independent study to substitute for a regular Pacem class. The purpose of an independent study is to allow students the flexibility to design their own curricula with faculty mentors. Pacem faculty may also assist the student in finding outside expert mentors when appropriate. Independent studies must include similar concepts and skills and be of the same quality and complexity as the classes they are replacing. Independent studies are not available if a similar course is currently being taught. At the beginning of the year, students will define goals for their studies. Throughout the year the student and their mentor will meet weekly, to plan their work for the week and assess the student's progress.

If there is no Pacem faculty member available with the expertise to advise an independent study, a student may find an independent outside tutor. Pacem is only able to pay for one hour a week at a rate comparable to the Pacem faculty hourly rate. Any fees above that rate will be the responsibility of the family. This option is intended primarily for full-time students.

College Advising

Pacem Faculty

Depending on demand, a variety of offerings to assist in the college admissions process will be available to our high-school aged students. These may include workshops such as choosing an appropriate college, applying for financial aid, essay writing, homeschool transcript and portfolio documentation, and interviewing skills. In the past we have also employed a college consultant.

Thursday Programming

Thursday mornings at Pacem are devoted to Student Directed Projects. For students not interested in that, this is a good time to explore internship opportunities, community service projects, or other compatible full-day programs. Faculty guide students in making the best use of their time. The possibilities are endless!

Thursday afternoons

On Thursday afternoons, Pacem hosts a series of 1 – 6 week long workshops. In these workshops, we will take advantage of local organizations and experts. Students may register for the entire series of workshops, or for individual offerings. Interested students are invited to play a significant role in choosing workshop topics, organizing them, and even leading them. Past workshop topics have included mountain biking, archery, model rocketry, Korean martial arts, German language and culture, improvisational acting, Shakespeare reading and performance, digital photography, board game design, and more.

Extracurricular Activities and Clubs

Pacem offers a variety of extracurricular activities which vary by season. Offerings are determined by student interest and are generally student-led. In the past, these have included the following: game club, dungeons and dragons, live action role-playing, a cappella singing, cross country skiing, ultimate Frisbee, running, theater, and more.

Fall Outdoor Adventure Days

All students are invited to join us for several days before the start of school (Thursday September 1st through Friday September 2nd). We will spend some time in the woods and fields of Vermont getting to know each other and building the foundation of our community for the coming year. Our days will be filled with team building activities, hikes, camping and companionship. We will have time alone to contemplate our goals for the coming year, and time as a group learning to work cooperatively and appreciating what each of us has to offer the group. Please plan to come for the entire time if possible. All students who are taking more than one class at Pacem are strongly encouraged to attend.

Homeschool Advising Package

With our homeschool advising package, Pacem's homeschool expert, Rebecca Yahm, will provide you with support for your homeschool curriculum, planning, and teaching throughout the year. The first advising meeting will take place in the summer to get help developing educational goals for the year, planning curriculum, finding resources, and/or completing state paperwork. In the middle of the year, you will have an opportunity to check in and address any concerns or issues you might be facing, since mid-year questions and new directions are common. At the end of the year, you will meet for a homeschool assessment, which fulfills the state of Vermont Home Study year-end assessment requirement and is also an opportunity to review and appreciate your child's progress and accomplishments during the year. Meetings in addition to the ones described here can be scheduled for additional cost.

Health Seminar and Trip Days

For one to two days in April, we will devote ourselves to understanding, appreciating, and promoting healthy lifestyles. During this time, Pacem will host a series of workshops led by students, faculty, parents, and local experts. Specific topics will be developed by students and faculty. More information will be available in April. We are also hoping to revive our school trips in 2023! We may look at options close-by or plan something further afield. This will be discussed further in the fall of 2022

Mountain and Service Retreat

Just as we began the year outside, so we will end it. After classes end in June, we will physically challenge ourselves on two mountain hikes and enjoy the beauty of early summer in Vermont. On one other day we will serve one or two organizations in our community. If students are up for the challenge our mountain hikes might include an overnight camping trip. Any camping trip will incur a nominal cost to cover food and camp-site fees. Parents are asked to either volunteer to chaperone or pay to cover staff costs for these days.

The emphasis of these days will be to reflect on the past year and appreciate the ways in which we have all grown. We will contemplate how we can help each other and the world around us, learn about and appreciate our natural world, and find our peaceful center.

Bring your knowledge or field guides of the natural world with you and share!

Please note: Classes with insufficient enrollment are subject to cancellation. Families will be notified as soon as possible about class cancellations. Deposits for canceled classes will be returned.