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Course Descriptions Academic Year 2024-2025

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.

Discoveries: Literature and Us

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

Jenni Belotserkovsky

Students in this class will explore a variety of literary genres including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Students will read some stories together and will discuss literature components like character traits, character motivations, and narrative meaning. 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 note-taking, summarizing, and evaluating, and they'll begin to build analytical writing skills. Students will design, write, revise, and polish all substantial projects. They'll select 2 polished pieces to include in their Pacem Writing Portfolio. In addition to academic writing students will have ample opportunity to explore creative fiction and non-fiction. This may include stories, poetry, or even a newspaper. Throughout the class students will use their reading and writing to think more deeply about their place in the world.

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 and writing homework.

Explorations

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

Jenni Belotserkovsky

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 consisting 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 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 and writing 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 essays and other nonfiction pieces from publications like *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 fiction genres to focus on. Students may select any genre—fantasy, science fiction, classics, humor, 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/argument, 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 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.

Advanced Global Literature

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

Laura McCaffrey

Literature: Students will explore literature from three to four regions outside the United States, though because of the challenges with finding work in translation, they may instead read literature by authors with roots in those regions yet currently living in English-speaking regions. Some of this literature will include classic texts like *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe or *1984* by George Orwell, while other texts may be more contemporary like Ken Liu's translation of Cixin Liu's *Three Body Problem* or work by Nnedi Okorafor. We'll take a multi-genre approach, studying nonfiction, fiction, and poetry, and students will look at authors' techniques for creating literature. In addition, students will consider the ways literature depicts and explores current social issues, such as the effects of transformative technology or political upheaval. Students will have the opportunity to choose some of the texts for this class.

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. Writing responses and projects will be tailored to students' interests and long-term goals, though students will be required to write at least two academic literary analysis essays. With guidance, they will use the drafting process to develop and complete all major projects. Students 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. Students will learn decimals, fractions, percents and the beginnings of geometry. 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, 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. 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.

The instructors will be in touch with parents (and will meet with students) 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 Big Ideas Math, Art of Problem Solving, Singapore Math, and others. Students will be expected to complete homework in addition to working during class time. In addition to having a textbook, students

may use online math practice sites such as IXL or Khan Academy. Please note that in order to make good progress in their math skills, students are expected to complete regular homework.

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. In the 2nd Block section, the division of the sections will be at the discretion of the teachers and finalized at the beginning of the year.

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.

U.S. 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. In this election year, we will focus particularly on the history of voting rights and changing democratic ideals. 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.

Society in Miniature

(level 2-3/ages 13-15) (1 credit)

Rebecca Yahm

Imagine you are part of a small group of people starting a new community. How will you live peacefully with your neighbors? How will the group make decisions, share resources, and provide for everyone's basic needs? How will you care for the land? What is an ideal society? What role will you, as an individual, play in this community? This year-long creative simulation actively involves students in creating a peaceful, sustainable community. It introduces ideas and information from many of the social sciences and allows students to learn about civics concepts experientially. Students will create characters, represented by miniature people, who have come together to start a new community. They will need to decide what their community should look like and how it should be structured, as well as how each person will contribute, and then simulate its creation in miniature form. We will practice skills for communication, collaboration, and respectful dialogue as we work through these big questions.

This will all become very concrete as students choose a location for the community, build miniature homes to fit their 3-inch-high characters (and their group vision), and create a physical plan for their community. Building will be done roughly to scale with mostly found materials (re-used and/or natural).

Part of each class will be spent in character, planning and creating the community and making decisions together. Another part of each class will be academic background and reflection on the diverse issues that could come up, which will include many of the following: governance, property ownership, exchange of goods, gender roles, family structure, rights and freedoms, balance of rights and responsibilities, balance of individual needs with community and ecosystem, land and resource use, energy, legal/justice system, role of religion, community traditions and rituals, diversity, self-sufficiency, equity, and the media. We may have the opportunity to learn from field trips and/or guest speakers. Students will write journal responses and essays on some of these issues and may also create a village newspaper. As we tackle the ambitious and rewarding task of imagining and running our own mini community, we will integrate skills in writing, research, speaking, group decision-making, art, and even math. Students will be encouraged to be both creative and reflective, bringing thought and vision as well as their individual interests, knowledge, and talents to this group endeavor.

Towards a More Perfect Union: U.S. History and Government

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

Rebecca Yahm

What does it mean to live in a representative democracy? What forces have promoted and impeded a more democratic society? What is the state of democracy in our country right now? Who is included and how has that changed over time? How have different groups of people sought to participate in “liberty and justice for all”? What are the myths of America versus the reality? These are some of the themes we will discuss as we look at major events and developments in U.S. history. This is an election year, so the focus in the fall will be on the Constitution, government structure, and the election process; as well as the events leading up to the formation of the country. Students will write and record commentaries about an election issue they care about as part of a national Youth Media Showcase challenge. For the remainder of the year, we will explore major themes and events in U.S. history, with a focus on the lives of everyday people and how they changed over time, the impact on the individual on major national and global events and trends, and the ongoing tension between expansion and restriction of democracy, rights, and freedoms. Students will think critically and experience history in depth through activities like simulations and debates, and possibly also local field trips or guest speakers. They will also interpret primary sources, discuss different perspectives on the past, and work on academic writing skills.

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 food rots and then becomes inedible. We will explore the process of fermentation and the history of how that helped our ancestors keep food safe along with an in depth look at the microinvertebrates that make it all happen. 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.

Physics

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

Lexi Shear

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. In this course, we will 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. Increasingly science educators are promoting the study of physics as the first foray into upper level science. From this, the more abstract sciences of chemistry and biology follow naturally. This will be a project-based conceptual physics course. We will ask questions and work together to devise both qualitative and quantitative experiments to answer them. From these explorations, we will develop a concrete understanding of physical laws, which we will apply to current problems in the world around us. Students who are ready for it will analyze their data using the tools of algebra, but no particular level of math is expected.

Chemistry

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

Lexi Shear

What are things made of? Why do we use so much plastic in our world? How much pollution is in our air and water? Why do we use the materials that we do? How do things stick together? Why does petroleum have so much energy in it? The answers lie in chemistry. We will answer these questions, and many others as we discover what matter, the stuff of the universe, is made of, how it is put together, and how it changes.

This will be a rigorous study of both quantitative and qualitative chemistry. We will cover topics typically included in an honors high school chemistry curriculum including atomic structure, bonding, behavior of solids, liquids, and gasses, mole concept, stoichiometry, and chemical reactivity. Throughout the course, we will examine issues of local and global environmental importance, as well as topics of particular interest to the current students, as a means to understanding the structure and behavior of matter. Our studies will include group discussions, lab experiments, gathering and analyzing data, computer simulations, reading, and research.

Computer Science Tutorial: Programming

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

Paul Wallich

The goal of this course is to aid students in learning to write useful chunks of code, in particular programming for the web. Web programming requires thinking both about what a program does and what it looks like, and sometimes involves coordinating programs written in multiple programming languages.

Depending on individual students' interests, they will be able to learn Python (with an eye to using libraries that let them easily build Python-based web applications), javascript (for interactions within a web page), and HTML and CSS (for the presentation and styling of their pages). This course will be offered based on student interest at a time that is mutually agreed upon between the students and the teacher.

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) (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). This year, all students will have access to the makerspace during class and will be able to include makerspace components in their projects and displays.

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.

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. This year, all students will have access to the makerspace during class and will be able to include makerspace components in their projects and displays.

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.

Technology Project

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

Paul Wallich

Students who want to do self-directed projects that have a strong technological component can sign up for Tech Project, which will be taught at the same time as the regular Student-Directed Projects course. They can practice the research, communication, design, and execution skills that will be crucial for later success. The teacher will guide them in exploring their chosen topic, and in designing and creating an artifact (as well as written, oral and visual presentations) that embodies their particular interest. Students will also work on project management skills such as goal setting, organization, time management, and revision in the face of changing conditions.

Students will have expanded access to Pacem's makerspace, including 3d printers, laser cutter, quilting frame, and materials including microcontrollers, LEDs, motors, actuators, and other items for exploring their project ideas and creating an artifact. As a result, if they don't already know the basics of 2D and 3D design, electronics and programming, they will learn those in addition to their topic of choice.

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.

The Arts

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.

Studio Art

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

Bonnie Hooper

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.

Topics in art will be determined by the interests and past experiences of the students. Painting, drawing, sculpture, and world art, are all possible areas of exploration. All assignments will be modified so that advanced students will be challenged, and beginners will be given instruction in basic art skills. A wide range of artists will be used for inspiration.

Please note that the choice of section for this class will be determined by the other courses a student is taking.

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.

Beginner/Intermediate Spanish

(level 1-3/ages 10-15) (1 credit)

Mercedes Guerrero

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.

Mixed Level Spanish

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

Mercedes Guerrero

In order to accommodate learners at a wide variety of different levels, Foreign Languages at Pacem are taught on a tutorial model. Students at the same level will receive instruction together and also spend time working independently. Some classes may use online resources and instruction to supplement in-person instruction. All students will engage in conversation with each other and their teacher to gain fluency, and complete 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.

Foreign Language Independent Study

(level 3-4/ages 14-18) (.5-1 credit)

Staff

Students may choose to study a language other than Spanish independently. If possible, we will find a tutor to work with the student in their chosen language, however students choosing this option will be expected to work and make progress independently and document their work. Students should sign up for the Independent Study class described below to take this option.

Independent Study

(level 1-4/ages 10-18) (.5 -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 – 8 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, fencing, American Sign Language, improvisational acting, Shakespeare reading and performance, digital photography, board game design, and more. In the spring, Thursday workshops will focus on the production of a full-length play. If there is sufficient interest, we may offer short-term health-oriented workshops in this time as well.

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 (Wednesday August 28th through Friday August 30th). 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, 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. The details of these days will be available in August. 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. If there is student and faculty interest, we may use this time for school trips, as well.

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.