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## Course Descriptions Academic Year 2025-2026

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**

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

**Rebecca Yahm**

Students in this class will explore a variety of literary genres including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, often drawing on lists of award-winning middle-grades books. Students will read some stories together and discuss literature components like character traits and motivations, plot elements, setting, theme, and style. They'll also make independent reading selections, create responses to these, and share thoughts on them with the larger group. While responses to reading can have creative components, students also will practice academic writing skills like note taking, summarizing, and evaluating, and they'll begin to build analytical writing skills. 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 class newspaper. Students will design, write, revise, and polish all substantial projects. They'll select 2 polished pieces to include on their Pacem website.

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 sometimes have reading homework.

### **Journeys**

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

**Jenni Belotserkovsky**

Literature: Who are you? Where are you going? In this class, students will explore the idea of "coming of age" and the physical and psychological journeys that both characters and real adolescents take as they grow up. Students will collaboratively select literature to read and discuss.

Discussion and Writing: Students will work on close reading analysis, as well as presentation and discussion skills. They also will have the opportunity to explore who they are, what interests them, and their own unique journeys over the course of the year. Students will keep a Journey Journal comprised of short informal pieces, as well as write an academic literature response essay, a short story or poem, an expository essay, and a reflective essay on the student's journey this year. We may try to create some kind of class literary journal. As a part of learning to become more effective writers, students will receive feedback on substantial writing pieces. 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 will have reading and writing homework.

## **Introduction to US and Indigenous American Literature: Who Are We?**

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

**TBA**

**Literature:** In this class, we'll explore who we are, and how we make sense of our "Americanness" 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 genres, 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 speech, one short story, one poem, and one literary analysis essay. With guidance, students will use the drafting process to develop and complete all major projects.

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

## **Peace and Conflict Literature**

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

**TBA**

**Overarching focus:** This class will explore Peace and Conflict in literature, and an essential part of this focus will be the relationship between the individual and society, as well as the relationship between insiders (or 'we') and outsiders (or 'the Other'/'they').

**Literature:** Students will start with ancient conceptions of conflict and peace by reading excerpts of ancient texts. They may look at heroic ideals of warfare in a text like *Beowulf* and/or study psychological conflict with a Shakespearean play. They'll compare and contrast these with alternative visions of peace and conflict from a variety of contemporary texts, including one or more examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century utopian and dystopian fiction. They'll finish the year with independent explorations of peace and conflict literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each student will choose an era, region, genre, or author to study independently. As an alternative, we may focus on Solarpunk or genres that present positive solutions to our culture's current conflicts.

**Discussion and Writing:** The focus of discussions will be sophisticated aspects of texts such as authors' choices; central themes; multiple meanings, symbols, and sub-texts; overall structures and aesthetic impacts. Students will develop and write 3 to 4 shorter (2-5 page) fiction and/or nonfiction pieces as well as a longer essay. They may also write poems, speeches, and other genres. Each student's selection of writing pieces will relate to long-term educational goals.

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)**

**TBA**

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)**

**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.

## **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.*

### **Global Connections**

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

**Rebecca Yahm**

This class looks at the connections we have with other cultures and places. In the first part of the year, we will focus on the cultural diversity within Vermont and the United States, including a study of immigration. As an introduction to cultural and geographic concepts, students will create imaginary island countries with modeling clay, map them, and invent cultures to go with them. As the year progresses, we will learn about the major world religions, aiming to understand some of their core beliefs and values as well as their impact worldwide. We'll also look at some of the trade connections we have to other countries through consumer products, and we'll discuss related environmental and labor issues. Students will have the opportunity to study one country of their choice and do an in-depth project that incorporates areas of interest. Class activities will include map work, discussion, writing, oral presentations, and projects.

### **Peace from the Inside Out**

**(level 2-3/ages 13-15) (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 sociocratic decision making. They will investigate problems in the local community and hear first-hand from the people working to solve them through interviews and guest speakers and possibly field trips and/or a short volunteer project. They will be introduced to aspects of nonviolent social change in history and discuss current events related 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, at least one oral presentation, group decision-making, and projects.

## **Nonviolence and Social Change**

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

**Rebecca Yahm**

This class looks at peace, nonviolence, and social change in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 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 history and religion, including the work of Gandhi, and look at worldwide 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, if and when violence is ever justified and/or necessary, 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 dive deep into contemporary social issues, 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 may include explicit training and practice in conflict resolution techniques and the sociocratic decision-making process used in Pacem's circles, and even 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.*

### **Life on Earth**

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

**Ryan Johns**

What did the earth look like in its earliest moments? How has it changed since? Did bird feathers really come from fish scales? In this class students will take a journey through earth's history closely examining climate, continental drift, and the evolution of plants and animals. At different times, students will be archeologists, meteorologists, botanists, and zoologists. The fall semester of this class will be an in-depth look at the connection between geology and evolution as students explain how and why things have changed over time.

In the spring, students will continue their explorations of life on earth with a look into whole organisms including human ones! We will answer questions like "How do my heart and lungs work?" "What are typical changes in my body during adolescence?" and "How does my cellular structure differ from a plant or single celled creature?" Along the way, we'll practice the skills of observation, data analysis, drawing inferences from evidence, non-fiction reading and writing, and discussion.

### **Earth and Energy**

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

**Ryan Johns**

Students will explore the earth and its ecosystems through the lens of energy. We will start with a geologic perspective of how energy has shaped the planet's overall form. From there, we will look at energy in climate and weather systems and energy pathways and transformation in ecosystems. The exact topics covered will be shaped by students' interests.

Students will practice crafting a solid testable question, a viable hypothesis, honing deep observation skills, gathering qualitative and quantitative data, analyzing their findings, and creating conclusions based on their process which often leads to more questions. We will use group and individual projects, science circles, formal and informal experiments, field trips, group games, student presentations, and other various resources to aid us in the process of deepening our understanding of these concepts.

### **Biology: the Living World**

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

**Lexi Shear**

Our planet is a living world filled with life-forms of almost unimaginable diversity. What is life made of? How does it work? How did it get here? We will answer these universal questions as we study biology across scales. We will start our journey with an investigation of the microscopic elements that make up cells and a study of modern biotechnology

techniques. Next, we will consider how cells work together to create complex organisms. Our focus will broaden to consider the interactions of organisms and populations in our ecosystems. Finally, through the broadest lens of all, we will consider how life evolved on the planet.

This will be a laboratory, activity, and field-based course in biology intended for all high school students. Throughout the class, students will be asked to use the scientific method to answer biological questions. Other learning activities will include reading, discussions, lectures, field study, and research. Biology is a vast subject, and we will determine, as a class, which topics we should focus on, depending on student interest. Students should expect to complete regular reading and writing homework assignments.

## **Environmental Science**

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

**Lexi Shear**

On any given day we can hear a host of news clips about environmental concerns, but what really are the facts behind these stories, and how can we realistically mitigate them? In this challenging, upper high school level, multi-disciplinary science course, we will use physical and biological science to help us identify and analyze the pressing environmental issues that humanity faces today. Using readings, discussions, scientific data, lab experiments, field trips, and experiences in our community we will seek to understand the root causes and possible solutions for a variety of environmental problems.

The year will be divided into several in-depth studies based on student interest. Those may include: earth systems, climate change, and climate modeling; forest ecology, wildlife ecology and the creation of a conservation plan; alternative power generation and Vermont's energy system; pollution, pollution remediation, and local solutions; aquatic ecology and ecosystems, and more! Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to how these issues impact each of us individually as residents of Vermont. Students should expect to complete regular reading and writing homework assignments.



## **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. Students can decide at the beginning of the semester which is most appropriate depending on their project choice. 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) (.5 credit)**

**TBA**

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)**

**TBA**

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.

## **Study Skills**

### **Study Skills**

**(levels 1-3/ages 10-15) (.5 credit)**

**Pacem Staff**

At Pacem ask all our students to take a leading role in shaping their academic experience. This course is intended to help middle school and younger high school students organize their studies and learn to navigate and succeed in the shifting academic and social climate of middle and high school. The class will address academic executive function and organization skills, literacy skills, and basic math skills. In addition, get help with specific classes that they are taking.

## **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.

In addition to our regular short-term Thursday workshops, several more academic high-school level electives will be offered on Thursday afternoons. Those will be determined by student interest over the summer.

### **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 27<sup>th</sup> through Friday August 29<sup>th</sup>). 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.