

Buxton School
Williamstown, Massachusetts

COURSE CATALOG
&
AFTERNOON and EVENING ACTIVITIES
FALL
2011-2012

- ENGLISH I
- ENGLISH II
- ENGLISH III
- ENGLISH IV—Dystopian Fiction: Imagining a Terrible Future OR Early Twentieth Century British Fiction
- WRITING
- ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

HISTORY and SOCIAL SCIENCES—FRESHMEN and SOPHOMORES

This curriculum consists of a series of electives specifically designed to introduce younger students to the foundational concepts and questions of history and social sciences. Students must take at least two of these electives over the course of their freshman and sophomore years, but are welcome to take as many as four during this time.

- AFRICA
- CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

HISTORY and SOCIAL SCIENCES—JUNIORS and SENIORS

Students are required to take American history. They may choose to take as many upper-level electives as their schedule permits.

- JUNIOR THESIS
- AMERICAN HISTORY
- THE WESTERN TRADITION
- ECONOMICS
- PSYCHOLOGY
- ARCHITECTURAL THINKING, DESIGNING AND BUILDING

- ALGEBRA I
- GEOMETRY
- ALGEBRA II
- INTRODUCTION TO TRIGONOMETRY
- PRE-CALCULUS
- CALCULUS

- BIOLOGY
- CHEMISTRY
- PHYSICS
- MARINE SCIENCE—Fall semester focus: Oceanography & Winter/Spring semester focus: Marine Biology
- ASTRONOMY

- MANDARIN CHINESE I
- FRENCH
- SPANISH

- STUDIO ART
- CERAMICS
- ADVANCED CERAMICS
- PHOTOGRAPHY
- VIDEO PRODUCTION

- MUSIC I
- MUSIC II and III
- PRIVATE LESSONS

- DRAMA I
- DRAMA II and III

AFTERNOON and EVENING ACTIVITIES

- ARTS; MUSIC; DRAMA; CREATIVE WRITING; DANCE, DRUMMING and PERCUSSION; ATHLETICS

ENGLISH

ENGLISH I (full year)

This course is an introduction to the infinite possibilities and pleasures of literature. We will, first and foremost, consider a selection of contemporary novels, classic texts, and short stories individually and in relation to each other. These considerations will be of a literary, social, historical, and personal nature. Through these analyses, students will have the opportunity to improve upon their writing, reading, and speaking skills, learning to critically interpret and articulate their own ideas effectively in careful inquiry and personal response to the topics at hand. Further, the class is a unique chance for the entire grade to learn about and from each other over the course of the year, getting to know one another personally and intellectually in their first year at the school.

ENGLISH II (full year)

In English II, we will be reading a wide range of literature to expose students to as many voices and writing styles as possible. Through exposure to—and discussion of—short stories, novella, plays, novels, and graphic novels, students will begin to see the flexibility and elasticity of the written word. To further their appreciation and love of great writing, students will do their own writing in this class. They will try out different writing styles and techniques, discovering first-hand how different kinds of writing allow authors to say different kinds of things. Students will also work on analytical papers as a way of honing their thinking about books and ideas and to help them make their writing expressive and precise.

ENGLISH III (full year)

The class will read Tolstoy's *War and Peace* over the course of the fall term. Daily discussions will consider the rich emotional and moral world that Tolstoy uniquely creates. In the first half of the term, there will be weekly in-class writing assignments. Later in the fall, students will write an original short story that will include some Tolstoian themes and techniques. A major expository essay on the novel will be due before the December vacation. Reading for the rest of the year will be determined later in the fall. In past years, the class has read non-fiction as well as fiction in the winter, including works by Sigmund Freud, Primo Levi, and D.H. Lawrence. The spring has often focused on drama and poetry.

ENGLISH IV (full year)

Seniors will choose one of two electives offered each semester, each taught by a different teacher. These courses will continue to develop, on a more advanced level, many of the theoretical and aesthetic ideas explored in the previous three years. Student writing, class reading, and discussion are at the center of the courses.

Dystopian Fiction: Imagining a Terrible Future (one semester) There are many ways for writers to talk about and comment upon the world we live in: through realistic fiction, political satire, nonfiction analysis, reportage. One rich and imaginative method writers have used to explore and critique their surroundings, their era, and the human condition is through dystopian fiction: fiction that imagines a future that is nightmarish, damaged, disillusioning, and disheartening. In this class, we will read, discuss, write about, and write dystopian fiction. We will read novels such as *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, *White Noise* by Don DeLillo, *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, and possibly *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. We will also be looking at short fiction by authors ranging from Franz Kafka to Ray Bradbury, and viewing several dystopian films such as *The Children of Men* and *Gattaca*. Students will write both analytical papers about how and why authors use this kind of fun-house mirror as a way of exploring social and emotional issues; they will also work on creating their own dystopian fictional works.

Early Twentieth Century British Fiction (one semester) The first-semester senior seminar readings will include *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster, *Dubliners* by James Joyce, and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf. There will be a number of short writing assignments over the course of the term and a final, longer written piece.

WRITING (one semester)

Students in this course are given individual guidance on the practice of writing and editing powerful and persuasive pieces, from grammatical and structural details to strategies and habits for completing assignments. There will be small specific assignments—both short reading and writing exercises—as well as some attention to work from other classes and activities (i.e. papers and college essays, if applicable). The idea behind all the exercises is to frame intentional and clear analytical writing as immanently accessible.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (full year)

Students learning English are immersed in an English-based curriculum in their courses at Buxton and in their social lives at the school. English as a Second Language is offered in three sections that cover conversational as well as academic comprehension and production.

- The first ESL course addresses general grammar and vocabulary, with attention to the student's particular interests and needs, in addition to work from other courses.
- The second, taken concurrently, focuses directly on the English literature curriculum, emphasizing the specific contexts and vocabulary presented in those courses, along with writing assignments and the use of academic language.
- The third section of the ESL curriculum concentrates on preparation for the TOEFL and other standardized testing, usually taken in the student's junior or senior year.

HISTORY and SOCIAL SCIENCES

FRESHMEN and SOPHOMORES

For the freshman/sophomore years, this curriculum consists of a series of electives specifically designed to introduce younger students to the foundational concepts and questions of history and social sciences. Students must take at least two of these electives over the course of their freshman and sophomore years, but are welcome to take as many as four during this time.

AFRICA (one semester)

In this elective we will study ancient African civilizations, the slave trade, the foundation of African culture, colonial rule, famine and disease, and current events using our text *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*. Why is Africa called the “dark continent”? Do internal or external forces cause the difficult issues that Africa continually faces? What would modern Africa be like if the European slave trade never existed? Our text, films, and current events will shape the foundation for many interesting discussions. (Open to freshman and sophomores, but is open to other grades as well.)

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY (one semester)

In this introduction to cultural anthropology, the primary focus will be to address the question: What is culture? We will explore this through various facets of culture including kinship and descent, language, marriage, gender, religion, food production, and arts. Students will learn about cultures around the world through a comparative approach in order to recognize patterns of cultural similarities and differences.

The class will examine the field of cultural anthropology and its relevance and application in our daily lives. The course will largely consist of in-depth class discussion, but will also include a series of short essays and a final ethnography project. (Open to freshman and sophomores.)

JUNIORS and SENIORS

During the junior/senior years at Buxton, students are required to take American history. They may choose to take as many upper-level electives as their schedule permits.

THE JUNIOR THESIS

An important part of each student’s junior year is the Junior Thesis and Project. The thesis is an opportunity for independent research, creative expression, and learning how to plan and execute long-term projects. Students pick a topic that interests them and spend much of the year researching and writing an ambitious paper about it. Additionally, students are asked to produce a creative piece to complement their academic work. Thesis topics have included the history and practice of ballet, the work of the controversial director Elia Kazan, the tradition and significance of Japanese tea ceremonies, and the history of the Middle East. Creative projects have ranged from staging original one-act plays to doing dance demonstrations to preparing a special meal for the entire school.

AMERICAN HISTORY (full year)

This course will cover the political, social, and cultural history of the United States from 1492 to the beginning of the 21st century. We will approach the topic chronologically, but will incorporate discussions of current affairs and how the past speaks to the present. This will be primarily a reading and discussion class, with material drawn from current writings about historical issues as well as primary documents: from sermons to pamphlets to art works to advertisements. The goal of the course is ultimately to give students a sense of how America got to be the country it is, which can help students think about the country they would like it to be. (Open to juniors.)

THE WESTERN TRADITION (full year)

To understand where we are, we have to know where we came from, and much of American culture has European roots. This course will survey the intellectual and cultural heritage of Europe, starting with the Early Middle Ages and continuing through the present. It will draw from art, literature, philosophy, music and religion to give students a fuller sense of the development of European ideology and culture. Although it will be a full-year survey, it will be divided into semesters, and students can take either semester by itself. The fall will focus on the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, including the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the beginning of the Enlightenment. The spring will begin with the French Revolution and continue up to the present, addressing industrialization, romanticism, imperialism, and the main social and political movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. (Open to seniors.)

ECONOMICS (one semester)

In the wake of the financial crisis, and with battles heating up over deficits, the debt limit, regulation, tax rates, and the role of government in the economy, the discipline of Economics is at the heart of political debate. But too few people actually understand the theories underlying the arguments or even what the words people are using mean. This course will attempt to remedy that. We will start with a consideration of the great economists—Smith, Ricardo, Marx, Keynes, etc.—looking at their works both as ways of understanding how economies do work and how they should work. In other words, how should labor be organized and how should its fruits be distributed? Then we will look at the major theories and issues of contemporary economics, helping students understand such things as inflation, interest rates, regulation and deregulation, budget deficits, trade

deficits, taxation, the stock market, currency trading, banking, savings rates, etc. The goal of the course is essentially twofold: 1) To consider the philosophical and ethical questions of political economics, and 2) To give students the intellectual tools they need to be economically informed citizens. (Open to juniors and seniors.)

PSYCHOLOGY (one semester)

Have you ever wondered how the brain works? How we sense and perceive the world around us? What the roots of memory, learning, intelligence, emotion and morality, language and thought really are? Whether people are born "hard-wired" or whether we are all "blank slates"? What consciousness and dreaming are all about? What about when things go wrong upstairs—what really happens during a psychological disorder? How do stress and health interact? And where do the answers to all of these questions come from? Well, you're not alone in wondering. Put on your thinking caps, sign up for psychology this fall, and we'll look together for answers to these (and other) questions, using a scientific approach. (Open to juniors, seniors, and motivated sophomores if there is space in the class.)

ARCHITECTURAL THINKING, DESIGNING AND BUILDING (one semester)

What is architecture and how does it shape the world we live in? How do buildings determine the quality of life of their surroundings? This course will be broken into three distinct terms. The first term will be comprised of architectural theory and history as well as learning basic drafting skills and applying them to assorted projects. In the winter term we will apply these ideas and skills to the community here at Buxton and will collectively design a building for the campus. The spring term will consist of learning how to build our design and, hopefully, completing the project from the ground up.

Students may take the first term as a distinct half-year elective, or they may do the full year, but in order to do the second half, students must have taken the first half. (Open to juniors, seniors, and motivated sophomores if there is space in the class.)

MATHEMATICS

ALGEBRA I (full year)

This course provides an introduction to algebraic properties and expressions. Topics include the study of equations and inequalities in one variable, work with polynomials and exponents, and graphing of linear equations. Students also begin solving and graphing systems of linear equations. A brief introduction to quadratic forms is included.

GEOMETRY (full year)

Geometrical relationships and the structures of logic are the two main themes of this course. The topics are explored in such a way that students discover and define the fundamental relationships as a class throughout the year. The basics of plane geometry and symmetry are covered, along with an introduction to the geometry of the solids and beginning trigonometry. Deductive and inductive reasoning are woven in throughout the topics, thus developing a system of logical thought that is intended to contribute, not only to other math and science courses, but to all areas of study. Students have the opportunity to pursue a number of independent projects throughout the year.

ALGEBRA II (full year)

This is a second-year high-school algebra course designed to develop proficiency in mathematical skills, to solidify an understanding of mathematical concepts, and to encourage logical yet creative thinking. Class sizes are kept small so that students have every opportunity to achieve success and gain confidence in their ability to do mathematics.

INTRODUCTION TO TRIGONOMETRY (full year)

This class will explore linear, quadratic, exponential and logarithmic functions. Students will learn right triangle trigonometry and the unit circle. The purpose of this class is to establish thorough knowledge of trigonometric functions and their applications.

PRE-CALCULUS (full year)

Designed to prepare students for college-level calculus, this is a fast-paced course. Questions are continually asked that go beyond the immediate problem being examined. Topics covered include graphing techniques, trigonometry, vectors, conic sections, transcendental functions, polar coordinates, and sequences and series. There is an introduction to the concepts of calculus at the end of the year.

CALCULUS (full year)

This course is offered to advanced students who thoroughly enjoy the application of complex mathematical concepts. The primary function is to demonstrate the enjoyment that is present in higher-level mathematics. As with most calculus courses, the first term concentrates on differential calculus and the second on integral calculus. Although there is some emphasis on application, a secure grasp of the fundamental concepts is also stressed.

SCIENCES

BIOLOGY (full year)

In the fall term biology concentrates on the topics of cell biology and human physiology as an introduction to the fundamentals of the subject. All the systems of the body are discussed and explored, including a detailed section on the brain and nervous system. In the winter term, the focus is on genetics, looking into the workings of DNA and genes, and discussing current issues in genetic technology. In the spring, the main topic is evolution, looked at through the lens of the unique organisms that have evolved in island environments, such as the hotspots of the Galapagos, Hawaii, and Indonesia. All three terms involve weekly labs and several research papers. The spring term includes an independent research project as well, the results of which are presented at the Spring Arts Weekend. Buxton's extensive campus and greenhouse provide excellent opportunities for many of these labs and projects.

CHEMISTRY (full year)

This college-preparatory laboratory science is primarily for juniors and seniors. Topics covered include atomic theory, phase changes, origins and significance of the periodic chart, quantum mechanics, chemical reactions, acid-base relationships, oxidation-reduction principles, and an expanded section on organic chemistry. Whenever possible, discussions are geared to helping students gain an understanding of the principles and mechanics of natural phenomena as well as modern technological advances.

PHYSICS (full year)

This course is designed to prepare students for college-level physics as well as to let them learn and work with the laws of the world around them. The fall term focuses on the fundamentals of Newtonian mechanics, work, and energy. The winter moves on to the properties of waves, including sound and light, optics, and electromagnetism. The spring concludes with a survey of modern physics: astronomy, relativity, and quantum mechanics. Due to the importance of mathematical descriptions in all these topics, Algebra II is a prerequisite for physics. Weekly labs allow students to make direct connections between theory and practice and to develop experimental procedures. Students also complete several independent or joint projects throughout the year with emphasis on exploration and design, which may be presented during Spring Arts Weekend.

MARINE SCIENCE (full year but can be taken for one semester)

Class work for both semesters centers around regular individual readings of current articles and then presentations by the students to the rest of the group on a weekly basis. This seminar style requires that everyone be extremely responsible about meeting individual work expectations. There are also several research papers assigned throughout the year, usually two in the fall, one in the winter, and two in the spring term. The class will involve some hands-on labs as well as field work during a trip to Cape Cod in the spring.

Fall semester focus: Oceanography The first semester will look at the ocean in depth as a worldwide ecosystem, and as a subject that is studied using all the various fields of science. The course will begin with the physics and chemistry of the world's seas: salt water components, currents, tides, tsunamis ("tidal" waves), the Gulf Stream, and the El Niño-type weather patterns that are caused by the relationships of wind and water. Then it will focus on the structures of the ocean basins: the ocean floor, undersea volcanos and deep-sea vents, and the edges of the sea. From geology, this will lead into studying the different ecosystems and environments in the ocean: the deep sea, the polar seas, rocky and sandy shores, coral reefs, mangrove swamps and salt marshes, and the open ocean itself.

Winter/Spring semester focus: Marine Biology In January the course will move into a survey of marine organisms, looking particularly at the adaptations that creatures make for life in the oceans. It will start with the very small—the viruses and bacteria present in the seas—and move on to the seaweeds, and invertebrate organisms. In the spring term we will study the marine vertebrates—fish, sea turtles, seabirds, marine mammals—focusing on animal behavior, and ending with a special concentration on the cetaceans (whales and dolphins). Along the way many of the topics will address various environmental issues and discuss human use and development of the ocean's resources.

The class is limited to 12 students total and is open to anyone who has completed Biology.

ASTRONOMY (one semester)

This class will be ordered somewhat chronologically. We will start with historical astronomy of various cultures (Mayan, Native North American, Chinese, Egyptian, etc.). Then we will address the Copernican sun-centered vs. earth-centered controversy of the 1600s. The middle of the semester will involve studying stars, our solar system and others, and the universe, including Einstein's theories of relativity. We will end the term by exploring some of the current topics in astronomy: dark matter, extra-solar planets, wormholes, and the like.

There will be both papers and projects along with readings and several class presentations. Readings will be primarily from current articles rather than a textbook. We will often use the computer-based lab program: "Starry Night." Also expect to put in extra "lab time" in the evenings many weeks.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

MANDARIN CHINESE (full year)

Mandarin Chinese I is a two-semester course that establishes a foundation for Mandarin study through listening and speaking, as well as some reading and writing. The course seeks to naturalize beginning learners to the sounds and tones of Mandarin, while moving towards language immersion in the classroom. The course will cover basic grammar structures, daily conversation, and introduce various aspects of Chinese culture. More advanced Mandarin classes are available.

FRENCH (full year)

Level II stresses basic language skills with emphasis on reading, writing, and conversation and offer glimpses into the cultural life of the French-speaking world.

Level III presents an intensive grammar review along with an introduction to modern French prose. Written expression is stressed through frequent compositions. A full-length novel or play is read during the last term.

Level IV, while including a review of grammar, is an exploration of French culture expanding from the 17th century to today. Through an in-depth study of novels, plays, poetry, music and movies, students will be exposed to some of the most creative minds that have shaped French culture and captivated the eyes of the world. Within the year, students can find themselves anywhere from enjoying the aristocratic comedies of Jean Baptiste Molière, to learning about the realities of marginalized, Parisian youth presented through Mathieu Kassovitz's masterpiece *La Haine*. Frequent compositions, connected to the source material, will refine written expression. Comprehension and oral expression will be facilitated through exclusive communication in the target language.

Level V is an advanced literature course and is individually arranged.

SPANISH (full year)

Levels I and II introduce beginning students to basic reading, writing, and listening skills using a variety of methodologies. Emphasis is also placed on discovering the richness and diversity of Hispanic culture. These courses are designed to provide the students with basic and intermediate grammar so that they can engage in conversation about daily life in different speaking styles, to develop a general knowledge about Spanish culture, and to introduce students to Hispanic literary texts from both sides of the Atlantic. Level I introduces the fundamentals of grammar and syntax through media and text-based presentations, using the textbook Portafolio Volume 1. In the spring term, reading and conversation skills become a more central focus of the transition into Level II. The second year course continues with the Portafolio series, as the class continues to develop an understanding of the basic grammar, fine-tuning the experience with a heftier exposure to literature, film, music, and current events from both Spain and Latin America. The language used in class will be mainly Castilian, with special emphasis on Hispanic-American forms to provide the students with a real practical language they will be able to use in their future interactions.

Level III emphasizes an intensive grammar review. Written skills are stressed through composition, creative writing, and poetry. Coursework and class discussion will focus on Spanish and Latin American history and culture. Language immersion is a constant at this level. Students are more heavily involved in the curriculum-development process this year, actively guiding the direction their learning takes through project and presentation-based coursework.

Level IV continues to inform the grammatical sensibilities of the students, delving at last into the finer nuances and quirks of the language. The course centers, in the fall and winter terms, around the discussion and analysis of a series of contemporary Spanish-language films. These films then provide the contexts for a sophisticated understanding of dialogue and "everyday language" skills. The spring term is dedicated to conversation and literary analysis, using primarily short stories and news articles to inspire debate and reflection within the class.

Level V is an advanced conversation and literature course.

ARTS

STUDIO ART (full year)

Through exploration in painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, fabrics, found objects, and mixed media, students can begin to articulate their artistic visions. Projects are defined through individual discussion. Students are encouraged and introduced to use a broad range of materials. What inspires the student determines which methods of working, materials, and ideas are explored. Throughout, students begin to relate their daily experience to the process of making art.

Students can take structured art classes that offer formal skill sets in drawing, painting and printmaking with an emphasis on balancing direct, observational skills with expressive, independent work. There also is the opportunity to take 'open studio' classes where students can work independently on any idea with almost any medium; instruction is available and responsive to individual projects.

CERAMICS (full year)

This course introduces students to the various aspects of clay and the related disciplines of ceramics through demonstrations and experimentation during class time. As beginners, students learn to prepare clay for either throwing pieces on the potter's wheel or hand building. Students then choose projects that interest them and work

in the studio, both in and outside of class time. Students are encouraged to read about contemporary potters, sculptors, and artists in other media in order to gain a context for their personal work. Ultimately, students learn to articulate and refine their own ideas in clay.

ADVANCED CERAMICS (full year)

This class is geared to students who feel comfortable centering and throwing four to five pounds of clay on the potter's wheel and trimming and glazing their work. It is a structured class where the students, as a group, progress each week with a new in-class assignment. The assignments are meant to challenge each student's abilities and strengthen their throwing technique. Each week the class stays focused on the idea of creating many pieces rather than trying to make one perfect piece, this way learning from mistakes made. In addition to working in the studio, students are expected to cover, trim and glaze their work outside of class. Students find a new love for the material and a close bond with each other as they advance through this exciting and challenging experience.

PHOTOGRAPHY (full year)

Studying photography, students encounter art and science, observation and response, discipline and creativity. This course covers traditional black-and-white photography (in the darkroom, with real film and chemicals). Students learn the mechanics and theory behind cameras and lenses, how to develop film on their own, and how to print on the enlargers. Cameras, film, and paper are all provided. The student begins making images quickly and develops their own method of visual communication in response to images they make, as well as those that strike them from books, the Internet, or their classmates. Beyond basic black-and-white, students may study 19th century photographic processes, including albumen and wet-plate collodion; camera building; large format photography (4x5 and 8x10); and can learn how to make their own photographic chemicals. The class is hands-on and physical, drawing on math and science skills and the development of a photographic technique as part of communicating how the student sees the world. In addition, there is a well-equipped digital lab and fine-art digital printer. An open digital photography work period is held every week. The darkroom is available to all students and is staffed at least one evening a week for students who want help with their photography work outside of a formal class.

VIDEO PRODUCTION (full year but can be taken for one semester)

This course is offered in two parts. These two sections can be taken together as a year-long course or individually as a single semester. In both parts, students can expect to be well acquainted with the rudimentary skills of video production by working hands-on with video cameras and video editing software (Final Cut Pro).

Fall: The first semester will focus primarily on the tradition of documentary filmmaking and specifically how new technologies have factored into the development of this field. We will watch documentaries and non-fiction films spanning from the Lumiere "actualities" to the work of Les Blank, Werner Herzog and Errol Morris. Students will be assigned short documentary video experiments at first. These will become more and more involved over the course of the term and eventually the class work will culminate in a substantial independent project of the student's choosing.

Winter/Spring: The second semester will focus on the tradition of experimental and avant-garde film and video. We will look at the work of many seminal artists from Stan Brakhage to Nam June Paik to Bill Viola as well as artists who are currently developing their practices such as Trecartin, Barney and many others. Our focus this term will be on developing a "personal practice" and students are encouraged to identify and peruse a specific question or goal in their video work. As in the fall, initially students will be assigned short video experiments and will gradually break-off into more independently motivated work over the course of the term.

MUSIC

MUSIC I (full year)

This course offers a comprehensive investigation of the art of music. The class will study music from different cultures and from many time periods. The theoretical emphasis focuses on the notated traditions of the world. Students can then use any of these systems as a basis for their own compositions. Specific areas of study include **theory:** acoustics, basic fundamentals, traditional harmonic and contrapuntal functions; **ear training:** rhythmic and melodic dictation and sight singing; **analysis:** listening and analyzing with full scores, observing historical cycles; and **composition:** original work written and performed by class participants, faculty, and adjunct faculty. Composing original pieces enables students to participate in the most basic creative act of music and it becomes the common denominator of the class experience. All students, regardless of previous background, share equally in this fundamental musical process.

MUSIC II and III - Advanced Composition and Performance (full year)

These are upper-level courses intended primarily for students planning to continue music study at the college level. Score reading and analysis of a variety of music are an integral part of this class. For the most part, performance consists of ensemble sight-reading and performance preparation techniques, including many aspects of improvisation. All student compositions are performed and recorded throughout the year.

PRIVATE LESSONS (full year)

Lessons in piano, voice, and most instruments can be arranged.

DRAMA

DRAMA I (full year)

The Drama I class is designed primarily for freshmen and sophomores (with the occasional junior). The goal of this class is to expose beginning drama students to all aspects of theater through a series of small-scale productions. Having this be a performing class is essential: it is only through the experience of performing that a student can come to understand the fundamental nature of theater, that it is a shared experience between audience and actor.

It is also crucial that students feel that particular thrill of performing to understand why acting is such an extraordinary and rewarding craft. Through these productions, students are also exposed to all aspects of theater: we read and choose plays together (debating the merits and performability of each), collect and/or make props, choose and fit costumes, design and build set pieces, and make choices about lighting. Students also learn basic drama terminology and skills—the areas of the stage, how to project and stay “open,” how to memorize lines and pick up their cues. Over the course of the year—and three or four productions that can range from Monty Python skits to comedic one-acts by David Ives to serious one-acts like *The Lottery* or *The Long Christmas Dinner*—the hope is that the student will grow both as an actor and as a person. We expect to see more comfort and risk-taking, more willingness and confidence on stage.

DRAMA II and III (full year)

Drama II is an upper-level elective class that assumes that the enrollees have a passionate interest in theater, and are not just getting their feet wet. With that premise in mind, we start each year with monologues, an always challenging and risky undertaking for the aspiring actor. The students are involved in the selection of their individual material, and the monologues provide an important opportunity for close, one-on-one work. The current curriculum becomes more variable after the performance of the monologues at the Fall Arts Weekend. In the past, it has included work on scenes of two or more actors, one-acts, and full-length plays. Recently, the spring term has become a bit more experimental, as we have approached different kinds of work without a published script. This has included generating our own scripts for a Commedia dell Arte style performance, mask work, and improvisational exercises around opposites, character status, the Elements, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Virtues, and others. For students who have already taken Drama II, a repeat of this class can result in student-directed scenes.

AFTERNOON AND EVENING ACTIVITIES

FINE ARTS

For students who are not enrolled in art classes, we encourage them to explore the studios. Students may come in for single free periods during their academic day, outside of their assigned class time, or after school and on weekends. Much of the art created at Buxton is made during time outside of formal class periods. For an expanded description of the art possibilities at Buxton, please see Arts in the course section.

MUSIC

CHORUS

Choral activities and vocal ensembles are open to all regardless of prior experience. Twice a year, major choral works are undertaken. An additional piece involving all students and faculty is performed at Graduation. Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Mozart's *Missa Brevis K.220* and *Requiem K.626*, Schubert's *Mass No. 3*, Gounod's *Messe Solennelle de Sainte Cécile*, and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* have been performed in recent years.

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Chamber orchestra is open to all students who have an interest in playing music in a larger group. A wide variety of instruments can be accommodated in the chamber orchestra. Repertory works are performed during the Fall and Spring Arts Weekends, and in the winter the orchestra provides music for the touring All-School Play. Recent performances have included Bach's *Orchestra Suites in C and D*, Handel's *Water Music*, Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and Schubert's *Rosamunde Overture*; waltzes and rags by Scott Joplin; and arrangements of pieces by George Gershwin and Duke Ellington.

CHAMBER MUSIC

Students who are interested in playing chamber music may participate in one of a number of group ensembles. They vary in size and instrumentation and are individually coached by the music faculty. Duos to seven-piece jazz ensembles form each semester to rehearse and perform student composers' work as well as standard repertoire. Rudimentary sight-reading ability is necessary. Performances are given several times each year.

DRAMA

DRAMA MINOR

The purpose of drama minor is to learn about the rehearsal and performance process by choosing plays, blocking and rehearsing them, learning lines, creating appropriate costumes, sets, and props, and performing the plays for the Buxton community. An afternoon activity offered in the late fall and spring, drama minor is open to anyone who wishes to participate, regardless of theater experience or background. The group meets once a week to begin with and possibly more often as opening night approaches.

FALL and SPRING PLAYS

These productions are cast at the beginning of each term and involve students of all grades who wish to be considered for a part. There are no requirements for participation. Casting is at the discretion of the directors, but we strive to involve as many different students as possible. We also take into consideration the needs of the actors. One student might be ready for a challenge, so we will cast him or her in a difficult role on purpose. Another might be trying out for the first time and we want to celebrate their courage by giving them a small part, regardless of acting talent. These plays rehearse two evenings a week, for two hours each time (though not all students are required to be at every rehearsal for the full two hours). Other students, as volunteers, are in charge of lights, sets, props, and costumes. Some of the work for these crews happens during the evening rehearsals, some happens during Work Program hours. Adults are involved in these crews as well, but students are, and need to be, the primary participants.

THE ALL-SCHOOL PLAY

This is the major production of the winter term and a central component of the All-School Trip. Unlike our other two plays, this one involves every single student in the school. If you are not in the cast (which is usually quite large), you can play in the orchestra that accompanies the production, participate on the lights crew, do make-up, produce the programs, house-manage during performances, or have a hand in any of a number of other necessary tasks. While in our host city, we “give back” by performing the play in nursing homes, schools, retirement communities, or for other groups or organizations that have invited us. The play is usually performed three times in three different venues.

CREATIVE WRITING

A weekly activity, creative writing affords the opportunity to pursue writing projects of choice in an informal, non-academic setting. Students are given the option of sharing their work with the other members of the group and may read before larger audiences of peers, parents, alumni, relatives and visitors at the annual Fall and Spring Arts Weekends. Work is also published in the yearbook and in the Newsletter.

DANCE and DRUMMING

Over the past several years, we have had the opportunity to work with master dancers and drummers from Haiti, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and Indonesia, which has been an invaluable experience and has given us the opportunity to learn new material from these countries.

Any student who is interested may be part of the program, and from one-half to two-thirds of the students currently participate each year. A traveling dance/drum performing group is an outgrowth of this interest.

DANCE

This activity explores West African, Afro-Caribbean, modern, ballet, and other creative influences in dance, focusing on traditional-folkloric and contemporary influences in original student compositions. Several levels of classes run from November through May, accommodating beginners as well as experienced dancers. Individual and group choreography performances are given during the Fall and Spring Arts Weekends.

DRUMMING and PERCUSSION

Studies include hand and stick techniques, traditional arrangements, and individual compositions. Areas to be considered are West African, Afro-Caribbean, and contemporary influences in original student compositions. Performances with dance are held during the Fall and Spring Arts Weekends.

BALINESE MUSIC and DANCE

Students will be introduced to traditional Balinese dance forms as well as instruments from the Balinese gamelan orchestra. We have a visiting artist from Indonesia round out the in-school instruction during the winter or spring term. Promising students will have the opportunity to study Balinese dance and drumming in our summer program, which began in July 2009, with a group of ten people from the school intensively studying dance and instrumental music for three weeks at the Yayasan Tri Pusaka Cakti Arts Foundation in Batuan, Bali.

ATHLETICS

Buxton offers a number of sports and athletics. **Soccer** is offered in the fall term and **basketball** in the winter. We also offer skiing and snowboarding at a nearby ski resort three times a week during the winter months. Other sports and activities are offered throughout the year depending on availability and interest. These include (but are not limited to) horseback riding, yoga, karate, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, track and field, and Frisbee. Additionally, our campus and the Berkshires generally, offer myriad outdoor activities. For a more complete description of Buxton’s athletic programs, please see the viewbook.