

Program of Studies

Berkshire Country Day School

Upper School
2019-2020

UPPER SCHOOL

Upper-School homeroom teachers for grades 7–9 serve as advisors to a group of students in their respective grades. Advisors are advocates for their advisees and keep abreast of their advisees' progress throughout the school year by soliciting information from teachers at faculty meetings and from meeting with their advisees on a weekly basis.

Advisors also serve as the first line of contact between their advisees' parents and the school for a question or concern of a general nature. If the question pertains to a particular class, parents should contact the teacher of the course. If steps need to be taken to effect changes in the behavior of or academic support for an advisee, the advisor will set up a conference with parents, class teachers and/ or the Associate Head of School to develop a plan of action.

The advisors meet frequently with their advisees as well as hold two dedicated advisory periods per week. These advisory blocks are used for the social curriculum. Positive personal and social growth is central to the BCD mission. Goal setting and self-reflection is an important part of our program.

Advisory block conversations include a variety of topics such as respect, responsibility, courage, value systems, decision-making, tolerance, excellence, success, manners, and service. These topics stem from the pillars of BCD's core values: Originality, Quality, Respect, Sustainability, Community, Wellness and Citizenship.

upper-school advisors

grade 7: Dr. Jilly Lederman

grade 8: Ms. Kathy Shortelle

grade 9: Mrs. Susan Benner

upper-school sports

The foundation of the after-school sports program is the belief that every student should have an opportunity to participate in organized team sports at BCD. Among the many things that can be learned from team sports are physical conditioning, sportsmanship, cooperation, social interaction, dependence on others, and the shared-experience factor. This last point is particularly important at a small school and is a major reason for having only one sport each season through the ninth grade. Perhaps the most compelling reason for having team sports is that the peak time for physical skill and coordination development in a person's life is from ten to thirteen years old. Being on a team provides a means for this development through the skill and time requirements. It also provides a reason to want to excel so that the individual may be an asset to the team. Another reason to have team sports at the middle and upper-school levels is that this may be the

only opportunity for a student to be on a team due to the far more competitive demands of high school and college sports.

At BCD, after-school sports are required for all students in grades 3 through 9 in the spring and fall. In the winter, there are numerous optional sports offerings for grades 4-9 as well as the Friday Ski Program which is open to students from PK to Grade 9. Occasionally, students may have particular interests beyond the scope of what BCD offers (such as tennis, riding, swimming, karate, etc.) and they may choose an alternate program in the fall and/ or spring as long as it meets certain criteria, i.e. meeting three times per week, providing active as opposed to passive activity, and supervised by a qualified instructor. The administration at BCD finds it particularly important for upper school students in grades 7 through 9 to be involved in after-school sports, because no physical education classes are scheduled for these grades within the school day.

The most difficult problem with a required competitive sports program is striking a balance between participation and competition. Achieving a perfect blend of the two is virtually impossible even though this is what the program tries to accomplish. The reason is our belief that all children should have an opportunity to play team sports. While an intramural program would be sufficient for some, it does not provide the competitive edge or the format for teaching good sportsmanship for those who have the skills to play on a competitive team. So, BCD tries to create enough teams at varying levels in an effort to meet the needs of all of its students. In the Junior Varsity and Varsity programs, students participate on competitive teams that play teams from area schools. In both of these programs, the coaches try to balance participation and playing time. The question of balance between competition and participation is always a delicate one, but the fact is that everyone is on a team and everyone is involved.

grade 7

Dr. Jilly Lederman, advisor

English

Dr. Jilly Lederman

Grade 7 literature embraces self-discovery. Who am I? And what do I meet as my world grows? Home, self, change, values, power and weakness, survival, and support are all issues of increasing urgency for grade 7 students. The literature we read, which may include *Animal Farm*, *Call of the Wild*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Dandelion Wine* and *The Iliad*, among others, brings these issues into focus and allows for them to be explored in a supportive environment. The readings provide the basis for most class discussions and writing projects. Compositions will be assigned on a regular basis. English workshop for words, phrases, and clauses or teacher-produced worksheets are used for grammar study.

history

Mr. Ned Douglas

The seventh-grade history curriculum covers American History from the pre-Colonial period through the post-Civil War Reconstruction era. In this course, students develop the factual foundation and critical thinking skills that will enable them to discuss and write about these historical events in an increasingly conceptual and analytical fashion.

Students read a variety of primary source materials provided for them in the form of handouts. Students learn how to evaluate the material and think as historians do. Additional information is presented in a more traditional lecture format and through simulation games. The American Nation textbook is kept as a resource in the history classrooms when students need additional background and context.

Classes emphasize active and insightful participation in class discussion. Students are encouraged to work on their ability to articulate opinions and support them with relevant facts. Students learn to listen and respond to one another in a polite and respectful manner. In this way, the class strives to teach students what the phrase civil discourse means. Student writing is based, in part, on these discussions. Students are encouraged to write succinct paragraphs articulating a view with supporting evidence.

Students are also required to complete one project for each trimester. These projects are designed to augment factual knowledge and improve research skills. In the fall and spring, the projects are done as a group.

Students are assessed in a variety of ways. There are quizzes and tests. Projects and participation are also used to evaluate students. Students are taught a variety of study skills throughout the year that range from note taking to reading comprehension. An effort is made to connect historical knowledge with the present. Current events are tied into the curriculum wherever possible.

pre-algebra

Mrs. Susan Benner

Our goal in teaching Grade 7 pre-algebra is to help to create feelings of confidence, enthusiasm, and competence in our students by encouraging them to see patterns, understand processes, and to use skills. Students at this age are usually ready to move away from the world of arithmetic toward the world of pre-algebra. We try to demystify math at this level by helping students make the connections between what we study in class and the real world, and to expand their critical thinking.

Our resources include a text, calculators, puzzles, games and work sheets. Students also work on mathematical note-taking and writing. Topics studied include the vocabulary of algebra, the decimal system, positive and negative numbers, fractions, equations and inequalities, geometry, ratio, proportion and percent, the coordinate plane, volume and surface area, and probability.

Enrichment material is made available to all students to keep their level of interest and enthusiasm high.

Assessment of progress includes self-tests, quizzes, section tests, and records of homework completion so that students always receive feedback to let them know where they stand.

algebra I

Ms. Kathy Shortelle

This course is for the advanced student who already has experience in pre-algebra. By stretching this course over a two-year period, we can increase both the breadth and depth of the topics covered in what is unquestionably one of the most important courses for future success in the study of Upper School mathematics. While the study of algebra is abstract, its roots are still firmly embedded in the concepts of the previous three or four years. This course will be completed in grade 8.

Materials for the course are drawn from text and web-based sources as well as using various challenges and enrichment activities.

physics

Mr. Gore and Ms. Benner

Physics is the study of matter, and it is the most fundamental of sciences. All things are made of some kind of material or another but “matter” is not the only kind of thing that moves through space and time. Some things %such as bits of information – move too. It turns out that the manner in which information moves is also called “physics.”

This course is divided into three basic segments: During the first segment, we will introduce the fundamental principles and patterns of motion. Newtonian movement will be taught conceptually and experimentally, i.e. by doing and feeling the physics. During the second segment, we will take Galileo’s axiom and apply it to the motion of things on Earth. The notions of speed, acceleration, free-fall, force, and mass will be developed in the context of common (“terrestrial”) objects. We’ll experiment with balls rolling down slides, pendulums swinging along arcs, and springs squishing in and out. We will thereby establish Newton’s Laws of Motion.

The third trimester the seventh grade does engineering by design. During this time, the seventh grade will use the concepts they have studied to complete various challenges that may include an egg drop, building catapults and a Rube Goldberg machine.

Homework will be assigned twice or three times a week, and the laboratory notebook will be graded.

French

Mme. Deanna Collins

The foremost goal for grade 7 is to help students to become increasingly comfortable hearing and speaking French. Students learn various expressions and vocabulary in a context that the students can understand and use. Students learn that French is a living, working language that can be a pleasure to speak. They will be introduced to grammar and vocabulary useful for a variety of situations. Students will learn about France and the Francophone world, their culture and traditions.

The class will be conducted primarily in French. Students will be encouraged to participate actively in all classroom activities, which include communicative exercises, games, skits, creative writing, and reading. Grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary will be reinforced through a wide variety of activities including games, open-ended dialogues, and skits. The video clips of French teenagers that accompany the text will support comprehension and increase familiarity with spoken French. Written work will follow work done orally in class.

Spanish

Sr. Miguel Silva

Students continue to learn the speech and rhythms of Spanish. Emphasis is placed on oral communication and on developing the ability to speak with and understand native Spanish speakers. Oral drills, role playing, and improvised conversational activities allow students to feel proficient in basic Spanish by the end of the year. Students will also be exposed to the geography, history, music and food of Latin America.

Latin

Ms. Eugénie Fawcett

The primary goal of the Latin program is to enable students to read Latin prose and to translate it into coherent English. Other goals of the Latin program are: (1) to promote verbal precision, logical thought, and simple grammatical and etymological analysis, and (2) to foster an understanding of and appreciation for the Greco-Roman influence in Western literature, philosophy, and art.

By the end of the grade 7 year, the students will have developed Latin reading skills and a knowledge of Latin grammar. They will also have studied the political, economic, and artistic characteristics of ancient Rome. Each student will be expected to maintain his/her own Latin grammar notes, as all the students are regularly tested on their mastery of syntax and quizzed on their memorization of vocabulary and forms. Weekly extra help sessions provide opportunities to improve grade averages by retaking quizzes and to get individualized attention. A final examination will be administered, as well as The National Latin Exam.

grade 8

Ms. Kathy Shortelle, advisor

English

Dr. Jilly Lederman

By grade 8, the surprise for the student is that adventure need not be over the mountain and far away but is most definitely much nearer to everyday experience. As the student's identity becomes more secure, the literature read speaks to the more immediate themes of the individual and the group, standards and their structure, and microcosms other than the student's own. Books like *Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Macbeth*, *Warriors Don't Cry* and *The Odyssey* bring forth the questions that the students are asking and need to hear discussed. Compositions will be assigned on a regular basis, and the analytical essay can be attempted seriously at this grade level. The course also includes a significant amount of grammar study.

history

Mr. Ned Douglas

Grade eight history covers European history from the fall of Rome through the Renaissance. One cannot study European history without also examining other cultures, such as the Chinese, Japanese, and Byzantine Empires and their interconnection to Europe.

Students will use various texts and many primary source materials, provided both as handouts and digitally. The students may also read various historical and narrative nonfiction selections. Students think as historians and learn how to evaluate original texts. Additional information is presented in a more traditional lecture format and through simulation games.

Classes emphasize active and insightful participation in class discussion. As in seventh grade history, students are encouraged to work on their ability to articulate opinions and support them with relevant facts. Students learn to listen and respond to one another in a polite and respectful manner. Student writing is based, in part, on these discussions.

Students are assessed in a variety of ways. There are quizzes, tests, projects and role play games, and research papers. Participation is a key component of this course.

As part of this course, students will explore current events and will participate in research and discussion regarding various current topics.

algebra I through graphing

Mr. Ned Douglas

The focus of this course is on algebra as a set of tools, so we spend time both learning how to use the tools and, just as important, when to use them. Modeling life situations for analysis and looking at word problems will be a continual component of our work this year. At every step, emphasis will be placed on the process of solving problems. Careful attention to methods and error analysis will allow each student to gain confidence and precision in computation. Class will be a mix of lecture and discussion, with an emphasis on student participation in the form of questions and class examples. Homework will be assigned four nights per week in an effort to practice the concepts that we cover in class. Topics to be covered include: sets, number lines, order of operations, variables, word problems, manipulating equations, absolute value, inequalities, graphing functions, systems of variables, and coordinate plane.

algebra I

Ms. Kathy Shortelle

This course is a continuation of the work begun in grade 7 and provides students with a strong grounding in operations with variable expressions. While algebra is abstract in nature, it is conceptually grounded in the course work of previous years. This connection allows students to reinforce their understanding of previous topics, including integers and rational numbers. They will also encounter new topics including operations with polynomials, quadratic equations, irrational numbers, and graphing linear equations. Throughout the course, students will also gain familiarity with the graphing calculator when appropriate.

Primary resources for material will be supplemented with various challenges and enrichment activities.

introduction to physical science

Mrs. Susan Benner

Students in eighth grade examine physical science through a set of experimental protocols in the laboratory where students discover important principles governing the physical world. They discover math as a language of science through data analysis, graphing, and algebra. They investigate properties of matter, such as melting and boiling points; density and solubility. They identify characteristics of elements and compounds. They also learn procedures such as fractional distillation and crystallization, chromatography, and filtration; they separate mixtures into pure components; study molecular motion; and use mathematics to determine the size of molecules and atoms.

The spring trimester begins with a trip to the Everglades National Park in Florida. The trip is followed with an introduction to ecology and ecological research as they relate to

the class's experience in the fragile ecosystem of the Everglades and our local environment.

Grading is based on class participation, laboratory reports, homework, tests, and an Everglades project.

French

Mme. Deanna Collins

The foremost goal of eighth-grade French is to help children to become increasingly comfortable hearing and speaking French. We will learn various expressions, vocabulary, and grammar in a context that the students can understand and use. Students will learn that French is a living, working language that can be a pleasure to speak. They will be introduced to grammar and vocabulary useful for a variety of situations. Students will learn about France and the Francophone world, their culture and traditions.

The class will be conducted primarily in French. Students will be encouraged to participate actively in all classroom activities, which include communicative exercises, games, skits, creative writing, and reading. Grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary will be reinforced through a wide variety of activities including games, open-ended dialogues, and skits. The video clips of French teenagers that accompany the text will support comprehension and increase familiarity with spoken French. Written work will follow work done orally in class. Towards the end of the year, the class studies a Francophone culture (Québec, Sénégal), including its history, culture, language and traditions.

Spanish

Sr. Miguel Silva

The Spanish world language programs seeks to develop the four language skills while making the students aware of the cultural strengths, weaknesses and differences between our culture and that of the target language.

Our goal is to have the students develop their language skill through a careful study of the structure of the language and its words. Simultaneous to this study the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are introduced at appropriate times with sensitivity to what the students are ready to do. We are dedicated to the use of the language in interactive situations that parallel what our students will need when they travel abroad or meet native speakers of the language here in our country.

The eighth-grade Spanish course is a pivotal year in our Spanish curriculum. The students have developed their knowledge of basic Spanish structure and vocabulary through previous years of study. This foundation has them ready to develop the four language skills to a significantly higher level. They build on what they knew as they left

Spanish seventh grade but now are ready for far more sophisticated structure and a more intense interactive use of Spanish.

Latin

Ms. Eugénie Fawcett

The primary goal of eighth-grade Latin is to enable students to read Latin prose and to translate it into coherent English. Other goals of the Latin Department are: (1) to promote verbal precision, logical thought, and simple grammatical and etymological analysis, and (2) to foster an understanding of and appreciation for the Greco-Roman influence in Western literature, philosophy, and art.

Grade 8 Latin builds upon the foundation laid during the previous year. Oral recitation and written work are emphasized equally, and the students make additions to their Latin notebooks in class. Regular vocabulary quizzes, occasional grammar and translation tests, and a final examination will be administered. During the weekly Latin help sessions, students may retake vocabulary quizzes, in order to improve their grades and show that they had mastered the material. Greek mythology and Roman history are reviewed, and all the students take The National Latin Exam.

grade 9

English

Mr. James Fawcett

By grade 9, students are close to being young adults as they cap off their BCD experience. The skills acquired in the earlier grades, the works read, the writing done, all are meant to reach their culmination in this year's work. Dreams, dilemmas, paths of possibilities and the need to make choices: the literature read this final year will follow these themes as they are set into motion. *Of Mice and Men* (a summer reading text) some of which may be: *Ethan Frome*, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Plays will include "Our Town," "Everyman," and "Julius Caesar." Selections from *The Aeneid* will be covered as well along with various poets and their works. Vocabulary study and grammar reinforcement are part of the program as well. Written assignments will focus especially on the analytical essay but will embrace creative compositions and poems as well.

history

Mr. Ned Douglas

Ninth-grade students study western civilization, post-enlightenment that emphasizes the increasingly complex relations between an expanding Western Europe and other world civilizations. The growth of the nation-state, industrialization, imperialism and nationalism are discussed as well as the impact of these forces on the rest of the world. Study, writing, and research skills will be emphasized. This course will delve deeply into primary

sources via document based questions, a major independent research project, and frequent homework assignments requiring the use of library materials rather than a text, all aimed at giving students personal experience of the historian's methods. Students are expected to read a newspaper or to watch international news on television every day, because the course links themes of the past to the present.

geometry

Ms. Kathy Shortelle

This course provides students with an in-depth study of plane geometry and an introduction to three-dimensional geometry. The approach is inductive in nature, expecting students to utilize the capability of a computer software program, Geometer's Sketchpad and Geogebra, to investigate geometric questions and, through their observations to produce and defend conclusions. Students spend the majority of the year developing a familiarity with geometric concepts, vocabulary, and relationships, finishing the year with an examination of the role of proof in geometry.

biology

Mrs. Susan Benner

Students in grade 9 examine biological science through class lecture, discussion, and laboratory experiments. The course will examine cell structure and function, genetics, evolution, human anatomy and physiology and a comparative survey of kingdoms. The course starts at the molecular level and moves upward through organ systems, finishing with the survey of kingdoms. The students will become better world citizens through knowledge of the natural world. Students will complete extensive laboratory work and create laboratory write-ups. The course will require students to do a significant amount of reading and homework.

Grading is based on class participation, laboratory reports, homework, and tests. A midyear and final exam will be given.

French and Spanish

Madame Collins and Senor Silva

The goal in ninth-grade French instruction at BCD is to help students synthesize their language education in order to improve their fluency and oral comprehension. The student trip to France and Spain in the fall helps establish relevance for the second language program; their hard work will be rewarded when they are able to converse proficiently and confidently with native speakers while in Paris or Barcelona. The program offers students many opportunities to speak in a variety of contexts while also refining their listening comprehension skills.

While oral fluency is a top priority, there is also a strong emphasis on reading and writing. Students review fundamental grammar as well as some of the finer points of

advanced grammar. Similarly, students learn a variety of vocabulary (both common place and literary) that helps to prepare them to communicate more effectively and to read a variety of literary texts. Students also read material that is both more complex and diverse, in order to help them to become more sophisticated language learners. Reading, writing, and oral communication are all emphasized.

Latin II

The students in Latin II spend the first part of the year completing a thorough study of Latin grammar. Regular vocabulary quizzes and occasional grammar tests will be administered, and the students are encouraged to retake vocabulary quizzes whenever necessary.

The balance of the year is spent reading selections from Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The students prepare translations for homework and also translate at sight in class. Since the *Commentarii* are read and discussed as historical documents, the students will be expected to become familiar with the history of Republican Rome. The final examination will be primarily a literature and history exam. The National Latin Exam, on the other hand, will include some questions that test the students' knowledge of grammar and forms.

upper-school arts electives

(sample selection. varying by term and year)

vocal ensemble

Do you love to sing? Let your voice soar with Vocal Ensemble. In this class, we will build each musician's current skill level in vocal technique, sight-reading, ensemble skills, and music theory. Students sing, play, and dance radio and Broadway classics based on repertoire selected by the ensemble. The class will perform an ensemble number for the Winter Concert, and will feature duets and solos for a concert in February. No audition required.

jazz ensemble/upper-school band

This class will focus on the classic songs of the 20th century and special attention will go into studying the great improvisers of the different epochs of American music. We will learn about variations on a theme, chord progressions, melodic and harmonic substitutions, rhythm, and scale/chord relationships. All instrumentalists and vocalists are welcome but students should already possess some basic ability in reading music and understanding the major and minor scales.

advanced music theory and composition

For anyone who wants to grow their ears: This course will allow creators of all levels to grow in the practice of arranging sound. By utilizing multiple modalities such as ear training, Deep Listening, and improvisation, students will be able to grow in musicianship as well as develop their own original projects. By the end of the course, students will be able to create original works of music across at least 2 different media. Prerequisite: Students should be able to read and write musical notation and it is strongly recommended that students have possess basic performance skills in voice or on an instrument.

studio art offerings

The Studio Arts department provides time, place, materials, and guided instruction aimed at providing each student with individualized creative experiences. Led by renowned teaching artists, the art studio is both an industrious work space and a forum for creative discussion. Course offerings are dynamic, changing and evolving in response to student interests, expertise of faculty, and current trends in contemporary art, media, and ideas. Through a variety of programs centered on Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Installation Art, and Ceramics, students gain hands-on familiarity with a variety of mediums, engage in critical thinking, and develop a sense of self-expression. Students work independently and collaboratively as teaching artists reinforce the importance experimentation, inquiry, and investigation. Local studio visits, guest artist critiques, and museum or gallery visits expose students to arts-based career paths and encourage students to understand art and artists in a variety of contexts. Examples of studio electives include Conceptual Drawing with Dana Piazza, Drawing with Confidence with Phil Knoll, Oil Painting with Maggie Mailer, and Functional Ceramics with Ben Evans.

arts blocks examples: Fall 2019

basic ceramics "in the style of..."

In this class we will look for inspiration in the work of leading ceramic artists from the 1900's to present. Students will learn and experiment with hand building and wheel working techniques while creating pieces in the style of the artist's work that we study. We will also learn glazing and surface design based on the artist's work. Some artists studied will be Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, John Mason, and Betty Woodman.

project runway: fashion theory

In this course students will learn about the different themes and historical trends of the boundless fashion industry. Through discussions and hands-on projects, the group will generate original ideas and designs. While the materials in the course may seem quirky, they are selected to help expand the imagination of the young designers and push the boundaries of "normal" and "expected".

conceptual drawing

“When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes the machine that makes the art.”

— Sol LeWitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” 1967

Following Sol LeWitt’s approach, students will explore Conceptual Drawing in the form of both large-scale collaborative wall drawings, and independent drawing projects. This class will also cover how to build an online portfolio. Students will photograph their artwork, and upload it to a shared class website.

zine: from thoughts to pages

In this course students will learn the fundamentals of book binding and formatting. Over the course of the trimester, students will gather found as well as original texts and images to compile into an original self-published work. Through two major projects, the class will express their individual ideas and opinions about their lives, community, and surrounding world

upper-school theater

Upper School students may opt to do three seasons of sports or two seasons of sports and one season of theater. The theater offering is a winter production, open to all 7th, 8th and 9th grade students. Often this is an original production; students are engaged in the writing or reworking of a script. Production occurs at the Winthrop Theatre with day time and evening performances.

theatre arts blocks: Fall 2019

ensemble building

Students will work collaboratively to create short, devised theatre scenes inspired by poetry, paintings, many other mediums of art, and of course each other. As an ensemble, we will work together to create narratives that we can eventually combine to make a show that utilizes architecture, found sound, and found art. Through the trimester, we will focus on 4 different themes to use as inspiration in our pieces.