



**MIRMAN SCHOOL**

**2011-2012  
Curriculum Guide**

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## **Mission and Philosophy**

Mirman School is passionately committed to the education of highly gifted children.

We are dedicated to:

academic excellence;

the social, emotional and physical development of the student;

depth, complexity and differentiation tailored to each student's needs and abilities;

and developing creatively productive and ethical world citizens.

## **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM GUIDE**

The Mirman School Curriculum Guide is designed as an informational resource for parents, students, prospective parents, and prospective students. The programs of study delineated in this guide present a baseline of academic opportunities, not a ceiling for possible academic achievement at any educational level. Consistent with the philosophy of Mirman School, all teachers and administrators remain committed to providing all students the academic and intellectual engagement and instruction they need, as their academic performance and/or the professional evaluation of their teachers warrant.

## **LOWER SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY**

Mirman School is divided into two educational divisions: the Lower School and the Upper School. The Lower School curriculum is comparable to grades 1 through 5; the Upper School's curriculum is comparable to four years of middle school, grades 6 through 9. The demonstration of a willingness to pursue academic excellence, positive interest and involvement in the learning process and a commitment to academic integrity are important for the continuance of a student's studies. In addition to these academic expectations are the assumptions that all students demonstrate an attitude of respect and act in accordance with the rules of conduct established by teachers in their classes. All students are expected to participate in the co-curricular programs of the school by participating in field trips, attending assemblies and by completing community service.

All students of the Lower School receive daily instruction in all of the following subjects:

- Reading and Literature
- Language Arts and Writing
- Spelling
- Mathematics
- Social Studies

All students of the Lower School receive weekly instruction in all of the following subjects:

- Art
- Character Development
- Computer/Technology
- Library
- Music
- Physical Education
- Science
- Spanish

Creative Dramatics begins in Rooms Three.

A global awareness strand is integrated across the grade level curricula.

All Lower School classes begin at 8:00 a.m.; afternoon dismissal is at 3:00 p.m.

## **Rooms One**

In Rooms One students develop independence, responsibility and social skills along with their academics. Many of the children cannot read when they enter in September, but by June they are reading chapter books. At entry, most do not know what the “plus” and “minus” sign mean but add and subtract with regrouping by the year’s end. Within the math program, students evolve into mathematicians as they solve word problems, construct geometric figures and research information for a variety of graphs. Within the reading and language arts program, students who enter with little or no writing or reading skills develop into enthusiastic readers and young creative authors capable of expressing themselves in complete, coherent sentences. In June students contrast their written and mathematical work from their early days at entry with what they have been able to achieve at year’s end. They notice the leaps and bounds that they have taken in one academic year. Not only have they been set on to the road of scholarship, but they also have blossomed in all areas.

### **Reading and Language Arts**

When students enter Rooms One, they may have reading skills, or they may not have had prior reading instruction. Teaching methods include: identifying phonemes, phonics, language experience stories, sight word vocabularies, reading for meaning, and sequencing.

Students are taught decoding skills as part of reading instruction. The students learn pre-writing skills with journal writing and step-by-step instruction. Students are introduced to creative writing. They begin the process by using their imagination to try to create a story, which includes a beginning, middle and an end. The students compose a rough draft. They make the necessary corrections after referring to their dictionaries to produce a final copy. The children are instructed according to their own learning ability.

### **Mathematics**

When students enter Rooms One, they may have math skills, or they may not have had prior mathematical instruction. Children develop an understanding of math concepts by utilizing math manipulatives. They receive instruction individually and in large and small groups. Children are taught strategies for learning how to use mental math through oral instruction, math games and computer programs.

The EnVision Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in Rooms One. EnVision math uses problem based interactive and visual learning to deepen conceptual learning. It provides data-driven differentiated instruction to ensure success for every student.

### **Science**

Students learn the steps of the Scientific Method and practice the steps within the curriculum. They develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. Children learn the characteristics of environments by studying land formations, weather and living organisms of various environments. They learn to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study. In addition, Rooms One students learn about desert habitats, rainforest habitats, fresh water habitats, salt-water habitats, and the human skeletal system.

## **Social Studies**

Students are introduced to community helpers, transportation, map skills, and famous Americans. All Mirman School children are introduced to the continent of South America through interdisciplinary activities during the 2011-2012 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students recognize colors, shapes and body parts; recognize the Spanish alphabet and numbers 1-50. They utilize appropriate greetings with friends, family and teachers. Children learn vocabulary for family and pets. They learn classroom phrases and directions, days of the week and weather expressions. The program hosts an interactive learning environment that teaches young children Spanish through play time activities, such as singing, stories, art, games and puppets.

## **Art**

Students become aesthetically aware. They interpret images and are introduced to colors, shapes, patterns, textures, and an appreciation of beauty and art. At this level children manage tools, compare and contrast artists and their styles and experience self-expression.

## **Music**

Children experience the basic elements of music through speaking, singing, moving, playing games, and exploring the Orff instruments. Experience in rhythm, melody and harmony are carefully sequenced to provide step-by-step development in both skill and understanding. This exciting experience includes expressing beat in various tempos using body percussion (patting, clapping, stamping, etc.) and reading and writing rhythmic and melodic notation. The children learn to match pitch and sing in tune within a group. Students engage in solfege singing exercises using the Kodaly approach. They are introduced to basic locomotor and non-locomotor movement, simple circle dances, line dances, folk dance steps, and vocabulary. Rooms One students participate in the December Winter Concert.

## **Computer/Technology**

The following skills are introduced in Rooms One through a weekly computer class and technology integration of the core academic subjects as part of the school's 1-to-1 Laptop initiative. A Rooms One student is introduced to basic computer/technology use. Children practice responsible, social and ethical use of technology, as well as basic operation and navigation skills. They follow rules and procedures for technology use and work cooperatively and collaboratively with others when using technology. Students communicate about technology using developmentally appropriate and accurate terminology. A Rooms One student is introduced to file and resource management as well as printing.

Word processing is introduced at this level. A Rooms One student is also introduced to graphics and publishing. Children apply good design principles. Graphics and publishing skills include the use of copy, paste and print tools in graphic programs. A Rooms One student is introduced to graphing.

They are able to explain what the data represents in an existing spreadsheet and collect data for a new spreadsheet. A Rooms One student is also introduced to the Internet. They use teacher-selected websites, launch a browser, use the tool bar, and bookmark websites that they will be revisiting. Children navigate by clicking on links on web pages and return to the site by using back button or bookmark/favorite. In addition, children learn the basics of keyboarding and how to discuss and manipulate computer programming code.

### **Physical Education**

Rooms One activities include fleeing, dodging and tagging games, ball-handling skills, soccer skills, relay races, base running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field activities, basketball skills, T-ball, jump rope skills, fitness stations and circuit training, scooters, parachute play, cooperative activities, and problem solving activities.

Students begin learning how to incorporate physical activity into their lifestyle. They demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. Children apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of movement patterns and skills. They begin learning how to achieve a healthy level of physical fitness, to behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings and to understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings. Problem solving skills are introduced in Rooms One.

### **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students develop positive self-esteem. They learn to be positive and respectful by showing kindness and consideration towards others.

### **Global Awareness Strand**

Building global awareness is an important part of honing well-rounded students. Rooms One, with the rest of the Mirman community, participate in activities that teach them different facts about other people all over the world. Students share their own cultural customs and traditions. They learn not to judge people by outward appearance. Children learn that there are no limits based on their gender.

### **Library**

Students in Rooms One are introduced to the idea that books in the library are ordered in a certain way. They learn how to keep books in the correct order and can select books of interest and appropriate level. Children can listen and express the point of a story. They can identify cover, title, author, spine, illustrator, and title page. Students begin to build basic information literacy skills by identifying the difference between fiction and nonfiction, making connection to the world around them with the literature read through conversation and understanding how to find basic information within books with the use of a table of content and index.

## **Rooms Two**

Academically, Rooms Two students begin to have homework and keep a homework log. They continue to develop responsibility, independence and confidence. They learn about, and put into practice, values such as cooperation, courage, courtesy, fairness, generosity, honesty, perseverance, respect, and tolerance.

### **Reading and Literature**

Rooms Two students continue to develop oral and silent reading skills. Emphasis is placed on phonetic understanding, which is tied to the spelling curriculum. Children learn comprehension strategies, including how to read for meaning and answer questions using higher-level thinking skills from Bloom's Taxonomy. Reading skills addressed include sequencing, cause and effect, classifying, finding the main idea and supporting details, inference, and figurative language. Children learn story structure and elements of different kinds of literature. Students learn and practice dictionary skills. They learn to write in greater depth about stories and books.

### **Language Arts/Writing**

Rooms Two students develop an understanding of grammar and correct usage. They learn specific rules for forming plurals and possessives, how to punctuate dialogue, how to distinguish between homophones, such as too, to and two and there, their and they're. They learn the **basic** parts of speech. With an emphasis on learning to refine drafts, children learn to write more detailed stories, expository essays, poetry, and letters.

### **Spelling**

Students in Rooms Two learn spelling rules. More importantly, they learn to apply the rules to their daily writing. They learn to use the dictionary as a spelling tool.

### **Math**

Students in Rooms Two learn about the principles of commutativity and associativity. They explore number patterns to 1,000,000, including using a hundred chart to discern patterns and determine ten less, ten more and multiples of ten and other numbers. The children also learn to add and subtract on the hundred chart using the patterns they found. Children learn to collect, organize, compare, and interpret data, creating different types of graphs, tables and charts. They learn about probability and how to predict outcomes. Students work with place value into the millions or higher. They learn to regroup in addition and subtraction to three or four digits or higher, depending upon the child's abilities. In geometry, students review two-dimensional objects and are introduced to three-dimensional objects. They learn to calculate perimeter and area of quadrilaterals. Children study the concepts of symmetry and congruence. As a preparation for algebra, students solve simple equations. They are taught and apply critical thinking techniques to solve problems in logic. They study measurement, learning to estimate and check measurements of distance, weight and liquid. Children continue to learn to read an analog clock and are introduced to elapsed time. They learn about money, specifically coin recognition and how to make change. Students reinforce their mastery of basic addition and subtraction facts to twenty, plus multiplication and division facts through twelve. They learn to multiply at least 2-digits by one digit with regrouping, and to divide at

least 2-digit dividends by 1-digit divisors with and without remainders. Students learn basic fraction concepts, including parts of a whole, fractions of a set, equivalency, and comparison of fractions and mixed numbers. They learn how to change a mixed number to an improper fraction and vice versa. Emphasis is placed on the relationship of fractions to division.

The EnVision Math Series was adopted in June of 2010. EnVision math uses problem-based interactive and visual learning to deepen conceptual learning. It provides data-driven differentiated instruction to ensure success for every student. Games, songs and other activities reinforce lessons. Students access math software and safe math sites on their laptops, integrating technology.

## **Science**

Students learn the steps of the Scientific Method and practice the steps within the curriculum. They develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms and learn the characteristics of environments by studying land formations, weather and living organisms of various environments. Children learn to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study.

## **Social Studies**

Students develop map and globe skills. They compare the use of both and explore different kinds of maps. Students learn to read maps using a compass rose and legend, and they create their own maps by hand and on their laptops. They learn about United States regions and how a region affects the culture of the area. They study biographies of famous people and timelines of history. Rooms Two has a unit on Consumer Education, emphasizing advertising techniques and how not to be fooled by commercials. The unit culminates with each child making a video commercial advertising a book they love. All Mirman School children take part in a school-wide, interdisciplinary course of study of one continent per year. South America is the continent of focus for 2011-2012. Teachers coordinate with specialists to create a cohesive and exciting study.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions, point to objects and use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. They integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. Students are able to recognize colors and to correctly apply the target words to other class activities. They listen to culturally authentic songs and stories that depict cultural practices and products. Children recognize the months of the year and weather expressions. They recognize the vocabulary of professions as well as classroom and backpack vocabulary. Rooms Two students apply these words to other class activities. The program hosts an interactive learning environment that teaches young children Spanish through play time activities, such as singing, stories, art, games, and puppets.

## **Art**

Students are introduced to the basic concepts and vocabulary of art, and they build foundation skills. They continue to develop the skills necessary for cutting, gluing, folding, and the correct placement of objects. They further explore the use of texture in artwork, including combining art media. Children continue to develop printing skills and further develop basic drawing skills in order to be

able to produce landscapes, portraits, still lifes, and non-objective art, and to be able to categorize these art forms correctly. At this level students understand and are able to use hot and cool colors and are able to make imaginative use of color in a composition. They learn the concept of tint and are able to produce tints in paint and chalk. Students learn the double-loading technique of blending colors in paint and employ the concepts of positive and negative space and contrast. They develop the ability to work in three-dimensions in various media, including clay and paper. In addition, children learn to use overlapping in composition to achieve the illusion of three-dimensional space. They learn to further understand and employ the concept of symmetry and learn mix media in artistic composition.

## **Music**

Children continue to solidify their sense of beat and pitch and are ready for more sophisticated Orff orchestration. Rhymes, poetry and folk songs provide text for musical improvisation. During the year the students begin to sing simple canons. More advanced combinations of rhythmic and melodic patterns are introduced. Continued progress in the area of 'keeping the beat' to music is used in circle games stressing hand-eye coordination, both with and without instruments, while singing songs. Examples of classical as well as more contemporary music are used in class to enhance the students' understanding of composers and concepts. The students review locomotor and non-locomotor movement and continue to explore opportunities for creative and expressive movement. Rooms Two students participate in the December Winter Concert.

## **Computer/Technology**

The following skills are introduced in Rooms Two through a weekly computer class and technology integration of the core academic subjects as part of the school's 1-to-1 Laptop initiative. Rooms Two students refine skills established in Rooms One. File and resource management skills allow students at this level to describe hardware and software problems, as well as explain why computers, networks and information need to be protected from harm. Practices that will help keep students safe online are also introduced to Rooms Two students.

Keyboarding at this level includes the use of proper posture, ergonomics and proper key/finger association. Word processing skills include the use of the word processor from first to final draft. Spreadsheet skills incorporate the ability to add data to an existing spreadsheet, format text and create graphs. Databases are introduced. Various presentation tools are used in Rooms Two. The presentation tools include text, audio and graphics. At this level programming skills allow students to write simple programming code for animations. Rooms Two students are also introduced to search engines. Students in Rooms Two identify and describe the effect technological changes have had on society. They are introduced to blogging through a class wiki.

## **Physical Education**

Rooms Two activities include fleeing, dodging and tagging games, ball-handling skills, soccer skills, relay races, base-running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field, basketball skills, jump rope, fitness stations and circuit training, scooters, T-ball, parachute play, and cooperative activities.

Students continue to develop the knowledge, skill and attitude necessary to become physically educated people. They demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. Students apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of new movement patterns and skills. They achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings. Children understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings, and understand that physical activity can provide enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

### **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program, which is integrated into the curriculum wherever possible. Students in Rooms Two develop an understanding and practice of specific values: caring, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, friendship, generosity, honesty, kindness, loyalty, perseverance, respect, responsibility, and tolerance. Children are encouraged to analyze behaviors in the content of these values. They also learn about actions and consequences.

### **Global Awareness Strand**

Multiculturalism is a part of Rooms Two life. Students learn to appreciate and embrace differences in cultures. They learn about other religions, holidays, celebrations, and customs. Children understand and recognize our similarities and realize how much we are alike. They learn about famous people in history who represent other cultures and defend civil rights for all people.

### **Library**

Rooms Two students learn specific information literacy skills. They know that picture books and fiction books in the library are in alphabetical order and can find books on a certain topic with help. Children can select books of interest and at an appropriate level. They know the function of spine labels. Students strengthen their information literacy skills by engaging in conversations about the literature read, becoming familiar with research terminology, and diving further into research with the use of indexes and the table of content to locate information.

## **Rooms Three**

In Rooms Three students develop and practice skills to become independent learners. They work to extend their sense of responsibility. At this level children continue developing social and emotional skills in tandem with their academics. Multiculturalism and diversity with a strong emphasis on equality and justice are integrated into all academic areas. Students acquire an understanding of and an interest in world cultures and develop a sensitivity to and appreciation for diversity. Multicultural Day is a major event planned to integrate all aspects of the Rooms Three curriculum.

In Rooms Three students continue to build on and improve positive self-concepts. Every day is an opportunity for social and academic growth that celebrates each student's similarities as well as differences.

### **Reading and Literature**

Students increase proficiency in reading comprehension. Students' reading comprehension increases as they identify inferences, work with words and learn to follow directions. Additionally, children learn to use words in context, locate the answer, and determine the main idea and supporting facts. Students draw conclusions and are able to determine the sequence of events. They improve in their ability to work in a group and take part in presentations.

### **Language Arts/Writing**

Students develop knowledge and awareness of descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive writing. They understand cause and effect relationships, synonyms, antonyms, personification, metaphors, and similes. Students continue to improve their ability to use a thesaurus and dictionary. They expand their vocabulary and improve their editing skills, including grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and standard usage. Rooms Three students understand basic outlining, note taking and research skills. Cursive writing is introduced in Rooms Three.

### **Spelling**

Students explore language development in the writing process. They do this in cooperative learning environments, as well as individually, in order to further their spellings skills.

### **Math**

Students become more familiar with concepts of time, money, measurement, fractions, place value, and estimation. They work with 3-digit addition and subtraction, multiplication and division. Students learn the basics of algebra. They take part in a more in-depth study of geometry. At this level students learn to find perimeter, area and volume. They concentrate on problem solving skills and strategies.

The EnVision Math Series was adopted in June of 2010. EnVision math uses problem based interactive and visual learning to deepen conceptual learning. It provides data-driven differentiated instruction to ensure success for every student.

## **Science**

Students continue to employ the steps of the Scientific Method within the curriculum. They also develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. In order to identify characteristics of the environments, they study land formations, weather and the living organisms. Students learn to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study. They learn the basic physics of matter and begin to look further at how the human body functions. Children examine the basics of energy transference, germs and their effect on the human body. Finally, Rooms Three students study the circulatory system and learn the basics of protection from the sun.

## **Social Studies**

Students gain an awareness and understanding of the concepts of profit and loss, division of labor, entrepreneurship, business, and decision-making. They employ word-processing and research skills. Students study map and map making as part of their geographic studies. They learn to gather data and graph it. Rooms Three students also have a unit on Native American studies. They learn about and research individual Native American tribes. Leadership and social skills are fostered. All Mirman School children are introduced to the continent of South America through interdisciplinary activities during the 2011-2012 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions. They point to objects and use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. Students integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. They learn and understand classroom and school objects. In addition, children learn and understand food, meals and time. They learn and understand vocabulary relating to city, town, nature, and Los Angeles. The program hosts an interactive learning environment that teaches Spanish through activities such as singing, stories, art, and interactive games. Students incorporate technology in the Spanish class. They have an opportunity to apply their Spanish language skills in a multimedia production employing PowerPoint, iMovie, GarageBand, and podcasting.

## **Art**

In Rooms Three the basic concepts and vocabulary of art and foundation skills are reinforced. Students learn relief and block printing as well as the concepts of foreground, middle ground and background. They are able to employ these concepts in producing landscape compositions. Additionally, they learn the basic techniques of watercolor. Children learn to create the illusion of volume with proper shading techniques and are able to produce representations of objects from different or unusual points of view. They further develop the ability to work in three-dimensional form in various media, including clay and paper. Students are able to use color in an expressionistic manner. They learn artistic lettering and further understand and employ the concept of symmetry. Rooms Three students further explore the use of texture in artwork, including combining art media and sandpaper monoprints. They are able to produce compositions with one-point perspective.

## **Creative Dramatics**

The Creative Dramatics program was established to help students develop performance skills and provide a venue for self-expression. Through the use of improvisation and movement, they develop

skills in problem solving, characterization and story telling. They learn the importance of concentration and focusing on completing a task. Students gain the ability to create an environment and transform ordinary objects into extraordinary ones. In addition, they develop imagination and a heightened creativity. Finally, students learn how to work as a team, and in so doing, learn more about themselves.

In Rooms Three students begin to focus on making the imaginary a reality. They learn how to place themselves in an unfamiliar environment and respond to unfamiliar situations. At this level they also delve into creative problem solving, and movement is introduced. The movement exercises help them to accomplish a specific objective. Concentration skills and spontaneously reacting to stimuli are reinforced. Even the most reserved students get a chance to express themselves physically and become less inhibited. Through their creativity and imagination, students learn they have the opportunity to succeed.

### **Music**

Enjoyment, confidence and discipline are reinforced. Singing in unison, solo singing and simple harmonic parts and canons are used to enhance the Rooms Three curriculum. The Kodaly approach continues to be used to improve their abilities. Rooms Three is the center of the Lower School music program and extends the use of the basic skills and understanding to higher degrees of sophistication. Instrumentally, the students learn to play simple songs on the recorder. More advanced rhythmic and melodic patterns are introduced, using Orff and other instruments. Music of all styles and eras from North America and around the world are incorporated into the program. Students study various composers and the timbres of instruments used in their compositions. The students in Rooms Three continue to be expressive in their movements, with and without props. Students choreograph small group pieces, review dances from Rooms Two, learn more difficult steps, and remember and perform dances independent of the teacher. The Room Three students perform in the December Winter Concert.

### **Computer/Technology**

The following skills are introduced in Rooms Three through a weekly computer class and technology integration of the core academic subjects as part of the school's 1-to-1 Laptop initiative. Students in Rooms Three refine skills established in Rooms One and Two. In regards to the social and ethical use of technology and information, they demonstrate and advocate for legal and ethical behaviors among peers, family and community. Keyboarding skills include being able to key the entire alphabetic keyboard by touch using the correct fingers of the correct hand. Children "Touch-type" 15 words per minute. Word processing skills include being able to format documents.

At this level children apply knowledge of graphics and publishing when they capture images from the Internet; import and modify images; rotate, duplicate, align, and resize objects; follow copyright laws for use of images; and use text objects in draw mode. Presentation tools include the ability to determine target audience, goal and purpose of presentation; to use storyboards and mind-mapping software to brainstorm and plan presentations, and to use multimedia tools. In addition, spreadsheet skills include the ability to collect, input, analyze, organize, and display data graphically; to add and format appropriate labels and legends; to format and change axis scale, chart area, data series, or appearance of charts; and to discuss why a particular graph works best for their set of data. When on

the Internet, students use keywords searches. They continue to learn various word processing skills; to have proper keyboarding techniques reinforced; to develop spreadsheets; and to improve upon various graphic design strategies. In addition to programming, Rooms Three students are introduced to HTML scripting through creating web pages. A cyber-safety expert addresses the students on issues vital to Internet safety.

### **Physical Education**

Rooms Three activities include continued learning and practice of fleeing, dodging and tagging games, soccer skills, relay races, base-running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field, basketball skills, jump rope, fitness stations and circuit training, and scooters. Baseball, hockey skills and cooperative games are introduced.

Students continue to demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. They apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of movement patterns and skills. Children exhibit a physically active lifestyle and achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness. They behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings and understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings.

### **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students identify and embrace their personal characteristics, preferences, interests, and beliefs. In Room Three they are able to recognize commonalities and differences among themselves and consider and understand their own unique traits and interests.

### **Global Awareness Strand**

Students learn to appreciate and understand the writing, reading and communication techniques of various cultures. They integrate cooperative learning, and their studies culminate in a spring semester event, Multicultural Day.

### **Library**

Specific information literacy skills at Rooms Three level include the ability to employ the Patron Catalog, using the title, author or keyword search. They know that the call number indicates the location of the book and that the Dewey Decimal system has ten general categories by subject. Students become more familiar with the basic print and digital reference materials: encyclopedia, atlas and dictionary. They know that fiction books have various 'genres' and are able to describe the basic differences. In addition, students understand that information on various topics can be found in reference books, subject books and on the Internet. They practice using keywords, the table of contents and the index, along with approved websites, to locate relevant information for research purposes.

## **Rooms Four**

Rooms Four emphasize organizational skills, discovery, increased self-confidence, and creativity. The formula for success in Rooms Four is Responsibility + Cooperation + Respect + Perseverance + Patience = Success. These themes are integrated into all aspects of academic and social life. Responsibility is emphasized in connection to organizational skills and time management. Students learn to assemble and maintain a binder categorized by subject. They receive a weekly homework sheet with accompanying lessons in time management. Cooperation is encouraged through numerous small group activities across the curriculum. Respect is highlighted through multicultural education units in literature and social studies, as well as through attention to respectful social dynamics with peers and adults. Perseverance is encouraged throughout the year, as students are guided through a variety of long-term projects across the curriculum. Guidelines, class lessons and work time in class are part of the implementation of these projects. Some of the projects are technological and make use of students' laptops while some are hands-on projects. In this way, a balance is sought between technology and hands-on experiences for development of the whole child. The higher-level cognitive learning domains (Bloom, 1956) of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are considered across the curriculum when designing projects to further student learning. There are field trips throughout the year connected to various components of the curriculum. These field trips provide opportunities to practice the Rooms Four Formula for Success outside the school.

## **Reading and Literature**

The literature component includes the study of such genres as folktales, fantasy, historical fiction, poetry, biographies, and fiction that reflects diversity. Within these genre studies, students' reading is individualized to meet their needs. The following elements are aspects of the Rooms Four reading and literature curriculum.

Students increase oral fluency through specific lessons in expression, emphasis, characterization, articulation, and dramatic lessons. They increase silent reading fluency by practicing silent sustained reading. In these lessons, emphasis is on multiple strategies to unlock meaning and make connections between the reader and the text; recognition of literary stylistic devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, varied sentence structure, and dialog as a means of character and plot development. They are taught to recognize story archetypes. They do projects that use visual arts, as well as dramatize works of literature through such activities as storytelling, improvisational skits and character portrayals. Students engage in activities meant to increase their ability to judge and discriminate among works of literature based on an author's style, as well as plot, character, setting, and theme within a text. They practice discussion of literature utilizing literary language, demonstrate ability to write about literature utilizing the language of literary elements and learn to set reading goals.

## **Language Arts/Writing**

Students explore and practice writing on a daily basis. Writing as a means of self-expression and information sharing is used across the curriculum. Students are taught the steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing. Lessons in Writing Workshop are presented to facilitate the development of each student's voices as a writer. Additionally, strategies are provided for students to implement as they move from step to step in the

writing process. As a result, they become more fluent and self-confident. At the same time, Rooms Four students continue to recognize that writing means revising and rewriting. Each student is also taught and practices home-row typing skills in order to be able to efficiently type. As a culminating project in the spring, students create their own poetry anthology. Publishing is done in-house in the classroom and in the school literary journal.

## **Spelling**

Students in Rooms Four have a diversified spelling program. They take part in various lessons that build spelling skills while integrating vocabulary and language arts lessons. The spelling approach is curriculum based. Words from social studies, reading and language art units are incorporated into their spelling lexicon.

## **Math**

Students in Rooms Four review place value, money, addition, and subtraction. They work with units on multiplication of whole numbers, division by 1 digit divisors, fractions and mixed numbers. In addition, students cover metric and standard measurement, decimals, algebra, logic, graphing, geometry, statistics, and probability. Problem solving is integrated within all units of study. Specific strategies for solving problems such as draw a picture, make a chart, find a pattern, and working backwards are taught and applied.

The EnVision Math Series was adopted in June of 2010. EnVision math uses problem based interactive and visual learning to deepen conceptual learning. It provides data-driven differentiated instruction to ensure success for every student.

## **Science**

Students continue to employ the steps of the Scientific Method within the curriculum and to develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. Children learn the characteristics of environments characterized by dry land formations and ocean life. They learn how to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study. At this level they learn the basic physics of matter. Rooms Four students begin to look further at how the human body functions with focus on the endocrine system and the immune system. Further, they learn the basics of forensic studies.

## **Social Studies**

A cultural approach is taken to the study of California history. The units in California history include Native Americans of California, European explorers, Spanish missions and presidios. Students examine Mexican California, including ranchos and pueblos. In addition, they study the Westward Movement, the Gold Rush and statehood. Children learn about the Transcontinental Railroad and California government today. Additional units of study integrated into California history are African American studies and a unit on family heritage. As a culmination to the study of California, Rooms Four travel to Sacramento. All Mirman School children are introduced to the continent of South America through interdisciplinary activities.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions, point to objects and use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. They integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. Children learn and understand vocabulary for the family, food and restaurant, currency, Latin American countries, and sports. Students learn the verbs -to be and -to like. They incorporate technology in the Spanish class. The program hosts an interactive learning environment that teaches children Spanish through activities, such as singing, stories, art, and interactive games.

Students incorporate technology into the Spanish class. By learning about PowerPoint, iMovie, GarageBand, and podcasting, children have the opportunity to apply their Spanish language skills in a multimedia production.

## **Art**

In Rooms Four students master the basic artistic elements of line, shape, color, space, form, and texture as demonstrated by both traditional and contemporary masters. They learn to use an impressionistic style line on top of a body-mind watercolor and learn to use calligraphic line over basic watercolor wash compositions. Children are able to draw complex objects from life, to produce the illusion of two-dimensions in compositions by overlapping drawn objects, tinting, for atmospheric perspective and proper use of shading. In addition, students produce optical illusions on paper and compositions with two-point perspective. They master techniques of color blending, understand the strength of primary, secondary and intermediate colors, tints and shades, warm vs. cool colors, and their mutations or varieties. Children become familiar with art from Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Expressionist Periods. Further, they understand art in a historical context and use colors in an expressionistic manner. Rooms Four students understand and produce abstract or realistic works, which communicate different moods. They also learn techniques of Western Native American art.

## **Creative Dramatics**

In Rooms Four students work on making the imaginary a reality. Children create imaginary objects through pantomime and learn to communicate these objects to their classmates. They learn how to take these objects and use them to communicate their location. They call these “wheres,” and students demonstrate where they are. Additionally, they begin to explore characters or “whos.” Students learn to show, not to tell. Through this pantomime of imaginary characters, objects and places, children develop confidence and a strong sense of self. They have fun in the process and learn that theatre is a place where they can express themselves freely.

## **Music**

In Rooms Four emphasis shifts to incorporate more formal music training. The students begin instruction on the violin. The children also attend two Orff/Kodaly classes per week. At this age, some of the best ensemble music is possible, for the children’s skills are highly developed. The students continue expressive movement, with and without props, and dances are reviewed at higher levels of complexity. There is continued independence in in-group dancing. Performance opportunities include performing in the December Winter Concert and Spring Instrumental Music Concert.

## **Violin**

All Rooms Four students take part in an introduction to violin. They not only develop a practical and aesthetic appreciation for this versatile and expressive instrument but also gain a sense of accomplishment based on the value of persistence and organization in mastering multi-step problems. Violin fundamentals are taught to instill good habits from the very beginning. Violin basics and ensemble playing are reinforced with musical games as new material is learned. There are several opportunities to perform both on and off-campus.

## **Computer/Technology**

The following skills are introduced in Rooms Four through a weekly computer class and technology integration of the core academic subjects as part of the school's 1-to-1 Laptop initiative. When it comes to file and resource management, students organize folders for work in progress and final drafts in an organized system and share files over the network, and on their thumb drives. Rooms Four students are able to identify successful troubleshooting strategies for minor hardware and software issues/problems. Their social and ethical awareness allows them to follow proper use of copyright material, to cite resources properly and practice being good digital citizens. Rooms Four students explain terms associated with the safe, effective and efficient use of telecommunications/Internet. Children "Touch-type" 25 words per minute.

Rooms Four students continue to learn various word processing skills, develop spreadsheets and improve upon various graphic design strategies. When it comes to the Internet, students use effective search strategies for locating and retrieving electronic information, which includes Boolean logical operators and explain and correctly use terms related to networks and Internet connectivity. They also begin using various search engines and learn to evaluate the usefulness of websites when researching. Additionally, spreadsheet and database skills are introduced. In programming, students explore logical statements further by creating interactivity with their animations. A cyber-safety expert addresses the students on issues vital to Internet safety.

## **Physical Education**

Some of the continued activities in Rooms Four include fleeing, dodging and tagging games, soccer skills, relay races, base running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field, basketball skills, jump rope, fitness stations and circuit training, scooters, baseball, hockey skills, cooperative games, and football skills.

Students continue to demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. They apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of movement of new patterns and skills. Students exhibit a physically active lifestyle. They achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings.

## **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Each pillar is discussed and incorporated into all areas of the curriculum and overall environment of the classrooms. As well, students set

reasonable personal goals. They reflect on interactions with peers and build on the 1-3-10 practice, a positive technique for mastering self-control. Students practice responsibility, cooperation, respect, fairness, analysis of a problem situation, and demonstrate the willingness to persevere on long-term projects.

### **Global Awareness Strand**

Students explore diversity through literature and art. They examine the cultures of groups of people who have impacted the history of California. Students recognize and honor their own cultural heritages and those of their classmates.

### **Library**

Students in Rooms Four acquire and continue to strengthen specific information literacy skills. They use their knowledge of the Patron Catalog to access information. In addition, students are introduced to online sources and skills, including citing sources, for research assignments. They use the Patron Catalog to find books by author, subject or title, and they understand that the Dewey Decimal System pulls together material by subject in ten categories. Students using print and digital resources continue to work on their information literacy skills by using keywords to locate relevant resources, practice locating nonfiction books by call numbers, relating plots and themes of books to their own experiences, and begin to utilize databases and the Internet to locate relevant information.

## **Rooms Five**

In the transitional year from Lower School to Upper School, Rooms Five focuses on students learning and applying the invaluable skills of organization, time management and independence. It is these work habits that will prepare students for the academic rigor, social demands and a balance of the two in Upper School. To assist in this development and preparation, students are required to use agendas. They also are expected to keep accordion files of hard copy work, as well as digital files on thumb drives. While students will receive thorough guidelines and expectations for assignments, there is less teacher monitoring of student progress to ensure each child can work independently. In fact, student autonomy is a significant goal of the curriculum. Students in Rooms Five have a leadership role in the Lower School community for which they develop a great sense of pride.

### **Reading and Literature**

Rooms Five students develop a comprehensive working knowledge of literary genres and an appreciation for the reading process. Over the course of the year, students have the opportunity to read a variety of fiction genres as well as different types of nonfiction. Students learn to analyze character, recognize literary devices, understand plot development, determine genre characteristics, and identify an author's voice. Vocabulary growth and comprehension skills are integrated across the curriculum.

### **Language Arts/Writing**

A Rooms Five student practices both creative and expository writing. Children effectively apply literary devices such as simile, metaphor and personification and hone skills in character and plot development, tone, and sense of voice. Students take notes, outline and use reference tools. All students are expected to proficiently edit their own work, revise and publish work within specific deadlines. Children continue to develop their keyboarding skills using Type to Learn and are expected to word process at 45-50 words per minute by year-end. Vocabulary enrichment as well as student mastery of usage, grammar, and mechanics are all substantial parts of the writing curriculum. Students are able to appropriately apply word processing tools such as spell check and the thesaurus to strengthen writing.

### **Math**

Students master the addition of three numbers, decimals, negative numbers, estimation and rounding, subtraction across zeroes, multiplication of four digit numbers, division up to four digits, place value up to billions, fractions (including improper, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), geometry, time, money, graphing, ratios, proportions, percents, and probability. Rooms Five emphasize the real world application of these skills through creative projects, guest speakers, and empowering the students to use problem-solving strategies.

The EnVision Math Series was adopted in June of 2010. EnVision math uses problem based interactive and visual learning to deepen conceptual learning. It provides data-driven differentiated instruction to ensure success for every student.

## Science

Rooms Five students refine their practice of the Scientific Method within the curriculum. They continue to develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. Students learn kingdoms 1-3 of living organisms (bacteria, protist, fungi) and learn the plant and animal kingdoms. Children develop a basic understanding of chemistry (Periodic Table and elements, subatomic particles, acids and bases); and continue to develop a better understanding of the human body by learning about the nervous system and the reproductive system. At this level students develop an appreciation and understanding of the importance of making responsible choices about their bodies.

## Social Studies

In social studies, Rooms Five students learn about Colonial America and the establishment of our nation. Although a number of these topics are integrated across the curriculum, students are specifically taught how to actively use the content in a textbook and digital resources in research. Students pose insightful questions about events they encounter in primary and secondary sources such as historical documents, oral histories, letters, diaries, and artifacts. Additionally, students develop an understanding of mapping concepts and geography. All Mirman School children are introduced to the continent of South America through interdisciplinary activities.

## Spanish

Students respond to simple questions and point to objects. They use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. Children integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. They learn and understand vocabulary for all K-5 concepts and know all previously taught grammar concepts in addition to affirmative extension on interrogative and negative forms. Further, students learn "ser" and "estar" conjugations in the present tense. They learn to conjugate with -ar -er -ir endings in the present tense.

The program hosts an interactive learning environment that teaches Spanish through activities such as singing, stories, art, and interactive games. Students incorporate technology in the Spanish class. They have an opportunity to apply their Spanish language skills in a multimedia production employing PowerPoint, iMovie, GarageBand, and podcasting.

## Art

Students continue to enhance artistic skills and techniques previously developed. They become familiar with art from western and non-western cultures and are able to draw familiar objects from memory. Children are able to produce compositions with three-point perspective. They learn characteristics and/or techniques associated with the following art forms: prehistoric cave drawings, ancient Egyptian sculpture, Chinese brush painting, Persian miniatures, *chiaroscuro* portraits, impasto paintings, abstract Cubistic paintings, surrealist composition, realistic expressive drawings, block sculpture figures, African 3-D mask, Latin American hexa-flexagons, Metatepec ceramics, Indonesian shadow puppets, Japanese block prints, and Islamic geometric design. At this level children are able to produce artwork in these styles and become familiar with art as scientific illustration, genre painting, documentary art, folk art, and social message.

## **Creative Dramatics**

In Rooms Five the focus is on spontaneity. Through various games and exercises, students are encouraged to react spontaneously to sensory images such as sounds, words, environments, characters, and plot. They learn to take risks and trust each other to feel safe doing whatever comes into their minds. Children delve into story structure and create imaginative, vibrant team-based stories. Once they are free enough to react in this way, the skills can be applied on and off the stage. At the end of the year, students begin to work with text, and they culminate their Lower School experience with a theatrical performance.

## **Music**

All students in Rooms Five participate in the Mustang Chorus during the first semester, plus one day per week in the second semester. This chorus is designed for the beginning singer. Singing skills such as healthy tone production, accuracy of pitch and blending are introduced along with basic sight singing and theory. The children learn to perform and appreciate music in a variety of styles. Performances include participation in the December Winter Concert, Diademes luncheon, Spring Pops Concert, and Graduation.

## **Violin**

All Rooms Five students extend their violin basics and ensemble during the second semester. They perform in a spring violin concert.

## **Computer/Technology**

The following skills are introduced in Rooms Five through a weekly computer class and technology integration of the core academic subjects as part of the school's 1-to-1 Laptop initiative. Students "Touch-type" 45 - 50 words per minute by the end of the year. Rooms Five students are responsible for independently using appropriate technology tools to define problems and propose hypotheses. They make informed decisions in choosing the most appropriate technology systems, resources and services. Online help and other support tools are used by Rooms Five students to learn about features of hardware and software, as well as how to assess and resolve problems. Database ability involves knowing the uses of databases, using existing databases, and knowing the associated terminology. Rooms Five students gather data, examine patterns, and apply information for decision-making using digital tools and resources. Comparing, evaluating and selecting appropriate electronic resources to locate specific information on the Internet are skills that are also introduced.

Basic computer and technology use allows students to discuss advantages and disadvantages of using technology in daily life. Social and ethical use of digital media is applied. Students are able to discuss misuse of technology for personal and commercial reasons and explain possible consequences. Children exhibit legal and ethical behaviors when using information and technology and discuss consequences of misuse. They advocate for legal and ethical behaviors among peers, family and community regarding the use of technology and information. At this level students demonstrate knowledge of current changes in information technologies and the effect that changes have on the workplace and society. A cyber-safety expert addresses the students on issues vital to Internet safety.

## **Physical Education**

The Physical Education program combines both Rooms Five. They are sub-divided into three groups of students, rotating every two weeks to a new activity.

The units covered in Rooms Five are basketball, hockey, football, fitness conditioning and testing, diamond games, dodgeball games, track & field, volleyball, soccer, and miscellaneous games to end the year. Students are also given the opportunity to participate in after school athletics: boys' basketball and soccer and girls' basketball and volleyball.

Students continue to demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. They achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings. Children understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings.

## **Character Development**

Mirman School practices the pillars of the Character Counts program. As seniors of the Lower School, students are role models who demonstrate empathy, tolerance, accountability, and cyber-citizenship. They interact with peers in a compassionate and humane way while transitioning into adolescence. Medical professionals address the students on the science of puberty.

## **Global Awareness Strand**

Rooms Five students continue to study and appreciate varying perspectives of world cultures through interdisciplinary activities. Throughout the year, students are encouraged to consider the impact of their individual and group actions on a global scale. In 2011-2012, the curriculum will involve the study of South America.

## **Library**

Students in Rooms Five concentrate on strengthening their information literacy skills, which include accessing, evaluating and using information from both electronic and print sources. They continue to practice using database and Internet search techniques and source citations. Students become more familiar with information literacy, research terminology and tools.

## **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM GUIDE**

The Mirman School Curriculum Guide is designed as an informational resource for parents, students, prospective parents, and prospective students. The programs of study delineated in this guide present a baseline of academic opportunities, not a ceiling for possible academic achievement at any educational level. Consistent with the philosophy of Mirman School, all teachers and administrators remain committed to providing all students the academic and intellectual engagement and instruction they need, as their academic performance and/or the professional evaluation of their teachers warrant.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY**

Mirman School is divided into two educational divisions: the Lower School and the Upper School. The Lower School curriculum is comparable to grades 1 through 5; the Upper School's curriculum is comparable to four years of middle school, grades 6 through 9. US1, US2, US3, and US4 designate the levels of the student academic community in the Upper School. The US4 students are referred to as "seniors" and enjoy certain privileges as a result of their tenure and projected graduation from the school. Only US4 students can graduate and receive a diploma from Mirman School. Any student in the Upper School, however, who successfully completes the academic program of Mirman School up to and through the year in which they and their families decide that the curricular offerings at other middle or secondary schools might better meet their developmental and educational needs, may matriculate from the school. They receive a Certificate of Matriculation with the support of teachers and administrators. Matriculating students may place into other institutions in a range of grades from 7<sup>th</sup> to early college admission, depending on their developmental readiness and curricular achievement.

The demonstration of a willingness to pursue academic excellence, positive interest and involvement in the learning process and a commitment to academic integrity are important for the continuance of a student's studies. In addition to these academic expectations are the assumptions that all students demonstrate an attitude of respect and act in accordance with the rules of conduct established by each teacher in his/her classes.

The following are full-year requirements in US1 through US4. Classes in these subjects meet four times a week:

- English
- History
- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Science
- World Languages

Semester requirements (some are rotational); additional classes in these areas may be taken as electives or expanded during LEAP:

- Art

- Choral and/or Instrumental Music
- Theatre Arts

Other Requirements:

- LEAP (one day per week)
- Computer Technology (integrated throughout and as electives)
- Elective Classes (graded, yearlong, one 4-day elective or two 2-day electives)
- Human Development (US2, US3 and US4, graded, one semester)
- Advisory Groups (yearlong, 1 period per week)

The following are diploma requirements in grades US1-4:

- English – 4 years
- Social Studies – 4 years
- Mathematics – 4 years
- World Languages – 4 years
- Science – 4 years
- Visual Arts – 4 semesters
- Performance Arts – 3 to 4 semesters Theatre; 1 year Music
- Physical Education – 4 years
- Community Service – 4 years
- School Service – 4 years
- Human Development – 1 semester
- Participation in Advisory Group – 4 years

Completion of all requirements is necessary for receipt of all diplomas and final transcripts.

## Service Requirements:

- School Service

All Upper School students are expected to perform 3 hours annually in service to the school. Such service includes helpful tasks such as stuffing envelopes for the Office of Admissions, working in the Front Office, assisting at the Friday morning Global Buddies recycling program, and helping at the Annual Spring Fair, among others.

- Community Service

By encouraging a tradition of service to the community, Mirman School hopes to foster in our students a dedication to improving our surroundings. Completion of this requirement is noted on the student's transcript when applying out and is reviewed by other schools.

- First and Second Year

US1 and US2 students are expected to perform 5 hours of service in the extended community annually. Examples include participation in such organizations as One Voice, local religious institutions, Heal the Bay, the Revlon Run/Walk, or Big Sunday.

- Third and Fourth Year

US3 and US4 students are expected to perform 8 hours of service in the extended community annually.

School and Community Service totals carry over from year to year.

- Senior Service

Each year, the Upper School seniors are afforded the opportunity to work in a Lower School classroom where they serve as mentors and classroom aides. Traditionally, seniors participate in the curriculum by helping students with their class work, reading and other tasks.

Completion of all service requirements is necessary for receipt of a diploma and a final transcript.

## **Learning Enhancement and Achievement Program: LEAP**

LEAP or Learning Enhancement and Achievement Program was developed as an opportunity for Mirman School's highly gifted students to reach their unlimited academic potentials. In keeping with gifted literature, it was designed to answer the highly gifted child's need for the time to work (1) on projects of their own creation, (2) in longer periods of time, and (3) in an independent manner. LEAP is an opportunity for students to plan their own schedule one day a week. Working with teachers as mentors, they engage in individual or small group learning. Each Wednesday students explore special interests, take advantage of independent study time, perform research and improve research skills, work for extended periods of time on projects of their own choosing, or meet for individual student-teacher conferences. In addition, children can employ LEAP time to make up work or a test missed due to an absence. It can allow time for quiet reflection and thought, as well as allow for a small group to work together on a joint project. It is a defining program of the Mirman Upper School.

The program is introduced in the early weeks of the school year and students "practice" the program before it is fully implemented. Responsible use of LEAP is both an obligation and an identifying characteristic of a successful Upper School student.

## **Library**

Students throughout Upper School will continue to strengthen their foundation in information literacy and researching skills by utilizing digital and print resources in conjunction with assignments from their teachers. They will fine-tune search techniques by using databases and the Internet for researching, and will continue to practice source citation. Students will work to be more efficient researchers and information consumers/creators by fine-tuning their note-taking skills, keyword use, evaluation skills, and critical thinking skills as they bring a more critical eye to the use of resources.

## Upper School

### I. Art

#### Art I

Students improve drawing skills using right brain drawing techniques. They increase the realism of their drawings as they learn pure and modified contour drawing. At the same time, children explore their own identity during a self-portrait unit. They identify and experiment with a variety of materials, techniques, processes, and technology. At this level students know and use appropriate art vocabulary. Students study different artists and their techniques that relate to the classroom projects.

#### Art II

Students develop an appreciation for and an understanding of art as a form of communication. They are able to discern the mood communicated by artwork and are able to communicate moods through artwork. Students understand art as a reflection of society. They master the different painting techniques for different media and are able to produce artistically mature painting. At this level, children discover if they are a more logical or body-minded (non-objective) painter. During Second Year they identify and experiment with a variety of materials, techniques, processes, and technology. Students analyze and evaluate the selection and use of materials, techniques, processes, and technology. They are able to demonstrate the ability to properly mix paint; to understand the concept of color theory that colors are used to symbolize something or create a mood and to understand the five basic color schemes (triadic, complementary, split complementary, analogous, and monochromatic). Students are able to use these color schemes and identify these color schemes in artwork. Finally, they study different artists and their techniques as they relate to the classroom projects.

#### Art III

Students accurately describe and criticize sculptures. They create a sculpture using subtractive and additive techniques. Children understand that the additive method refers to building up or adding material to create a form and that the subtractive method refers to carving or taking away from the material to create a form. At this level students develop critical thinking skills in planning the design and creation of artwork. They understand the different techniques in clay, wood, paper, and soldering. In addition, they demonstrate appropriate and safe use of art materials and techniques. Students identify eye level, vanishing points, converging tones, receding surfaces, height, width, and depth in 3-point perspective. They also identify and create works with simulated and real texture. Students study different artists and their techniques that relate to the classroom projects.

#### Art IV

Students identify the media and procedures used to produce two- and three-dimensional artwork. They learn what fields of endeavor offer opportunities for artistic careers.

Children view art as a way of understanding other cultures. They understand art in a historical

context and appreciate the historical forces affecting the art of an era. At this level students develop openness towards new styles of art. They understand the sources of art criticism available and appreciate their contribution to artistic understanding and awareness. Students interpret artwork on the basis of description, analysis and personal experience. They are able to apply all four stages of art criticism - description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation - to a work of art. Students understand how social and cultural beliefs can influence responses to works of art. They understand and identify subjects, themes and symbols as they research art history and world culture. Fourth Year students use the computer to create artwork as it relates to graphic design, photography and surface design. They are able to apply elements of design to photographic images, operate a 35mm camera, develop film, and create photographic images. In addition, they construct and use a pinhole camera to create an image. They learn to use a digital camera, download images, and manipulate these images using computer programs such as PhotoShop and Photo Edges. Students learn to print images and develop them into fine art images through the use of other media. They study different artists and their techniques that relate to the classroom projects.

## II. Computer Technology

Computer skills are integrated within core subject instruction in each academic course and some electives. The school's goal is to create critical thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators who are proficient in 21<sup>st</sup> Century content and skills.

Computer Technology Skills are not broken up by level in Upper School, as students have been instructed on the basics of Mirman's software, online subscriptions and intellectual property expectations through out Lower School. Upper School students participate in a Technology and Research Bootcamp at the beginning of the school year in order to provide a refresher to the tools teachers will be asking them to use through out the school year, the acceptable use of technology on campus, as well as research resources provided by the school.

The Bootcamp will also provide incoming students with a basic understanding of how the technology tools will be used in their classrooms. All students can schedule LEAP sessions with the Instructional Technology Specialist to learn more about any particular software, resource or tool.

See **Electives** for additional computer technology options.

### **III. English**

#### **English I**

Students identify the elements of fiction and analyze examples of irony, foreshadowing, symbolism, and tone. They examine cause and effect. At this level students find quotes from texts to support statements on character, theme and symbolism. They write analytical paragraphs and essays incorporating textual support, transitional expressions, as well as creative introductions and conclusions. First Year students write persuasive essays and write poetry exploring theme and symbolism. They identify poetic techniques such as apostrophe, internal and end rhyme, assonance and consonance, simile, metaphor, and personification. In addition, students identify perspective of narrator and identify tone. They write short stories and personal narratives. In grammar, students learn to differentiate between the eight parts of speech and to identify subject and predicate. Additionally, they identify sentences by purpose and classify types of sentences. They label complements, become familiar with the rules of punctuation and parallel structure, and also develop proofreading skills.

#### **English II**

This course focuses on sharpening the skills gained in First Year. In terms of analytical writing, prewriting strategies and the elements of the paragraph are reviewed, and the five-paragraph essay is introduced. Emphasis is placed on proofreading, incorporation of quotations and blending literary analysis with textual support. Vocabulary acquisition is a major part of Second Year. New words are learned through reading comprehension as well as a number of exercises including sentence completion, synonyms and antonyms, and analogies. A writing component of a creative nature is always added to ensure the students' application of the new words. In addition, Second Year students study the narrative and lyric poem and compose their own utilizing standard poetic devices. A major focus of the year is the analysis of literature, and the class reads at least two novels, a variety of short stories, and a Shakespearean play. Standard literary terms are reviewed and more advanced ones are introduced to supply students with the essential terminology. Grammar fills out the year. Students review the eight parts of speech as well as subjects and predicates. Complements (direct object and indirect object) and phrases (adjective and adverb) are studied, and clauses are introduced, as are the simple, compound and complex sentence. Punctuation centers around the correct use of the comma, semicolon and colon. Additionally, the use of quotation marks is emphasized.

#### **English III**

An emphasis on ethics guides the study of literature in Third Year. Students find quotes to support statements on characters' motivations and societal issues. They correlate the text to society and make connections between literature and pop culture. Students write analytical paragraphs and essays. They research historical events and cite sources according to MLA standards. At this level students also engage in oral discussion and debate. Students also identify such poetic techniques as apostrophe, internal, end and slant rhyme, simile, metaphor, and personification. They also memorize and present poems. Students identify perspective, tone and theme of poems. They identify various poetic forms - the ballad, narrative poetry and the sonnet. Additionally, they write poems in various poetic forms, incorporating poetic techniques. Students write short stories. In grammar they extend their review of the basics into a study of the clause.

## English IV

The focus in Fourth Year English is developing critical thinking and writing. Accordingly, students engage in close contextual analysis to determine how literary components integrate to make a work a masterpiece. At the same time, they are asked to question why an author does what he/she does and if he/she is effective. The historical and social background of a work is examined in regard to how the work is a product of its time. Classes read at least two novels and two plays (one of which is Shakespearean), short stories and poetry. Advanced literary, poetic and rhetorical techniques (style, tone, antitheses, archetype, etc.) are introduced. Students memorize segments of works and poems for oral interpretation. Non-fiction essays are studied and used as models for students' own non-fiction pieces, such as persuasive, narrative, descriptive, process and definition paragraphs. Expository papers are expected to contain sophisticated syntax, diction and style. Research papers follow MLA guidelines for style and citation. Vocabulary acquisition involves learning new words through exercises, reading comprehension and creative writing. Grammar centers on those aspects that impact writing. In addition to reviewing the complex and compound-complex sentence, students delve into clauses, verbals, agreement, modifiers, sentence combination and parallel structure.

#### **IV. Human Development**

The Human Development curriculum has been implemented as an integral aspect of the affective curriculum of Mirman School and in compliance with the Health Framework for California Public Schools. These courses are mandatory Mirman Upper School courses and required for matriculation to public, private, and independent secondary schools. The topics addressed at each level provide an age-appropriate and designated grade level (6-9) experiences.

##### **Human Development II: The Evolving and Changing Self**

Students in Second Year Upper School consider the biological, social and emotional changes associated with adolescence. These aspects of the curriculum will parallel the diversification topics discussed in the science curriculum. Students will explore the notion of “normative” behavior and be led to observe, understand and accept individual differences among their peers, both male and female. Central to the course will be discussions and exercises that help develop appropriate strategies for resisting negative peer pressure, avoiding self-destructive behaviors, and developing coping strategies, decision making, goal setting and problem solving strategies against potential stressors; practicing assertiveness and refusal skills; taking time for exercise and relaxation. Students should learn that, despite the frequent periods of emotional challenges and turmoil, various strategies can be applied to sustain self-esteem and integrity. Some of this coursework will be taught in gender affinity groups by the School Counselor and selected faculty or administrator associates. Human Development II in a one semester course.

##### **Human Development III: Acceptance of Personal Responsibility for Lifelong Health**

Students in Third Year Upper School consider the demands of living in both familiar and unfamiliar communities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the choices that accompany them. The communities to be considered and pressures they generate range from family groupings to adolescent peer groups in middle school and secondary school environments, to encounters with potential predatory strangers. The course will promote and facilitate acceptance of personal responsibility and the human body; identify significant aspects of mental and emotional aspects of adolescent health; discuss the major chronic and communicable diseases, including STDs and HIV, and the high risk behaviors associated with contracting them; emphasize the need to safeguard their lives by respecting and obeying basic rules for traffic, vehicle, and pedestrian safety; develop an understanding of the roles alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs play in facilitating dangerous adolescent and adult behaviors; provide tools to combat child abuse and sexual exploitation. Fostering and promoting student understanding and practice of positive health practices within the school, family and community become the ultimate course goal. Human Development III is a one semester course taught by the School Counselor and selected faculty or administrator associates.

##### **Human Development IV: The Self and the Not-Self, aka: The Me and the Not-Me**

Students in Fourth Year Upper School consider the topic of identity as it is effected by “sample cultural identifiers.” Those identifiers include ability, age, ethnicity, national origin, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic class. The impact of these identifiers is addressed through a systematic exploration of the question, “Who Am I?” After learning and practicing reflective reading and viewing techniques on books and films from several genres and creating personalized projects and discussions, each student culminates the course with a statement of

personal belief and/or apologia about their life philosophy, as they come to understand it, by semester's end. These culminating activities should underscore each student's independence of mind and spirit as they enter the next educational phase of their lives. Human Development IV is a one semester course taught by the School Counselor and the Headmaster.

## V. Mathematics

The departmental structure of the Upper School allows it to further differentiate the math curriculum for our students' wide range of abilities. Students are assessed regularly to determine and/or adjust placement along our mathematics continuum. Classes are designed to broaden mathematical knowledge and skills to prepare students for higher math courses. Students master fundamental processes while challenging their own problem solving abilities. Throughout the Upper School curriculum, technology, including the graphing calculator, is used as a tool to develop concepts fully and to apply these lessons to the real world. Competitive math problems are another topic found across the curriculum. The Continental and California Math Leagues offer diverse exercises for all students.

### Math 6

This course concentrates on the computational skills involving integers, fractions and decimals. Percentage applications are stressed in relation to these skills. Algebraic expressions and equations involving one variable are solved. Geometry topics include perimeter, area, volume, and angle measure. Statistics such as mean, mode and range are discussed in terms of a given list. Real world applications are stressed throughout the different topics.

The enVision Math Series was adopted in June of 2010. EnVision math uses problem based interactive and visual learning to deepen conceptual learning. It provides data-driven differentiated instruction to ensure success for every student.

### Pre-Algebra (Prerequisite: Math 6 or teacher recommendation)

This course takes the topics covered in Math 6 and adds another level of depth and complexity to prepare students better for algebra and beyond. Evaluating expressions and solving more complex equations and inequalities are two such skills emphasized. Polynomials are simplified, added, subtracted and multiplied. Rules regarding exponents are included in the presentation of both expressions and polynomials. Linear graphing onto the coordinate plane using slope and the y intercept is introduced. Percentage applications such as tax, discount and change are emphasized. Geometry topics such as surface area, volume and parallel lines are presented with more depth.

The Pearson Prentice Hall Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in pre-algebra. It includes Math XL, which is an online instructional and interactive assessment program that enables students to fully master skills and topics at a self-paced rate. Students receive personalized feedback to supplement the instruction in the classroom and to explore new concepts.

### Algebra I (Prerequisite: Pre-algebra or teacher recommendation)

This course is designed to prepare students fully for future course work in mathematics. The skills developed here serve as a foundation. Expressions are evaluated and equations are solved. Inequalities are solved and graphed on a number line. Factoring is emphasized to later perform operations on polynomials and solve quadratic equations. Linear equations are graphed and analyzed in terms of slope and intercepts. Linear systems are solved by graphing, linear combination and substitution. Radical expressions are simplified, added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided. Radical equations are solved. Function notation is introduced including domain and range. Quadratic

functions are graphed using the vertex and intercepts which are found by factoring, completing the square or the quadratic formula. The three basic trig functions cosine, sine and tangent are defined and computed given a right triangle.

The Pearson Prentice Hall Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in Algebra I. The series blends print and digital curriculum and provides for a seamless integration of technology. Online student textbooks are provided.

### **Algebra II** (Prerequisite: Algebra I or Geometry I)

All the concepts in Algebra I are studied again with greater depth, complexity and application. Matrices are introduced as both a mode of solution and decoding device. Exponential, quadratic, higher degree, and logarithmic functions are graphed and analyzed. Conic sections are identified and graphed. Probability including combinations and permutations are calculated. Series and sequences, particularly arithmetic and geometric, are studied. Binomial expansion and Pascal's Triangle are investigated. The graphing calculator is used throughout the course as a tool to analyze problems.

The Pearson Prentice Hall Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in Algebra II. The series blends print and digital curriculum and provides for a seamless integration of technology. Online student textbooks are provided.

### **Geometry** (Prerequisite Algebra I)

This is a formal course in Euclidean geometry with a focus on proof and sequential problem solving. Definitions, postulates and theorems are used to present arguments. Several types of proofs are studied, including two-column, paragraph, coordinate, and indirect. Angles, segments, parallels, triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, inequalities, similarity, right triangles, circles, area, volume, and construction are the general topics discussed in great detail throughout the course.

The Pearson Prentice Hall Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in geometry. The series blends print and digital curriculum and provides for a seamless integration of technology. Online student textbooks are provided.

### **Pre-Calculus** (Prerequisite Algebra II and Geometry)

This course begins with an in-depth analysis of linear, quadratic, logarithmic, exponential, and higher degree functions. Conic sections are graphed and key points are computed, including shifts and rotation. The study of trigonometry is the next focus. Defining the trig functions, computing key values, radian measure, and solving equations involving trig and inverse functions set the stage for further investigations. Finding the parts of a triangle with the laws on sine and cosine is a point of emphasis. Identities are proven formally. The area of a triangle is computed using Heron's Formula or the sine formula. Polar coordinates and polar graphing including complex numbers are presented. Vectors, matrices involving networks, probability, statistics, sequences, and limits are the other topics of discussion to prepare students for calculus.

The Pearson Prentice Hall Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in pre-calculus. It includes Math XL, which is an online instructional and interactive assessment program that enables students to fully master skills and topics at a self-paced rate. Students receive personalized feedback

to supplement the instruction in the classroom and to explore new concepts.

### **Calculus** (Prerequisite: Pre-Calculus)

The organizing concepts of this course are the historical problems of finding the slope of a curve and the area under a curve. The course takes all of pre-calculus mathematics and extends it by incorporating the limit concept. Differentiation, anti-differentiation and definite integrals are studied in the context of polynomial, trigonometric, and exponential functions. Techniques of differentiation include the product, quotient and chain rules. Implicit differentiation is applied to solve related rates, extremes on an interval and optimization problems. Techniques of anti-differentiation include integration by substitution, definite integrals, integration by parts, partial fractions, and numerical integration. Techniques such as separation of variables are used to solve first order linear differential equations. The course is rich in application as real world problems are integrated into every technique and concept studied. Graphing calculators are used everyday to inspect, verify and explore.

The Pearson Prentice Hall Math Series was adopted in June of 2010 for use in calculus. It includes Math XL, which is an online instructional and interactive assessment program that enables students to fully master skills and topics at a self-paced rate. Students receive personalized feedback to supplement the instruction in the classroom and to explore new concepts.

See **Electives** for additional math options.

## **VI. Music**

### **Orff Ensemble I**

This course continues to use the practices of Orff-Schulwerk at higher levels. The First Year students meet twice a week for forty-five minutes to play music and dance. Learning through hands-on music-making and creating one's own music remain at the core of the experience while simultaneously demanding more academic understanding of both music theory and music history. Singing, ensemble playing, dancing speech, and body percussion remain an integral part of the program. This course is designed to reinforce concepts learned in Lower School while featuring improvisation as a key element in the process. Students learn about the cultures and pieces from various parts of the world such as the Caribbean, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Students also study jazz by playing pieces and learning about the historical aspects of each piece. Performance opportunities include performing at on-campus events and concerts throughout the year.

See **Electives** for additional music options.

## **VII. Physical Education**

### **Physical Education I**

In First Year Upper School, the students participate in activities that give them the opportunity for enjoyment, challenge, improvement of all athletic skills, and social interaction. They are given the opportunity to participate in several after school interscholastic sports: boys' flag football, basketball, track and field, and soccer; girls' basketball, soccer, track and field, and volleyball.

The physical education units for the year are flag football, basketball, fitness training and testing, track and field, volleyball, soccer, scooter activities, cooperative games, multicultural and modern dance, jump rope skills, and other fun and challenging games and activities.

### **Physical Education II**

In Second Year Upper School, the students continue to participate in activities that encourage the improvement and refinement of all athletic skills. There is an added focus on cooperation, teamwork, self-discipline, and self-motivation. The students are given the opportunity to participate in several after school interscholastic sports: boys' flag football, basketball, track and field, and soccer; girls' basketball, soccer, track and field, and volleyball.

The physical education units for the year are football, basketball, fitness training and testing, track and field, softball, volley tennis, team handball, cooperative games, floor hockey, lacrosse, speed-away, and other fun and challenging activities and games.

### **Physical Education III and IV**

In Third and Fourth Year Upper School, the combined classes continue to refine their skills in some team sports and begin to focus on more individual and lifetime sports. They are also given the opportunity to participate in several after school interscholastic sports: boys' flag-football and basketball; girls' basketball and volleyball.

The physical education units during these two years include fitness conditioning and training, basketball, flag football, lacrosse, floor hockey, bocce ball, fencing, hiking, tennis, golf, archery, and other fun and recreational games.

See **Electives** for additional physical education options.

## **VIII. Science**

Acquiring scientific knowledge about how the world works does not necessarily lead to an understanding of how science itself works, and neither does knowledge of philosophy and sociology alone lead to a scientific understanding of the world. The challenge is to weave these different aspects of science together so that they reinforce one another.

For students in the Upper School, an emphasis is placed on incorporating the nature of science in the research of all projects and an allowance for students to work with the appropriate tools of science to answer their questions. It is this combination of student investigation and concept development that is at the core of the Upper School science curriculum.

### **Science I (Integrated Science)**

Students study living organisms including bacteria, protists, fungi, plantae, vertebrates, and invertebrates. They explore the evolution of life on earth. Students consider ecology and food chains. The Scientific Method is employed in all experiments. Participation in the Science Fair, while not required, is encouraged. At this level students learn the forms of matter (gas, liquid, solid); heat conduction, convection and radiation; atomic structure and the Periodic Table; and electricity.

### **Science II (Astronomy and Geology)**

Students explore various units in astronomy, including stars and galaxies, the solar system, earth and its moons. They explore various units in geology, including earth's interior, movement of the crust, earthquakes, volcanoes, and plate tectonics. Students participate in the annual Science Fair, including reports and presentations.

### **Science III (Cellular Biology)**

Students explore various units of life science, including the origin of life, the characteristics of life, the needs of living things, cell theory, human biology genetics, and evolution. They participate in the annual Science Fair, including reports and presentations.

### **Science IV (Physical Science)**

Students experience the richness and excitement of knowing about and understanding the natural world. They use appropriate scientific processes and principles in making personal decisions. Students engage intelligently in public discourse and debate matters of scientific and technological concern. They explore various units in motion, forces and energy. At this level children delve into machines, energy and power. They also explore various units in sound and light, including characteristics of waves, sound and light. In addition, students investigate matter and reactions, including an introduction to matter, elements, the Periodic Table, and chemical reactions. Participation in the Science Fair, while not required, is encouraged.

See **Electives** for additional science options.

## **IX. Social Studies**

### **Social Studies I (Anthropology/Archaeology)**

The first year social studies curriculum uses the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology to introduce and reinforce selected academic skills and study habits. One of the main academic threads of the first year is the analysis of a Neolithic burial site. Using questions generated by the students on the first day of class, the students formulate and test hypothesis about the burial, reinforce writing and oral presentation skills, and use mathematics and other skills to solve problems related to the site. The other major thread of the first year class is an introduction to the field of physical anthropology. Starting with a primate study at the beginning of the year, the students are introduced to the major time periods of earth's geologic history. Towards the end of the first year course, the students begin an independent research project that continues into second year. Throughout the year the academic subjects are used to introduce and reinforce essential academic skills such as getting and staying on task, asking questions to seek guidance, working both individually and in a collaborative setting, writing, proofreading, creating and giving oral presentations, creating, testing and defending a hypothesis, building a working social studies vocabulary, and strengthening research skills.

### **Social Studies II (Anthropology/Paleontology/Ancient History)**

During the course of the second year in the Upper School, students continue with the research into their independent project, which concludes with a presentation later in the year. The students are also introduced to the concepts of relative and absolute dating, the principles of evolutionary biology and the bones of the human body. In addition, they undertake an analysis of Pliocene and Pleistocene hominids. Additionally, students are introduced to the beginnings of human stone technology and learn various techniques for making stone tools. They practice one of the techniques when they make their own stone tool. Finally, students begin a study of the origins of agriculture during the Neolithic as part of a study on the beginnings of the river civilizations. As with first year, the content is the vehicle used to teach and reinforce a variety of cognitive, practical and interpersonal skills.

### **Social Studies III (United States History I)**

Upper School United States History I covers the course of our nation's history from the Revolution through the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the first semester, major parts of the Colonial Era, especially those developments leading up to the break with Great Britain are reviewed. From there, the class investigates the causes, conduct and consequences of the Revolution, and the establishment of the United States. An overview of the early Republic with particular emphasis on the creation and structure of the Constitution of 1787 and the rise of political parties in America follow that unit. As it moves on into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the class surveys the physical, political, economic, and social changes going on in the country. Both the actions of major players and the experiences of the common people are touched upon during these surveys. In the second semester, the chronological approach is continued up through the Civil War and Reconstruction, but certain themes and major points also are reinforced along the way. Foremost among those are the role of compromise in American history, the sense of American "specialness," both the rational and irrational motives of human actions, and the importance of perspective in constructing and understanding history. In studying these various topic areas, a variety of study, writing, research, and organizational skills are

emphasized.

#### **Social Studies IV (United States History II)**

The second year of U.S. History begins with a review of the American scene in the Ante-bellum period, with emphasis on the contending political, social and economic forces at work in the country during the 1850s. From there, students survey the conduct and outcomes of the Civil War. Both the actions of the key leaders on the two sides and the lives of ordinary Americans at war are part of that survey. Then, the class looks at the Reconstruction Era, with particular attention paid to the Afro-American experience after emancipation. Highlighting the continuing trends of westward expansion, urban-industrial growth, immigration, and socio-political change from the latter decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the pre-World War I years rounds out the rest of the second semester. The rise of American power on the global stage, economic challenges, social ferment, and political changes are discussed and analyzed. As with the third year course, students use primary sources in a variety of assignments. In addition, further development of research techniques, critical reading and writing skills, and the creative expression of history learning are pursued through some of those same assignments.

## **X. Theatre Arts**

### **Theatre Arts I and II**

Theatre Arts I and II are part of the Upper School Arts Curriculum. Students study multicultural and musical theatre history, improvisation and basic acting technique. Participants continue to use and build skills in story telling and character development through scene and monologue work. The class is a fun and exciting introduction to Theatre Arts.

### **Theatre Arts III and IV**

In Theatre Arts III and IV, the focus is on performance. Students bring to life a full-length theatrical production. They use their skills in story telling, acting technique and character development to create a professional piece of theatre, incorporating lighting, sound and costuming. Through performance, students develop confidence.

## **XI. World Languages**

The Rosetta Stone computer program is employed at all levels within the Upper School World Language Department.

### **French I**

In the First Year, students learn basic communication skills. They ask and answer simple questions and discuss topics such as family, friends, food, travel, and weather. Conversation and writing are primarily in the present tense with limited introduction to past narration and the command tense. Students are also introduced to French culture: the French way of life, holidays, artists, and the French-speaking countries Luxembourg, Belgique, Suisse, La Principauté de Monaco, and La Corse.

### **French II**

In the Second Year, students continue to expand their communication skills and use more complex constructions. Narration includes past and future events and students begin reading simple French books. Aspects of French culture continue to be explored with emphasis on France and French-speaking countries such as Canada, Newfoundland, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haïti, French Guiana and Tahiti. French scientists such as Pasteur and Marie Curie are also introduced.

### **French III**

In the Third Year, students employ conversation and writing skills. Topics such as music, entertainment, sports, nature, jobs, and professions are covered. Pronominal verbs are introduced in present tense. The imperfect tense is covered and used in listening comprehension as well as in reading selections. French culture such as differences in health care, school and daily life is taught. French-speaking African countries such as Senegal, Madagascar and Congo are explored through culture and literary readings.

### **French IV**

In the Fourth Year, emphasis is on improving reading skills with a variety of literary selections: poems, short stories and plays. Perfect and conditional tenses are examined, as well as the subjunctive mood. French culture covers communities and the environment. French Indochina (Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos) is explored.

### **Latin I**

Latin I begins with an entirely oral introduction to basic vocabulary so that students are able to greet one another, count from one to ten, identify objects around the classroom, and respond to simple commands. In the third week of school, students begin Unit 1 of the *Cambridge Latin Course*, the readings from which center around a family living in ancient Pompeii. Students are expected to spend much of the class period listening to and speaking in Latin. Cultural and vocabulary topics include basic geography, family, food, ancient and modern houses, household objects, colors, and entertainment. Students are introduced to the Latin system of noun cases and learn to use the present and past tenses. Students' experience of the language is reinforced at home through the

completion of Rosetta Stone Latin, Level 1. Students also investigate aspects of Greco-Roman culture through two major research projects.

## **Latin II**

Readings in the Latin II course continue to focus around the Iulius family. Vocabulary topics include the human body, animals, military terms, telling time, giving directions, and school. Additional uses of the major noun cases are introduced, as are conjugation of present tense verbs in the active and passive voices and the comparison of adjectives and adverbs. Students are also exposed to past and future tense verbs, though these grammar points are not covered in depth until Latin III. During a two-week unit on the history of the Roman monarchy, students create a mock résumé for a historical character. Other student projects include an autobiographical composition about seasons, a poster on verb conjugation, and two semester projects on a cultural topic of the student's choice. In addition to reading Chapters 10-18 of the *Lingua Latina* textbook, students also complete Level 2 of Rosetta Stone Latin.

## **Latin III**

Latin III students continue to read about the home life of the Iulius family in Chapters 19-27 of our textbook, *Lingua Latina*. Vocabulary topics include leisure activities, house and home, and a review of geographical terms. Imperfect, perfect, and future tense verbs are reviewed and are reinforced through compositions. Students gain first-hand experience of ancient Roman handwriting through writing a letter employing the future tense. To review the imperfect and perfect tenses, students write a travel diary. During our two-week history unit, the entire class works together to create a timeline of the Roman Republic. In the last unit of the year, subjunctive verbs are introduced, and will be reviewed and expanded upon in Latin IV. Each student completes two semester projects on a cultural topic of his or her choice. In addition to readings from the textbook, students also complete Level 3 of Rosetta Stone Latin.

## **Latin IV**

In the first semester of Latin IV, students complete the readings from the *Lingua Latina* textbook. Clauses using the present and imperfect subjunctive are reviewed extensively, and the remaining verb tenses are introduced. Gerunds and gerundives, previously introduced through Rosetta Stone, are reinforced. Students read about and discuss conventions of Roman life such as the dinner party, poetry, theater, gladiatorial games, and the military. Student projects include writing an adventure story and designing a campaign poster for the "Roman Emperors' Hall of Fame" during a two-week history unit on the Roman Empire. In the second semester, students read unadapted Latin passages from a variety of authors, depending on the interests of the class. By the end of Latin IV, students should be able to express themselves in writing and in speech on a variety of topics, ancient and modern, with complete sentences of increasing grammatical accuracy. Each student completes two semester projects on a cultural topic of his or her choice, as well as a composing a short children's book on a topic from Greco-Roman mythology or history.

## **Spanish I**

The First Year course in Spanish at Mirman School is equivalent to a typical ninth-grade course of study. All four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as culture are emphasized.

Study skills specific to world language classes are stressed throughout the course. By the end of the year, students have become familiar with classroom instructions given in Spanish and can speak in the present tense. They can give appropriate greetings, make introductions, ask for directions, and form questions. They have mastery of important idiomatic expressions with *hacer*, *ir*, and *tener* and can talk about weather and time. In addition, students are expected to complete four Milestones, Level 1, in the Rosetta Stone Program. Numerous games, skits and communicative activities make this course lively, fun and meaningful.

## **Spanish II**

The Second Year of study of Spanish begins with a review of interrogatives, irregular verbs and idiomatic expressions. After an extensive cultural unit on Spanish foods, students prepare menus and recipe cards. The Second Year of study continues with an examination of commands, reflexive verbs, and comparison of two past tenses, the preterit and the imperfect. Student projects include the presentation of original television scripts, magic tricks, food demonstrations, and an autobiographical photo album. In addition, students are expected to complete four Milestones, Level 2, in the Rosetta Stone Program. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills continue to expand.

## **Spanish III**

In the Third Year of study, students are provided with opportunities, which encourage them to incorporate their knowledge of different tenses. Special emphasis is given to practice with the past tenses, the future tense, and the use of object pronouns. Highlights include the creation of a digital fashion magazine, a lively auction, and baking Spanish fortune cookies. At the end of Third Year, students have completed what is typically covered in the ninth and tenth grades of a traditional high school course and can speak and write in the present, past, perfect, future and conditional tenses. In addition, students are expected to complete four Milestones, Level 3, in the Rosetta Stone Program.

## **Spanish IV**

The Fourth Year of study of Spanish allows students to finally enjoy the fruits of their labor. Reading comprehension is emphasized and literary selections are extensive and varied. After reading a Mexican folktale, students have the opportunity to write and present their own humorous adventures about Juan Bobo. An in-depth study of the formation and uses of the subjunctive mood allows students to express their feelings on a wide variety of topics and to hypothesize. At the end of the second semester, students view popular full-length movies to strengthen their listening skills, write a movie review, and design a movie poster in Spanish. Culminating activities include a trip to a Spanish restaurant and the Senior Spanish Scrabble Tournament. In addition, students are expected to complete four Milestones, Level 4, in the Rosetta Stone Program.

See **Electives** for additional World Languages options.

## **XII. Electives**

Upper School students are offered the choice of 1 four-day or 2 two-day electives. These are yearlong, graded classes. Elective choices change as student needs and interests become apparent. Electives in 2011-2012 include the following:

### **Astronomy**

Mr. Norm Brennan

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

The goal of the astronomy elective is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about the astronomical universe through a variety of topics, research, and public outreach activities. Topics will be taken from current discoveries and articles in astronomy journals and magazines (*Sky and Telescope*, *Astronomy*, etc.). Students will research and present on a variety of topics. Outreach activities are possible through events at Griffith Park Observatory and Cal Tech University.

### **Certamen (Beginning)**

Mrs. Jacque Myers

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

US1 and US2 only

No student limit

Certamen is a fast-paced quiz bowl game about Latin grammar, Latin vocabulary, and Greco-Roman culture and history. Competitive matches are held at Junior Classical League events. This class is open to Latin students in First Year and Second Year Upper School. Enrollment in this class does not guarantee a spot on one of the competitive Certamen teams.

### **Certamen (Advanced)**

Mrs. Jacque Myers

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

US3 and US4 only

No student limit

Advanced Certamen is open to Latin students in Third Year and Fourth Year Upper School, including those who have not previously played competitive Certamen. Enrollment in this class does not guarantee a spot on one of the competitive Certamen teams.

### **Computer Programming**

Mr. Grant Olds

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

Student limit: 12

Computer Programming introduces students to the foundations of computer science. Students will become acclimated to softwares such as Scratch, Processing and Java as they learn about basic components of programming such as variables, conditional statements, control loops, classes, objects, and arrays. Students will be able to write basic programs to create art, games, interactivity,

and simple interfaces. This course will cover the basics in Computer Science assessed by the AP Computer Science exam. The AP Computer exam is not currently offered at Mirman School.

### **Concert Singers**

Mr. Paul Kay

Meets 4X per week: Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 35

Audition and one year of choir experience required

The Mirman School Concert Singers vocal ensemble is offered to all Upper School students who desire to develop their musical knowledge and vocal skills in a performance-based curriculum. Emphasis is placed on music reading skills, tone production, breathing, choral posture, diction, intonation, ear training, blending and vocal technique. Each singer develops a work ethic and an awareness of the responsibilities that promote the highest level of success for the individual student and the entire choir program; this includes practicing the exercises and pieces that are rehearsed in class every day. In addition, each student develops self-confidence demonstrated by singing alone and with others. They also develop an appreciation for varied styles of music. Occasionally, written assignments will be given to reinforce the understanding of information presented in class. Students are required to attend all concerts, which include the December Winter Concert, Grandparents' Day, Pops Concert, and Graduation. Additional performances may be scheduled during the year as determined by the director. Vocal evaluations are administered at the beginning and conclusion of each school year. All singers participate in enrichment opportunities such as state and national choral festivals. Advanced choir students also have the opportunity to audition for annual festival honor choirs nationwide. A prerequisite for this course is an audition with the director and one year of choir experience. Auditions are held each year in May for the coming year.

### **Cooking/Baking**

Ms. Arpa Ghazarian

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 8

Students learn the art of cooking, which includes acquiring the technique, process, preparation, and history of cooking. Students learn how to make quick, simple and high intensity-flavored foods. This course begins with an introduction that includes the kitchen layout, appliances, safety procedures, cleanup, cooking equipment, tools, and utensils. Students learn how to read a recipe – list of ingredients and directions. Breakfast, lunch and dinner dishes, as well as appetizers/snacks and baking/desserts are prepared. The curriculum allows students to gradually develop and improve their cooking skills and to blossom into mini iron chefs.

### **Debate**

Ms. Marjorie Zinman

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

Debate is a year-long, two-day elective introducing students to the elements of debate. Students will

learn the basics of researching, defending and rebutting arguments in the traditional debate format. All classes will prepare members to participate in the local middle school debate league, which holds competitions approximately five Saturdays during the course of the year.

### **Film (Moral and Ethical Issues)**

Mr. Peter Brady

Meets 4X per week: Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 15

Moral and Ethical Issues of Film is a four-day Upper School elective in which students investigate a variety of societal issues and human dilemmas through the medium of film. These films are drawn from an array of genres: westerns, comedies, dramas, war films, and film noir. In the first half of the class, the offerings are grouped into two broad categories: medical issues and legal/personal rights issues. Films, such as *What About Bob?* (Ego and the limits of responsibility), *Awakenings* (medical experimentation and intervention), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (family ties and euthanasia/mass murder), *Fury* and *The Bravados* (revenge vs. justice), *This Gun For Hire* (nature of criminality), *Twelve Angry Men* (reasonable doubt and fairness), and *I Am a Fugitive From the Chain Gang* (institutional injustice) will be screened, discussed and analyzed. In the second semester, the course delves into larger historically based questions of choice and action. Films such as *Hombre* (racism, survival, and individual vs. collective responsibility), *The Molly Maguires* (personal choice in the midst of industrial warfare), *Inherit the Wind* (freedom of thought vs. community standards) and *The Front* (the corrosive nature of fear in Cold War America) are in the line up of showings.

### **Flash Animation (Introduction)**

Ms. Nia Ujamaa

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

**Available to First Year students only**

Student limit: 12

Introduction to Flash Animation introduces students to Flash MX as a multimedia design environment and shows them its capabilities in creating simple animations and simulations. Students acquire the basic skills of drawing, creating animations, importing multimedia objects, creating symbols, and exporting the product to a web page or as a standalone file. They create animations using the timeline, motion and shape tweens, layers, and masks as they work with graphic and sound libraries. In addition, students add simple action scripts and command buttons to control an animation and add interactivity to it. This elective is available to First Year students only.

### **Francophonie: Language and Culture**

Mme. Judith Sacks

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

This course is designed for students interested in countries where French is used as a primary or as a secondary language. There are over fifty Francophonie countries, including Canada, Martinique, Monaco, Switzerland, Belgium, Algeria, Sénégal, Tahiti, and Viet Nam, to name a few.

Students choose a Francophone country and use various forms of media to support a presentation, including the main characteristics such as location, geography, climate, population, history, culture, and language.

### **Global Awareness Challenge**

Ms. Nia Ujamaa

Meets 2X Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 15

The goal of this class is to take local action in order to create a global impact. Challenge 20/20 is a program that pairs classes from schools in the U.S. with counterpart classes in schools in other countries. The classes communicate via a number of technology devices such as Edmodo, Elluminate or Skype. Together, the classes identify local solutions to a global problem. The teams tackle a real problem that can be implemented at the local level and in their own communities. Students pick a topic based upon the 20 global problems presented in the book *High Noon: 20 Global Problems, 20 Years to Solve Them* by former Vice President at the World Bank, Jean-Francois Rischard. It is highly recommended that students signing up for 20/20 be prepared to sign up for at least one LEAP period per as this is when the class will be able to communicate with partner classes.

### **Mandarin (Introduction)**

Ms. Yuan-Yuan

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

This class focuses on conversations at entry-level. Basic pronunciation and intonations are taught. Simple and practical expressions used in everyday life are presented, aiming at furnishing learners with basic skills to deal with issues such as clothing, food, residence, and transportation. In addition, each lesson contains an elementary introduction to aspects of Chinese culture and geography. Students are expected to learn 44 Chinese Characters.

### **Mandarin (Intermediate/Advanced)**

Ms. Yuan-Yuan

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

This class focuses on conversations at entry-level. Pronunciation and intonations are taught. Also, students expand their vocabulary and expressions. By learning rhyming dialogues, students acquire the language skills quickly and increase their fluency in everyday life conversation. They learn Chinese vocabulary that pertains to time, body parts, asking directions, seasons, restaurants, and sports. Students are expected to learn 100 Chinese characters at this level

### **Mathcounts (Beginning)**

Mr. Larry Wiener

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Teacher recommendation required

This course is designed to introduce the basic formulae and strategies for competitive math to the beginning student. Only serious problem solvers who enjoy challenges are encouraged to enroll. Students are expected to attend the Don Bosco Math Competition in November.

### **Mathcounts (Advanced)**

Mr. Larry Wiener

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

Teacher recommendation required

This is a very rigorous training class for the school's more experienced mathletes. Experience and commitment are essentials. The Mathcounts team is selected from the students in this class.

### **Mind Puzzles**

Mr. Darrel Lee

Meets 2X per week: Monday/Thursday or

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

**Students who have taken Mind Puzzles in the past may not do so again.**

Student limit: No limit

This fast-paced, two-day elective challenges students with short, interesting mind puzzles of various types. It is designed to both challenge and improve students' problem solving skills. Students sign up for one of the 2 two-day Mind Puzzles classes. Students, who took Mind Puzzles last year, may not do so again.

### **Physical Education – Sports Games**

Mr. Michael Coleman

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 25

This class is designed for students who are interested in improving the sports skills that will help them in afterschool athletic sports teams or teams outside of school.

The class will be divided into 2 semesters, focusing on specific sports. In the First Semester, the focus will be on basketball and football, followed by soccer. In the second semester, the focus will be on basketball and soccer, followed by volleyball. Students will take part in drills, lead up games and team games for each sport.

## **Political Science**

Mr. Rob Woolley

Meets 2X per weeks: Monday/Thursday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 15

The Political Science elective provides students with an understanding of today's national and state political environments. Topics include the use of social and viral marketing within the political process, effects of mainstream and online media, polling and comedy sketches on public opinion, and the creation and reapportionment of state and federal electoral districts. In addition, students consider California's ballot initiative process, the continued use and possible improvement of the Electoral College and the advantages/disadvantages of campaign finance reform. As the year progresses, students address political rhetoric and examine leadership styles exhibited by elected public officials

Possible projects for the year include the creation of an online YouTube-style political ad, the creation of campaign literature and comparative analysis of multiple media reports covering a specific issue. Additionally, students craft a political speech and take part in a debate on the Electoral College process.

## **Speech**

Ms. Marjorie Zinman

Meets 2X Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

Speech is a year-long, two-day elective introducing students to the elements of speech. Different categories of speeches will be covered, including demonstration, oratorical and persuasive. Students will learn how to deliver a speech and how to critique speeches. They will also be able to work in pairs, to write their own speeches and to practice improvisational techniques.

## **Stop Motion Animation**

Ms. Arpa Ghazarian

Meets 2X per week: Tuesday/Friday

Open to all levels

Student limit: 10

Stop-motion animation is a filmmaking technique that uses similar techniques as those used to create flipbooks. Students use iStopMotion software to create animation using different media (paper and pencil, clay, Legos, figurines, etc.). Students learn how to design models, make backgrounds and settings, develop a story board, manipulate models one frame at a time, take photos, and put the final work together using iMovie. There are several "themed" mini projects followed by a final project of choice that integrates all the techniques demonstrated in the class. Students are also exposed to the animation techniques in famous films like *King Kong* (the original), *Wallace & Gromit*, *Nightmare Before Christmas*, and *The Corpse Bride*. Students are encouraged to bring a digital camera to class.

**Yearbook**

Mrs. Wendy Samson

Meets 4X per week: Monday / Tuesday / Thursday / Friday

**Open to students in US 2, 3 and 4**

**Teacher recommendation required**

Student limit: 20

Students create the Mirman School yearbook using Adobe InDesign. The yearbook staff determines the theme for the year, establishes the ladder and creates style guides for layout, graphics and copy. Using this information, students work in pairs to develop individual spreads and learn to interface with parents, teachers, Lower School students, and administrators as they develop the page content. They are responsible for all elements on the page, including photography, layout and copy, and they must meet specific deadlines four times during the year. The Yearbook elective also provides leadership opportunities for returning students selected to fill several editorial positions. Students must be willing to commit to a four-day per week elective. They may not participate in any other electives. Editors must also commit to a weekly session during LEAP.