

Art

In the Visual Art curriculum, students study and practice visual expression consistent with current concepts and styles. Emphasis is placed on creative expression as students investigate and examine movement and theories in contemporary art.

- Sample Course Description — East

Art students engage in an exploration of the full range of art as it has been manifested in the modern (the last one hundred years) era. The specific goals set forth in the curriculum mandate an engagement with historic and contemporary two-dimensional, three-dimensional and experimental art forms and the theoretical constructs/aesthetic underpinnings of these modes of artistic production. Additionally, the overarching goal of the Governor's School program, a broad and deep integration of the modalities of exploring, knowing, and creating in contemporary culture, is a specifically stated objective and a visible motivator behind the ideals of the visual art program.

The primary focus of the 2-D work is on drawing and the textual/totemic self-portrait projects, while the studio-based 3-D projects include personal found object sculptures. Student works are exhibited in Jones Auditorium during concerts, Belk Dining Hall, and Meredith College's Frankie G. Weems Gallery. Art students also take advantage of the non-profit and commercial galleries in Raleigh, including the North Carolina Museum of Art.

- Sample Course Description — West

Throughout the summer we analyze a body of aesthetic problems within 20th- and 21st-century art. Each week our inquiries take the form of individual and group discussions and exercises, collaborations with other disciplines, and field trips to contemporary art venues, culminating in more developed work to be examined in both the gallery and other predetermined spaces.

At the Governor's School, students have the opportunity to gain a foundational understanding of the evolving definitions and roles of art and art-making in the 20th and 21st centuries. This knowledgebase provides a context for our own explorations of new artistic strategies. Through our discussions we develop a formal vocabulary, not only to help us analyze contemporary art, but also to use this language in the inception, development, analysis, and critique of our own authentic work.

The students are asked to work in a variety of media, both traditional and experimental. They are encouraged to address content that is most relevant to their contemporary experience. In the studio, we emphasize the process of our explorations in art-making. Although there is time and space for seeking an end product, the main focus of our curriculum is discovering how our art practice can serve to not only frame statements, but, more importantly, to pose questions.

Choral Music

The choral music curriculum concentrates on the music of 20th- and 21st-century composers, students learn the finer points of choral singing — blend, diction, tone quality — and vocal techniques in rehearsals and performance. The aim is to take students from music that is relatively familiar in form and content to repertoire that is quite challenging aesthetically, intellectually, and technically.

Dance

The Dance curriculum embraces and expresses 20th and 21st century theories through daily modern technique classes, a survey of recent historical pioneers, and the integration of self-expression and abstraction through improvisation, composition, and choreography.

The focus of the Dance program at the North Carolina Governor's School is the study, creation, experimentation, performance, and discussion of contemporary dance. Contemporary dance is the chosen style of movement for Governor's School West because it best embraces and expresses theories of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which is the cornerstone of study at Governor's School. We focus on contemporary ideas in modern dance and the philosophies, techniques, and technologies that shape them. The students are encouraged to observe, analyze, and challenge these concepts, both mentally and physically. We aim to enable connections between kinesthetic expression and the world at large. Considerable emphasis is placed on the students' ability to work productively in a group setting and in collaboration with other dancers and artists.

During the session, the dancers participate in a variety of classes, workshops, and fieldtrips, in addition to attending performances at the American Dance Festival.

Quotes from recent Dance students:

- "It was beyond what I could imagine. I learned so much and have been transformed into a more educated and well-rounded dancer."
- "I discovered much more about myself as a dancer and about myself. The classes and performances pushed me mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially – exactly what I expected and wanted!"
- "I feel a lot more confident in my body and abilities."

English

The English curriculum focuses on modern and postmodern fiction, poetry, and drama. The students are encouraged to read closely, imaginatively, analytically, and empathetically. Some teachers present prewriting and revising strategies to help students improve their writing.

The definition of education as being that activity in which the student and the teacher are the same person is the guiding theme for English at **Governor's School East**. In the spirit of that definition, these are the goals of the department:

- To acquaint our students with works in poetry and fiction that they will not be exposed to during their tenure at their high schools back home
- To provide a learning atmosphere that encourages critical thinking, as the students encounter these new poems, short stories and novels
- To present a diversity of authors and works, so as to afford the students a widened and deepened perspective on the themes which literature makes available
- To offer, in each of the three sections, opportunities to not only read the works but to write originally and creatively in response to them
- To promote an understanding of how the themes and situations in the poems and short stories and novels which they read have interdisciplinary connections
- To allow them the intellectual autonomy to recognize that the themes of literature are, first, the themes of life
- To emphasize the value of process over product

To address these goals, the East English department offers three courses from which students can choose: **Memoirs, Poetry, and Contemporary Short American Fiction**.

At **Governor's School West**, the English department also offers intriguing contemporary topics for students. Recent courses include the following:

- **Postmodern Literary Expressions** — Questions include: What is Postmodernism? What are its form and content? How is Postmodernism represented in American Literature? Why maintain a literary canon? Is it needed to establish a boundary between "good" and "bad" literature? Who has a viable voice in the establishment of a literary canon? Should cultural and historical trends determine placement within a canon?
- **Best American Short Stories and Essays** — In this course, we'll read short stories and essays that have been anthologized in the popular Best American series. The first goal of this course is to expose students to the contemporary authors and their works that appear in these anthologies. But we'll also spend some time discussing how these anthologies work: Who chooses the stories and essays? On what criteria are these stories judged? Where are these stories and essays published prior to being anthologized? Perhaps more importantly, we'll use our analysis of these works as a "jumping off" point for students' own creative writing.
- **Film Adaptations of Literary Texts** — This course, film adaptations of literary texts, explores the ways in which filmmakers adapt novels and short stories into the cinematic medium. We avoid discussing whether or not the course's films remain "true" to their fictional predecessors. Instead, we examine how they engage in the work of adaptation; how the formal constraints of film differ from the formal constraints of the short story and the novel; and, above all else, how filmmakers, like readers, interpret themes and characters when creating their films. Moreover, the course will include a creative project, which allows students to generate their own adaptations of other student work. Through academic and creative labor, students gain a critical awareness of the interpretive process.

French

French students improve their skills in reading, writing and conversing and examine the emerging literature, music and art of French cultures.

The goal for students of French at Governor's School is to use French to express one's self while addressing the question, "Qui suis-je?" or "Who am I?" While this question is large in scale, students will begin an endeavor, a life-long endeavor, to chip away at it through the consideration of aspects presented through topics relevant to Francophone culture.

All of the work and effort are made in French. Students must converse in French to participate and contribute in class discussions and activities. With such an interesting, creative, and stimulating curriculum, a student misses out and feels frustrated or left out when he or she lacks the skills to express him- or herself. It is a challenge to consider the idea of who one is, especially in a different language, so the students must be up to the task.

Spanish

The goal of Spanish is to expose students to contemporary thought, literature, music, art, and political trends coming from Spain and Hispanic America.

The Spanish program presents students the opportunity to improve reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities in Spanish while challenging them to think critically about contemporary issues and developments in the Spanish-speaking world. Students will be asked to examine and reflect on pressing questions from the Latino perspective in order to make personal and interdisciplinary connections and apply them in a global context.

Instrumental Music

The focus of instrumental music is the study and performance of significant 20th- and 21st-century repertoire for orchestra (West) or wind ensemble (East), small ensembles, and the creation and performance of student works.

The Instrumental Music Program at **Governor's School East** is designed to extend the boundaries of the gifted student beyond the limits of the standard high school curriculum. Thus, strong emphasis is placed in the following areas:

- Wind Ensemble
- Sectional rehearsals
- Private lessons
- Jazz Ensembles
- Chamber Music Ensembles
- Ensemble X
- Composers' Forum.

In addition, instruction in Music Theory, Composition, and Music History is made available to the interested student, all of which combine to provide a venue for the specific creative needs of both the group and the individual.

The Instrumental Music Program at **Governor's School West** focuses on the study and performance of important music of our time for full orchestra and smaller ensembles, and the creation and performance of student works. These are all chosen to "open windows onto the future," the goal of the Governor's School curriculum as a whole. Components include:

- Full orchestra rehearsals and four performances
- Presentations and group discussions on music of our time (called "Context" sessions)
- GroupComp – student group composition projects
- Wind and String Ensembles
- Faculty performances and guest recitals
- Concept performance projects
- Performance collaborations with other disciplines
- Guest soloists and composers

Mathematics

The Mathematics program strives to provide an atmosphere for students to independently contemplate and investigate problems that arise in contemporary mathematical fields. In addition, the program provides many opportunities, through student-faculty interaction, seminars and invited lecturers, for students to gain an appreciation for both mathematics and the work of mathematicians. A sample of recent topics includes, but is not limited to:

- **Group Theory** — This course is a general look at the idea of proof in mathematics in the process of which the mathematical structure known as a group will be defined. After looking at many examples of groups, we will use the definition to discover and try to prove properties and structures that are common to any group. We will move on to a more complex structure known as a ring and spend time proving some of its properties.
- **Knot Theory** — This course will introduce students to basic topological concepts via knot theory. A mathematical knot can be thought of as a piece of string knotted with the ends glued together. Primary questions include: Is a given knot the unknot (a circle)? Can a given knot with a certain number of crossings be simplified so that it has fewer crossings? Are two knots topologically the same? How many knots with a given number of crossings are there?

- **Non-Euclidean Geometry** — When is the sum of the measures of the angles of a triangle not equal to 180° ? When is a bounded line of infinite length? When is a boundless line of finite length? When is a circle a square? What is the true geometry of physical space? What is mathematical truth? These questions and many others are considered in studying the exciting development of some non-Euclidean geometries.
- **Discrete Dynamical Systems** — A survey of recursively defined processes and their applications to economics, genetics, population, and mathematical chaos. Techniques from analysis, geometry, and linear algebra will be developed and employed to study and describe important parameters and behavior of these models.
- **Number Theory** — Everyone knows that multiplying a number by 0 gives 0, but most people do not know why. In school we are told "that's the way it is." In this course, we will return to first principles, the real nuts and bolts of how numbers behave. We will also explore how number theory, a field once considered to be a purely aesthetic pursuit, came to have many applications in the modern era, from plant biology to cryptography.

Natural Science

The Natural Science curriculum investigates contemporary theories and topics of modern science by the use of interactive seminar, discussion, group and individual problem solving, and lab activities. Both Governor's School East and West create new curricular offerings each summer, including mini-courses that delve deeply into intriguing topics. Recent courses include:

- Biology — *Topics in Behavioral Invertebrate Zoology*
- Geology — *Mining, Energy, and Natural Disasters as They Relate to Geology and Everyday Life*
- Chemistry 1 — *The Chemistry of Energy*
- Chemistry 2 — *A Hands-On Laboratory Course in Organic Chemistry*
- Science Improv — *How to Create Your Own Theory*
- Special Relativity — the Lorentz transformations and the consequences of Einstein's theory
- Neuroscience — parts of the human brain and concepts of identity
- Bioethical Frontiers
- Connections — relationships between nature and the global citizen

Social Science

The Governor's School Social Science curriculum examines the major political, sociological, psychological and anthropological concepts that have influenced the 20th and 21st centuries from theoretical and applied perspectives.

Both Governor's School East and West create new programs each summer, combining several key themes that are reflected in the courses. First, we want students to see themselves simultaneously as individuals and as participants in society. Secondly, while our material is firmly rooted in history, we use history to ground discussions of contemporary social problems. Finally, we want students to

combine both classroom discussion and personal experience in meaningful, analytical ways. Social science must, after all, be "social" as well as "scientific."

Theater

The goal of the Theater program is to introduce young theatre artists to contemporary and progressive theory, literature and technique. The approach is holistic, encouraging the actor to become a well-rounded, lifelong student of the theatre. Both Governor's School East and West focus on devised theater and the principles of ensemble building and storytelling. Each program guides students to become part of the creative process (e.g., writing, designing, directing, etc.), more so than merely being interpretive artists of an external script writer.