

HOLLIS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

UPPER SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY

The Upper School at Hollis Montessori School is a three year program serving students in 7TH, 8TH and 9TH grade. Each year is divided into three terms, or trimesters. Our math and foreign language classes are the only courses separated by grade level. All other courses serve the mix of grades 7, 8 and 9. Certain standards covered in other programs in 9th grade are covered in this program in 7TH, 8TH or 9TH grade, as we present a cyclical program that presents material over the course of three years, the exception being math and foreign language.

The content and work of more traditional middle school and high school classes in History, Science and English are covered in our program, but through a different set of integrated classes.

History

Most of our History and Civics content is presented and explored in our Earth and Human Studies course. As well, certain aspects are covered in our Human Development and Micro-economy courses. Students are led to develop an understanding of the forces that have affected and today affect American society and other world societies. For grade 9 students the successful completion of these courses will earn one credit in World History. At least 5 hours per week are spent by students in the study of human history: governance, economics, technologies, movement, and culture.

At least five hours per week. A World History grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One credit.

Science

The science lessons and work in our program are primarily presented in two classes: Earth and Human Studies and Micro-economy, though human systems and similar material are also explored in our Human Development course. For grade 9 students the successful completion of these courses will earn one credit in Physical Science. At least 5 hours per week are spent by students in the study of key concepts in Earth Space Science, Life Science and Physical Science, the refinement of science skills, and the oral and written expression of their understanding of these ideas.

At least five hours per week. A Physical Science grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One credit.

English

Similarly, the various aspects of a traditional English class are found in our Upper School, though they are dispersed through a variety of courses. Weekly Writing and Reading Seminars, substantive reading and major research projects in Earth and Human Studies (and the presentation of these projects to the broad community), as well as research and proposal writing in Micro-economy (even the writing of product brochures and advertisements), all work to support the students' need to develop writing, reading, research and expressive skills. For grade 9 students the successful completion of these seminars and courses will earn one credit in English. At least 5 hours per week are spent by students in the study of literature, the refinement of writing skills, and the oral expression of their understanding of associated ideas.

At least five hours per week. An English grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One credit.

Algebra

Most of our students complete their Algebra course over their 7TH and 8TH grade years. They are given high school credit for this course. Only 9TH graders who have not completed this study would take Algebra. Our Algebra course, a math seminar curriculum, is based on the Phillips Exeter Academy's Mathematics 1 course (www.exeter.edu/documents/math1all.pdf). We augment this course with hands-on projects that require practical application of concepts.

At least five hours per week. Full Year. An Algebra grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One credit.

Geometry

Most of our 9TH grade students pursue a study of Geometry. This course is composed of four parts. The first is an in depth reading of the initial books of Euclid's Elements. Students present these central propositions to their teacher and peers. In addition, weekly seminars are held where problems from Phillips Exeter Academy's Mathematics 2 course are demonstrated and discussed (www.exeter.edu/documents/math2all.pdf). Problems and projects are taken, as well, from Michael Serra's Discovering Geometry, an Inductive Approach (Key Curriculum Press). Finally, a variety of hands-on projects (packaging design, carpentry, mapping, etc) that require practical application of concepts are completed.

At least five hours per week. Full Year. A Geometry grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One credit.

English

In addition to the English components integrated with Earth and Human Studies and the Micro-economy work, students pursue a study of English through these seminars.

Writing Seminar: Students meet in a weekly seminar to present and discuss their writing on a common theme or in a common form.

Reading Seminar: Students meet in weekly seminars to discuss the text the group is reading. Often there are associated written assignments. The work is done in mixed grade groups. Grade 9 students, as all students, are required to choose appropriately challenging texts.

At least 5 hours per week. Full Year. An English grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One Credit.

Earth and Human Studies

For this course of study in each of our three terms a central theme is chosen to explore in depth. This theme is considered through a wide variety of lenses: scientifically (biology, chemistry, physics, Earth sciences) historically, sociologically, culturally (literature, the arts, religion), morally/philosophically. For example, when our focus was "Food", lessons and work were given on food webs, human digestion, human nutrition, the enteric nervous system, biological basis of salt, sugar and fat preference, taste, food labeling, food-borne illnesses and allergies, food taboos and diets, the Neolithic Revolution, hunger/starvation/famine, the science of cooking

(with experiments, emphasis on the scientific method), food preferences in different cultures, the evolution of farming practices, the evolution of markets, factors affecting food prices, and GMO's. We held seminars on vegetarianism. Students worked at the food bank for six weeks. They ran a restaurant, developing the menu, cooking, plating and serving the food.

Other themes have included Energy, Exploration and Orientation, Governance, the Biology of the Pond, the City, the Human History of our Land (from the last ice age to the present), Matter (its nature and its manipulation and use by humans), Information Technologies, and Water. Each fall term our work in this course is centered in the adjoining public lands: the Dunklee Pond tract, and Spaulding Forest. Future themes may include Weather and Climate, Utopias, and The Cause of Wars.

For each term in this course our students research, write, illustrate and present major independent projects upon topics related to our overarching theme.

At least six hours per week. Full Year. Credit for this work is given on our 9TH grade transcripts in three broad subject areas: English, World History, and Physical Science.

Foreign Language (Spanish)

Our students work to develop fluency in Spanish, meeting four times each week for a minimum of five hours. Classes are taught entirely in Spanish. Their vocabulary and concept content is integrated with the central themes being explored in the other classes, especially in Earth and Human Studies, Micro-economy and Human Development. Students working upon non-Spanish tasks with our Spanish instructor work to converse with her in Spanish.

Full Year. A Spanish 1 (or Spanish 2, dependent upon achievement) grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One credit.

Micro-economy

In this class the students develop and run a business. Under the name *Sunny Orchard* they market products such as cider, eggs, candies, firewood, and honey. Supporting lessons are given: scientific (how do bees make honey?), historical (how long have humans been keeping bees?), economic (what factors does one need to consider when pricing a jar of honey?), practical (how to use a hammer so as to effectively build a bee hive), organizational (division of labor; step-by-step planning) and social (negotiation; how to effectively resolve conflicts with co-workers or customers). Student work includes bookkeeping, budgeting and purchasing, design, advertising, surveys, research, the writing of proposals, interviews of experts, and documentation.

In addition to running Sunny Orchard, students volunteer in various capacities: in stewardship of the school campus and orchard, the adjacent parkland, and in southern New Hampshire. A trio of students each week plans, shops for, and prepares a meal for the classroom community.

At least six hours per week. Full Year. Credit for this work is given on our 9TH grade transcripts in three broad subject areas: English, World History, and Science.

Creative Expression

In this class students pursue the skills that will enable them to express their understanding of the world. Activities such as drawing, painting, photography, fiber arts, glass blowing and drama allow students to develop their abilities to explore and share their interior lives.

At least two hours per week. A Creative Expression grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. One half credit.

Physical Expression

In this class students exercise, develop physical skills and play. Activities such as rock climbing, canoeing, tennis, running, hiking, bicycling, speedball and other group games, help develop agility and strength, as well as a sense of pleasure and confidence in the meeting of physical challenges.

At least three and a half hours per week. A Fitness/Wellness grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. With Human Development, one credit.

Human Development

Students meet once a week for lessons, group work, and seminars concerned with the changes that take place (physical, intellectual and emotional) over the course of a human lifespan. In a three-year cycle we study birth and childhood, adolescence, and adulthood/aging/death.

At least one hour per week. Full Year. A Fitness/Wellness grade is given on 9TH grade transcripts. With Physical Expression, one credit.



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9 South Merrimack Road
Hollis, New Hampshire 03049
(603) 400-1515
HollisMontessori.org