Course Descriptions
2020–2021

Arts
Career & Technical Education
English
Health & Physical Education
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
World Languages
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Academic Course Sequencing

CTE, Arts, and Physical Health Elective Courses:

No sequence required with the exception of Senior College & Career Advisory and Basic, then Advanced, Computer Applications.
ARTS COURSE OFFERINGS

**Exploratory Music (1 Credit):**
Exploratory Music is a semester long course designed to provide students with a broad overview of various topics across the music spectrum. Through the National Core Music Standards: *creating, performing, responding, and connecting*; students will explore the elements of music, identify ideas that are central to the music discipline and answer essential questions in relation to the music discipline. Students will participate in lectures, project-based learning activities, presentations and games to obtain a better understanding of the course content.

**Introduction to Theatre (1 Credit):**
“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players...” according to Shakespeare. Introduction to Theatre gives students an opportunity to explore identity, emotion, and expression in a supportive and judgement-free environment. Students will explore the history of theatre and learn about classic playwrights who influenced and impacted culture through their gifts of storytelling. Students will analyze, critique, and extract meaning from improvised and scripted scenes and theatrical performances on film, television, and other electronic media. Introduction to Theatre will take students on a journey through drama, romance, comedy, and tragedy while enhancing basic reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSE OFFERINGS

**Advanced Computer Technology (1 Credit):**
Advanced Computer Technology will challenge the student with project-based activities. In this course, the student will collaborate with classmates in projects that show their knowledge of advanced computer skills. They will also be introduced to industry leaders. All students will research, create and present professional computer-based projects.

**Basic Computer Applications (1 Credit):**
Basic Computer Applications is designed to familiarize students with computers and their applications. It will also emphasize the use of computers and comfort with technology throughout high school, college, and future careers. Students will learn fundamental concepts of computer hardware and software and become familiar with a variety of computer applications, including google applications, keyboarding, spreadsheets, databases, and multimedia presentations. Students will also complete online modules that train them in basic Internet applications, using email proficiently, and learning best practices of web-based research. Coursework also includes activities that explore social and ethical issues related to computers such as being a good digital citizen and understanding cyberbullying.

**Economics and Personal Finance (1 Credit):**
Students need a solid foundation in economics and personal finance to be productive citizens in our ever-changing global economy. This course allows students to understand the complexities of the US economy on a personal, national and international level. Students are tasked with taking on an economic mindset, considering how decisions made now can affect their financial future. The class educates students on the importance of personal financial literacy and money management skills as it pertains to their own financial and life decisions.

**Exploratory Technology (1 Credit):**
Exploratory Technology is an advanced course that builds on the student's foundational computer technology knowledge and digital literacy. This course will explore involved programming, robotics, and some audiovisual media production. This class will increase the student's technical knowledge, intellectual and problem-solving skills needed for productively working individually and within groups on technical projects.

**Introduction to Computer Science (1 Credit):**
Introduction to computer science will focus on the conceptual ideas of computing, providing the student with knowledge of why certain languages and programs are used in computer problem solving. This course will expose the student to the computational practices of algorithm development, problem-solving and programming using real-life scenarios. Students will be introduced to interface design, limits of computers, and societal and ethical issues centered on modern technology.

**Introduction to Engineering (1 Credit):**
Introduction to Engineering is a semester long exploratory elective course where students will explore the major primary branches of engineering through research, laboratory experiences, and activities. Each branch of engineering (chemical, civil, electrical, mechanical, and interdisciplinary) will be studied for 3 to 4 weeks. By the end of the course students will have been introduced to the many types of engineering.
engineering within each branch with details about what type of education and skills each job requires, what a
day in that job may look like, what type of career path can be followed in each job, and the opportunity to
interview current engineering students and engineers. Students will also review or be introduced to the math
and sciences that are involved in each profession. Throughout the course, students will assemble a portfolio
of their work in the course to demonstrate skills in each of the major branches of engineering.

Senior College & Career Advisory (0.5 Credit):
The Senior College & Career Advisory course is a quarter long course offered during the 1st quarter of their
senior year, with bi-weekly check-ins throughout the remainder of the school year. This course is designed
for the students to adequately prepare for life after high school. Students in this course will research college
and/or career options to aid in choosing their desired post-secondary path: college, workforce or the armed
forces. Students will participate in lectures, project-based learning, group activities, campus & industry visits,
guest speakers & panels.

Yearbook (0.5 Credit):
Yearbook course will challenge the student with project-based activities, that will combine their writing,
listening, interviewing, editing skills in a deadline focused format. In order to create a culminating year-end
publication for the school. In this course the student will collaborate with classmates, to learn basic
photography, page layout, and editing, using various websites, and applications that will show their
knowledge of writing and advanced computer skills.
ENGLISH COURSE OFFERINGS

Advanced Creative Writing (0.5 Credit):
Freedom of exploration and expression are the foundational principles of Advanced Creative Writing. Students will have the opportunity to explore various genres of writing through independent and collaborative work. Students will be expected to understand fundamental characteristics of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama, and lyrical writing and demonstrate this in their own writing. Students will be encouraged to draw from their personal experiences, to explore raw emotions, and to critique historical and current events through their writing. Students will explore how writers of the past and present have influenced and impacted culture and be inspired to find their voices to do the same. Students in Advanced Creative Writing will create a safe and supportive space for sharing and expression.

English 9 (1 Credit):
English 9 at Church Hill Academy introduces students to the overarching theme of building and establishing community. The ninth grade student is given opportunities to plan and present oral presentations for both independent and collaborative projects. Students are introduced to literary works that highlight the functions of community and society and are encouraged to make connections to their personal experiences. Students will begin developing research skills by gathering various sources and learning to correctly cite these sources using a standard method of documentation. An emphasis is placed on effective collaborative work to reinforce the importance of building community, establishing personal responsibility, and creating spaces for open and inclusive discussion.

English 10 (1 Credit):
English 10 at Church Hill Academy challenges students to explore and think critically about identity across eras and cultures. As students continue to build and develop community, they are exposed to literary texts that explore culture through coming of age stories and are encouraged to reflect on their own personal experiences and identity. Students begin to analyze and compare various authors’ perspectives on similar topics and make connections to historical and societal references. English 10 students will build on previous knowledge of self and peer-editing to strengthen writing skills. Students will continue to develop research and presentation skills through the use of technology and media. Students will expand their understanding of grammar and mechanics through written and oral language.

English 11 (1 Credit):
English 11 at Church Hill Academy explores classic and contemporary American Literature from the 19th century to the present. Students plan and deliver informative and persuasive oral presentations to exercise their ability to formulate an argument and support it with evidence. Students explore common themes in American literature, such as race, gender, class, and religion, and how literary texts reflect or critique American history and culture. Students draw conclusions and make inferences from literature and synthesize information with correct citations and textual support. English 11 focuses on building...
and refining student skills in critical thinking, analytical reading, and persuasive and informative essay writing.

**English 12 (1 Credit):**
English 12 at Church Hill Academy encourages students to find new and relevant meaning in classic texts of both American and British literature. Throughout the course, students will refine critical thinking, reading, and analysis skills. English 12 students will produce written and oral presentations that reflect standards for higher education and the workplace. Students will discuss and analyze contemporary issues and explore their role as community, national, and global citizens. Students will demonstrate their ability to effectively articulate their thoughts and research through written and oral delivery, while building self and social advocacy skills. All Seniors will submit a culminating research project based on a topic of interest.

**Journalism (0.5 Credit):**
Fact or opinion? Truth or propaganda? Journalism gives students the opportunity to exercise critical thinking skills to delve into author intent and differentiate between factual information and opinion. Students will explore various forms of mass media including print media, broadcast news, and online news outlets on a local, national, and international level. Students will develop an understanding of journalism's role in impacting culture and society through the lens of social responsibility.
HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSE OFFERINGS

Health (0.5 Credit):
High school is a time of many changes and important decisions. Health class is designed to help students learn about their changing bodies, help them sort out emotions and personal values, and aid them in maintaining optimum health as a lifelong process. Instruction is aimed at showing students how to take responsibility for making healthy decisions. The course is designed to center on the student and give them good information to make informed, health-enhancing decisions that can positively affect them personally, within their familial unit, and in their community.

Physical Education (0.5 Credit):
The PE curriculum at Church Hill Academy focuses on exposing students to a variety of physical activities that will remain accessible throughout their lifetimes. This class is intended to expand our students’ understanding of sport and exercise, to encourage them to see the physical, social, and emotional benefits of exercise, and increase their confidence in their ability to lead a physically healthy life. At the conclusion of this course, we hope that each student has experienced or discovered a form of exercise that they enjoy and continue to engage.
MATHEMATICS COURSE OFFERINGS

**Algebra 1 (1 Credit):**
Algebra 1 is a foundational course for higher level mathematics with a focus on solving for unknown variables. This is offered as a semester course, or separated into two parts throughout the year based on student learning needs. Within this course, students learn how to represent and analyze patterns within real-life situations. Students dive into operations on expressions and polynomials, linear equations and inequalities, functions, and statistics. Each day students are taught a new skill or concept, then given opportunities to reinforce their learning with an emphasis on peer collaboration by means of practice problems, puzzles, or supplemental activities.

**Algebra 2 (1 Credit):**
Algebra 2 is a semester-long math course where students build upon math skills developed in other courses and expand into a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and their real-world applications. These math skills are further developed through mathematical equations and the use of problem-solving. The ability to apply learned mathematical concepts to real-world situations are approached through graphing and transformations of graphs. Graphing calculators are used to help students create connections to the real-world application and aid in the development of their math skills.

**Geometry (1 Credit):**
Geometry is a course designed to increase investigative learning skills. This course can be taught in one semester, or separated into two parts throughout the entire year based on student learning needs. By discovering theorems and postulates, students gain a deeper understanding of them and are equipped to apply them to the real world. Throughout the course, students will use inductive and deductive reasoning as well as prior knowledge of algebraic skills to explore angle relationships, characteristics of geometric figures, and transformations. Emphasis is placed on methodology and proving solutions by means of two-column proofs and verbal justification. Compasses and protractors will be used as students learn how to create various geometric constructions. Each day in class, students will work together investigating concepts to develop conjectures that can be used to solve problems.

**Pre-Calculus (1 Credit):**
Pre-Calculus is a semester-long advanced math course where students build upon math skills developed in other courses and expand into more complex understanding of mathematical concepts and their real-world applications. This course is best for students seeking a challenging math course for college preparatory. Students taking this course should have mastery of both geometry and Algebra II. Students math skills are further developed through mathematical equations and the use of problem-solving. The ability to apply learned mathematical concepts to real-world situations are approached through graphing and transformations of graphs. Graphing calculators are used to help students create connections to the real-world application and aid in the development of their math skills.
SCIENCE COURSE OFFERINGS

**Biology (1 Credit):**
This class is designed to introduce students to the basic fundamentals of Biology-the study of life! In this course, students investigate biological systems at the molecular, cellular, and macrobiological level. We explore biological themes such as cellular biology, evolution, genetics, ecology and anatomy. Laboratory exercises and field trips are incorporated into the curriculum for students to gain hands on experience and scientific practice. Projects and reading supplements are also included with each unit of instruction to provide students with opportunities to draw connections between course material and current events in our society.

**Chemistry (1 Credit):**
Chemistry is a semester long science course where students investigate and develop an understanding of how matter and energy interact with one another. The understanding of how these interactions take place are explored through laboratory experiences, mathematical equations, and the use of problem-solving. Science investigation skills are further developed through the implementation of scientific methodology by building skills like observation, communication, hypothesizing, inferring, designing experiments, and analyzing data. There are also new technologies introduced to help students create connections to real-world science data collection and to aide in their science investigative skills.

**Earth Science (1 Credit):**
Earth Science is a semester-long science course where students delve into the study of the planet earth and its composition, structure, processes, and its history; the atmosphere, fresh water, and oceans; and its environment in space. The history of space exploration and the study of space will help with developing thought processes about Earth and space. Through problem solving, analytics and creative thinking an understanding of earth's systems is developed. Science investigation skills are continuously developed through the implementation of scientific methodology by building skills like observation, communication, hypothesizing, inferring, designing experiments, and analyzing data.

**Physics (1 Credit):**
Physics is a semester-long science course where students utilize their investigative reasoning and deduction skills they have curated throughout their science courses to evaluate scientific evidence. This course is best for students seeking a challenging science course for college preparatory. Students taking this course should have a mastery of Algebra II and be taking/have taken pre-calculus. The understanding of how scientific investigation can be used to understand our world is explored through laboratory experiences, mathematical equations, and the use of problem-solving. Science investigation skills are further developed through the implementation of scientific methodology by building skills like observation, communication, hypothesizing, inferring, designing experiments, and analyzing data. There are also new technologies introduced to help students create connections to real-world science data collection and to aide in their science investigative skills.
SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS

**African American History (1 Credit):**
It is impossible to understand United States history without appreciating the lives, perspectives, and contributions of Africans and their descendants in the making of America and the articulation—and commitment to realization—of our ideals. In what ways have the ideas and actions of African Americans shaped our society since its inception? How did slavery and freedom, prejudice and privilege develop together in Virginia and what would become the United States? How and where is African American history represented in Richmond and elsewhere today? Students examine such questions in an in-depth exploration of Virginia and United States history focused on African American perspectives, challenges, and accomplishments. As James Baldwin famously stated, “History is not the past. It is present. We carry our history with us. We are our history.” With Richmond as their primary case study, students explore how and why legacies of slavery, Reconstruction, and the long civil rights movement continue to present themselves in a variety of forms today. Students engage with various community leaders who, in this moment, are succeeding in their efforts to rename prominent roads, erect new monuments, and restore sacred places that honor the city’s many African American heroes. In this way, students focus on the political impact of a contested past and the relationship between American history and public memory in Richmond over the past 150 years. Various forms of historical evidence are considered, including documentary evidence, art, film, music, architecture, autobiography, archaeological data, and the Richmond landscape. Assignments reflect the experiential approach of the course. In addition to conducting oral history interviews to illuminate community members’ personal experiences during the Civil Rights Era, students design an original memorial for the city and argue before the class why the memorial is needed in the proposed location at this time.

**Law, Justice, and Social Change (1 Credit):**
Ongoing protests against police brutality, injustice, and systemic racism in Richmond and across the nation affirm Rep. John R. Lewis’s call to action: “If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it.” At certain moments in our history, everyday Americans have felt morally obligated to risk their lives and livelihoods to demand justice through law, activism, and popular protest. In this course, we seek historical context to better understand the present-day protests and reform movements that many of us now find ourselves a part of. How and why were repressive laws and systems of injustice created in our country, and why have they been so difficult to reform or erase? How have Americans demanded justice in the past, and what lessons do they have for us? Specifically, what do we “have a moral obligation to do something about” in Richmond, and how do we go about doing it? In seeking answers to these and other questions, we explore the work of thinkers and activists—past and present—who have called for, created, and chronicled societal change, that the nation might one day realize the long-stated ideal of “liberty and justice for all.”

**Virginia and US Government (1 Credit):**
All clubs, teams, schools, organizations, communities, and nations create governments in which certain members make and enforce laws to promote unity and peace within the group and to ensure the group’s perpetuation. Many would agree with the 17th-century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who wrote that life without government would be “poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Over time, how have we designed our various governments—from the local to national levels—according to our evolving values and understandings of human nature? How do we select our leaders? How and by whom are our economic
systems, laws, and public policies devised and applied in our communities and nations? In this course, we examine such big questions by exploring students’ personal connections to the ideas and people who represent various levels and systems of government that shape their civic and economic lives. Students use their own neighborhoods and communities in the greater Richmond area as the primary laboratories for understanding such large topics as citizenship, representative government, civil liberties, and changes in foreign and immigration policy. Students create life maps, in which they identify their individual interactions and places within civic and economic systems that have helped to define and shape their realities. Course assignments are read alongside the New York Times and The Free Press, to better understand the relevance of political theory and government policy to students’ everyday lives. In addition, over the course of the semester, students interview community members who represent local, state, and federal government entities. In this way, students create a collective community map of government structures and functions that depict in real terms a diverse and evolving democratic society at work.

**Virginia and United States History (1 Credit):**
Richmond’s buildings, streets, and landscapes stand collectively as a kind of living “archive” through which we can explore Virginia and United States history. Representations of American Indian life, contact-period exchange, and European exploration often remain hidden in plain sight, while we encounter daily the more visible reminders of the colonial and Revolutionary periods, slavery and the Civil War Era, and Jim Crow America. In this course, we use the built environment of Richmond’s neighborhoods and communities as an immersive textbook for exploring the evolution of Virginia and the United States from the 16th to 21st centuries. As historians, we will consider Eric Foner’s assertion that “no idea is more fundamental to Americans’ sense of themselves as individuals and as a nation than freedom.” How have various Americans sought, lost, achieved, and understood freedom in the past? What does freedom mean to us today, and how are our conceptions of freedom different from those of American men, women, and children in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries? How do past meanings of freedom inform present-day American society and our places within it? Students examine present-day debates over big ideas—including government regulation of the media, Americans’ attitudes toward equality, and public demands for healthcare—as fodder for discussion of past uses and meanings of freedom in American society. For example, do Crevecoeur’s descriptions of an American in 1782 describe an “Americanness” that we know and observe in our present-day society? Might ideals espoused during the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 resonate with American women today? Is Henry Thoreau’s denunciation of the Mexican War at all relevant to current discussions of U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan? This course is designed with several goals in mind—each intended to engage students with such big questions in meaningful ways that connect the past to the present. First, we hope that this introduction to Virginia and American History will spark a lifelong interest in the study of past life, an immensely complicated endeavor that requires focus, patience, and, above all, creativity. Second, the course readings, discussions, and activities are designed to provide you with a solid basis for understanding several major intellectual, social, and political movements in Virginia and American History from the seventeenth century to today. Third, class activities (including debates, discussions, and oral presentations) as well as assigned writing assignments are intended to hone students’ communication skills and facilitate critical, independent—free—thinking. Finally, this course is designed to equip students with certain key skills, including historical thinking and geographical analysis, so that they are able to engage in economic decision making as informed and responsible citizens. As a culminating project, students will conduct an oral-history interview, which will provide the class with a new “narrative” to be compared to those encountered in assigned course readings.

**World Geography (1 Credit):**
Geography—people’s relationship to their environments—profoundly shapes our everyday lives, from where and how we live, to the kinds of educational opportunities and occupations that are available to us. Why does the City of Richmond exist, and how did it come to be here? How is the history of tobacco cultivation, for
example, in 18th-century Virginia still influencing our present-day lives? How is the population of our neighborhoods affected by global trade and environmental changes halfway across the world? Geography allows us to examine big questions and large-scale forces at work in small places or regions, whether it is Richmond’s East End or coastal Bangladesh, to better understand the myriad connections among the world’s people, places, and environments. Though Richmond serves as our principal case study, the focus of this course is the planet and its people. With geography as our lens, we travel the earth’s regions, examining landforms and climates, economic development, migration and settlement patterns, and the cultural characteristics of the people we encounter. Along the way, we consider how people’s cuisine, music, dance, art, architecture, and language reflect their culture and their relationships to place and environment. We employ the essential tools of geography—graphs, sketches, photographs, and satellite imagery—to understand public policy and political decisions in various parts of the world that have resulted from (and often influence) geographical understandings. Over the course of the semester, students apply social science skills to conduct two substantial research projects, including a geographical map and analysis of their local Richmond-area neighborhood, as well as a geographical study of a larger region elsewhere in the world. In this way, student geographers travel the world virtually while gaining new eyes and fresh perspectives on where they live and their connections to people, places, and environments near and far.
WORLD LANGUAGE COURSE OFFERINGS

Spanish I (1 Credit):
This class is designed to introduce Spanish grammar and vocabulary in a way that students find compelling, so that they can functionally use the language in their everyday lives. As a class, we will learn to comprehend Spanish daily through listening, speaking, reading and writing in the language. Beyond learning the fundamentals of the Spanish language in the class, students will come to understand what it means to be an active global citizen as we explore the cultures of many different Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Through this class we will gain a better understanding of our own language and culture as we compare them to the Spanish language and culture abroad.

Spanish II (1 Credit):
This class builds on the foundation of Spanish I as students continue to develop their communicative and cultural competence through speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students will be introduced to more complex features of Spanish grammar and vocabulary and held to a greater level of accuracy when using basic language structures. Material is presented in a way that students can functionally use the language in their everyday lives. Students participate in individual and group activities and complete written and oral exercises to practice new vocabulary and grammar concepts. Students are encouraged to use the Spanish language in the classroom as often as possible. We will continue to investigate the cultures of many different Spanish-speaking countries around the world as we also gain a better understanding of our own. Our cultural exploration includes geography, politics, religion, culinary practices and common traditions in Spanish-speaking countries. Throughout the course, students will progress in language proficiency and cultural knowledge that may apply these skills in opportunities beyond the classroom!

Spanish III (1 Credit):
This course begins with a review of essential Spanish I and II skills. The level of instruction assumes a basic knowledge of grammar concepts and vocabulary introduced in Spanish I and II. Emphasis is continually placed on using the Spanish language through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students participate in individual and group activities and complete written and oral exercises to practice new vocabulary and grammar concepts. Students are encouraged to use the Spanish language in the classroom as often as possible. We will also explore Hispanic culture, traditions, geography, and history, and students will have the opportunity to create presentations about Spanish-speaking countries and cultures. Our cultural exploration includes maps, newspaper and magazine articles, politicians, writers, musicians, past and current events from Spain and Latin America. Throughout the course, students will progress in their ability to communicate in Spanish with ease and confidence.