



SELWYN
SCHOOL

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SELWYN
CURRICULUM
GUIDE



3 Introduction

3 Non-Discriminatory Clause

3 Selwyn Signature Programs

3 Middle School Academy

4 Outdoor Education

5 Divisions

5 Lower Elementary (K-3)

6 Upper Elementary (4-6)

6 Middle School Academy (7-8)

6 Upper School (9-12)

7 College Admission Requirements

7 Selwyn Graduation Requirements

9 Course Catalog

9 Social Studies

12 Science

15 Mathematics

17 World Languages

18 English

20 Fine Arts

22 Physical Education

22 Electives

Introduction to the Selwyn School

Curriculum Guide

Selwyn is an independent, non-sectarian, college-preparatory day school serving kindergarten through grade 12 students. A member of the National Association of Independent Schools, Selwyn provides the most thoroughly individualized, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate array of student-focused experiences in Denton County. Our students grow into independent thinkers and creative problem solvers who are highly resilient and emotionally intelligent leaders prepared for effective citizenship in a global society.

At Selwyn School, our mission is to educate students to embrace complex challenges with empathic and innovative thinking, such that they are prepared to embrace their future as global citizens.

Non-Discriminatory Clause

Selwyn School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other school-administered programs.

Selwyn Signature Programs

Middle School Academy

Extensive research indicates that children in the early stages of adolescence have an underlying need to feel a sense of connection, importance, and belonging from their peers, adults, and school. That sense of connection is a key factor in the development of their social identity, and in turn many other measurements of success. Selwyn's Middle School Academy is customized for adolescents in 7th and 8th grade, designed to support their unique needs during some of their most fragile and transformative years yet.

Through an engaging, interdisciplinary curriculum seamlessly integrated with our outdoor education program, Selwyn students have the tools and guidance to build critical-thinking skills, lifelong values of personal responsibility, mutual respect, and a healthy curiosity to understand and interact with the world around them. Ultimately, middle school students need a safe and nurturing community where they can feel comfortable developing a strong sense of themselves as individuals, which is why we intentionally keep our classrooms small. Our goal is to build genuine connections between both our students and our teachers that cultivate trust and security, allowing our children to not just get through their middle school years, but thrive.

Outdoor Education (K-12)

An outdoor education program builds community and culture, raises expectations and standards, increases connections between students, and develops positive associations around school and the outdoors.

Outdoor education consists of coordination between all teachers, across all grades and subjects, on project-based learning activities. This program complements skills and knowledge taught in the traditional classroom. In this sense, outdoor education should be understood as an extension of the classroom, allowing students to combine multiple skills, technologies, and lessons taught in the regular classroom with project learning activities. Activities are designed so that older students can help lead lessons, allowing for peer teaching and development of leadership and community.

Selwyn's Lower School students participate in a array of Outdoor Education activities and programs that expose students to the natural world, allowing them to apply what they learn in the classroom to the outdoors. They learn the basics of archery and enjoy a variety of hikes and nature walks to several local parks. Students learn their roles as members of a larger community as they take part in yearly activities such as World Water Monitoring Day and Stream Clean. Through a variety of projects, from planting, harvesting, and eating, Lower School students are introduced to gardening by working in Selwyn's Garden. Through Selwyn's Outdoor Education, Lower School students build their observational skills, confidence, teamwork, and sense of place.

As a crucial part of Selwyn's Middle School Academy, the project-based curriculum comes alive as students work on activities designed to complement and reinforce the content and skills taught in the classroom. Students work on their Archery skills, learn to fish, go on hikes and explorations, and take part in the 8th Grade Leadership camping trip. Academy students take on leadership responsibilities, leading activities for both their peers and for younger students. To taking an active role in caring for Selwyn's Garden, learning to cook, working with solar ovens, and heading up campus-wide sustainability initiatives, Selwyn's Outdoor Education program works to instill leadership, teamwork, and confidence in Academy students.

In the Upper School, Selwyn's Outdoor Education works to instill a sense of confidence, place, and excitement in students. Students learn how to kayak and stand-up paddle board, take part in hikes and outdoor lessons, and further develop their Archery skills. Upper School students take on an active role in running Selwyn's Garden by planning what to grow, caring for the plants, and managing the budget. Students lead school-wide activities such as World Water Monitoring Day and the Great American Cleanup, and work with a variety of Citizen Science programs, helping to identify and map the plant and animal species in our region.

Divisions

Lower and Upper Elementary Education: The Elementary Division (K-6)

Our kindergarten and elementary education is designed to cultivate emotional intelligence, so students can develop the personal and social competency necessary to face successes, challenges, and disappointments with courage and resiliency. Developing a respectful and responsible character is a skill every child needs in order to thrive, find fulfillment, and be an influence for good in our society. Our program works on developing six pillars of character development: trustworthiness, respect, fairness, caring, responsibility, and citizenship.

Lower Elementary

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a stand-alone classroom focusing on exploration and discovery, and is designed to facilitate a smooth transition from the Reggio Emilia preschool to a traditional classroom setting. Play and the natural environment form the foundations of learning and social awareness, along with developmentally appropriate literacy and mathematical instruction.

Grades 1 and 2

First and second grade students learn in a multiage environment in which the students are grouped into “learning pods.” This approach provides children with the opportunity to lead as well as follow. The learning pod approach allows for cognitive, social, and emotional learning. The student’s natural curiosity is nurtured and their passion to know “why” encouraged. Students learn through individualized work activities designed to address a specific skill, topic, or theme. Literacy instruction incorporates guided reading, vocabulary, spelling, sequencing, grammar, listening, reading strategies, technology, etc. Students participate in writing workshops including handwriting, journal writing, research, story writing, narrative, and non-fiction. Our math program combines hands-on learning stations and technology and a learning lab where students can work with blocks, puzzles, building, and games. Science and social studies are thematic and have a cross-curricular approach comprised of reading, math, and writing.

Grade 3

Students in the third grade are given the opportunity to assume more individual responsibility for their learning while remaining in a self-contained classroom. Third grade serves as the bridge to the departmentalized upper elementary

Upper Elementary

Grades 4-6

Upper elementary provides opportunities for students to practice the skills of self-reliance and independence in a nurturing elementary environment. The course work is divided among three core instructors teaching ELA, math, science, and social studies. Students in grade six have the opportunity to join middle school for electives and extracurricular programs in order to prepare them for middle school. All elementary students participate in drama, music, art, PE, Spanish, and library time.

Middle School Academy (7-8)

Our middle school education is designed to empower students to construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through individualized learning experiences. Students are encouraged to reflect on those experiences in a deeply caring environment where they are challenged, supported, and held accountable.

During these two years, students experience an interdisciplinary, project-based learning environment. Because middle school is a time of tremendous change physically, emotionally, and academically, we focus on the process of learning as much as the content that is learned.

Middle School students experience the following:

- Outdoor education
- Environmental science
- Humanities classes that integrate history and literature
- Creative writing and publishing
- Integrated math and science courses
- Technology as a tool and to enhance the learning experience
- Spanish language and culture
- Art, drama, and music

Middle School students are:

- Active participants in their own learning
- Critical and innovative thinkers
- Capable and motivated decision-makers
- Responsible leaders and mentors
- Compassionate and respectful members of the Selwyn community

Upper School (9-12)

Our upper school education is academically challenging and student-driven so that the unique talents and interests of the students can emerge and a path toward realizing their potential is illuminated. In these four years, students have the opportunity to expand their passions and deepen their knowledge of the subjects they have been introduced to in the earlier years. In addition to the core upper school curriculum, upper school students also have the opportunity to take highly challenging classes such as “The Science of Vector-Borne Diseases.”

A Selwyn graduate is proficient in the following skills critical to being a successful contributor in the 21st century:

- Collaboration
- Communication across disciplines and cultures
- Critical and innovative thinking
- Global citizenship
- Technological literacy
- Public speaking
- Initiative with empathy and curiosity
- Resilient and emotionally intelligent leadership

College Admissions Requirements

Selwyn ensures that our graduation requirements satisfy those of the universities and colleges to which our students apply. Faculty advisors guide the students through the college admissions process and ensure that all requirements are met and that students are able to apply to their institution of choice.

Selwyn Graduation Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 26 credits during grades 9-12 in order to meet the graduation requirements. A course taken for one semester is 0.5 credit. A course taken for one year is 1.0 credit. All students must enroll in a minimum of five courses each semester; however, most students take seven courses per semester. All students are encouraged to participate in clubs and other extracurricular activities to develop as well-rounded individuals and to strengthen college applications.

Below is a description of the credits required in each discipline, including the core courses required for college admissions and detailed course descriptions.

Social Studies	4 credits
Science	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits
World Language	3 credits
English	4 credits



Fine Arts	2 credits
Technology	0.5 credit
Health	0.5 credit
Physical Education	2 credits
Electives	2 credits

Typical Freshman Year

Human Geography
Biology
Health (Semester)/Technology (Semester)
Geometry
Spanish 1
English 1
PE or Fine Arts

Typical Sophomore Year

World History
Chemistry
Algebra II
Spanish II
English II
PE
Fine Arts

Typical Junior Year

US History
Physics
Mathematics Elective
Spanish III
English III
Electives 2-4 (Dependent on whether the elective is a 0.5 or 1 credit class)

Typical Senior Year

Government (Semester)/Economics (Semester)
Science Elective
Mathematics Elective
English IV
Electives 3-6 (Dependent on whether the elective is a 0.5 or 1 credit class)

Course Catalog

Social Studies

At the Upper School level, Selwyn's Social Studies courses prepare students to become active citizens of their community by equipping them with the skills and tools necessary to understand the world in which they live. With special focus placed on the development of empathic thinking through engagement with other cultures, critical study provides the students with historical and geographical context to current issues. Students master expressing their thoughts through writing and public speaking, and learn how to conduct effective, independent research necessary at the college level.

Social Studies Graduation Requirements: 4 credits

Required Classes: Geography (9th), World History (10th), US History (11th), Government (12th), and Economics (12th)

Human Geography (1 credit)

This course introduces students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of Earth's surface. Students employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. They also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice.

World History (1 credit)

This course highlights the changes (causes and consequences) in global frameworks through comparisons among major societies. It focuses on the understanding of world history from approximately 8000 BCE to the present. It emphasizes relevant factual knowledge and skills in analyzing types of historical evidence. Students are taught historical thinking skills such as contextualization, synthesis, and analysis. Students make connections among historical developments in different times and places encompassing the five major geographical regions of the globe: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.

U.S. History/AP U.S History (1 credit)

The U.S. History course focuses on the development of historical thinking skills (chronological reasoning, comparing and contextualizing, crafting historical arguments using historical evidence, and interpreting and synthesizing historical narratives) and the development of students' abilities to think conceptually about U.S. history from approximately 1491 to the present. Seven themes of equal importance – American and National Identity; Migration and Settlement; Politics and Power; Work, Exchange, and

Technology; America in the World; Geography and the Environment; and Culture and Society – provide areas of historical inquiry for investigation throughout the course. These require students to reason historically about continuity and change over time and to make comparisons among various historical developments in different times and places.

U.S. Government/AP US Government and Politics (0.5 credit)

This one-semester course introduces students to key ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors which characterize the political culture of the United States. The course examines politically significant concepts and themes, teaching students how to apply disciplinary reasoning, assess the causes and consequences of events, and interpret data to develop evidence-based arguments.

U.S. Economics (0.5 credit)

This one-semester course invites students to consider how the everyday choices they make to satisfy their needs and wants impact global society. Students learn about economics as a behavioral science, following coursework that focuses on basic macro and micro principles. Topics covered include the study of economic systems, supply and demand, market structures and pricing, business and labor, banking, and finance.

Social Studies Electives

The following is a list of Social Studies electives that students may take during their 4 years at Selwyn Upper School.

American Studies (0.5 credit)

This class is an interdisciplinary exploration of American civilization since the late nineteenth century. Drawing from a wealth of diverse fields, including literature, politics, history, law, visual culture, and philosophy, students will engage with the concept of “America” as a marker of national identity and global significance. The course encourages students to consider new ways of interpreting the complex web of ideas and cultures that comprise American life and to situate their own experiences within it.

European Studies (0.5 credit)

This course familiarizes students with historical and cultural arrangements that define spaces of memory, belonging, and identity as “European.” Through the lenses of history, literature, philosophy, religion, politics, and economics, we will trace the intellectual roots of “Europe” as a concept in Western civilization, emphasizing the different ways inhabitants of the region have constructed their societies. Questions examined and discussed include the following: Does Europe exist? What nation-states count as European? Where does the idea for Europe come from? What does it mean to be European?

Jurisprudence (0.5 credit)

This course introduces students to the legal theories and concepts that underpin our modern justice system. The first half of the semester is devoted to studying the derivation of law including the concepts of natural law, civil law, legal reasoning, descriptive and normative jurisprudence, and the formation of legal institutions. Using this philosophical framework as a guide, students will then explore contemporary issues related to legal studies, such as debates regarding international law, human rights, and bioethics.

World Religions (0.5 credit)

This course is an introduction to the world's major religious traditions and the ways in which religions have developed. The class draws on diverse materials from the world's religious traditions and multiple disciplinary approaches.

Introduction to Philosophy (0.5 credit)

This class provides an introduction to philosophical reflection and an examination of central questions relevant of human existence as discussed in Western philosophy. Topics include metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, and justice.

Psychology (0.5 credit)

This course examines the human mind and its functions from a scientific perspective. Starting with the history of the subject, students gain an appreciation for the depth and diversity of thought that constitute this unique discipline. Once familiar with the field's heritage and common research methods, students study a broad range of topics, such as perception, memory, intelligence, morality, personality, mental illness, religion, language, and creativity.

Social Studies Independent Study (0.5 credit)

This course is designed to provide individual students with the opportunity to delve deeply into a topic about which they are passionate. Significant responsibility lies with the student to work independently and to develop a proposal that must be approved by a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor provides counsel throughout the study and evaluates the student's incremental progress. The course culminates in a formal presentation of the student's work.

Upper School Science

At the Upper School level, Selwyn's Science courses offer students an in-depth knowledge of biology, physics, and chemistry. Students develop problem-solving and innovative thinking skills through designing and conducting experiments. They integrate math and language skills into each class while applying scientific thinking to real-world scenarios.

Science Graduation Requirements: 4 credits

Required classes: Biology (9th), Chemistry (10th), Physics (11th)

Biology (1 credit)

This course is an introduction to key concepts in biology. This project-based curriculum surveys biological terminology, historical and cultural advances in science, research, and documentation from the global scientific community using the scientific method.

Chemistry (1 credit)

This course is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the key concepts of chemistry, utilizing the scientific method of inquiry, measurement, and data-gathering techniques. Through research and lab work, students gain an understanding of the framework and composition of all they see.

Physics (1 credit)

This course investigates the principles of optics and electricity, as well as the principles of motion from a Newtonian perspective. With a project-based curriculum focused on experimentation, Physics provides students with a better understanding of the design and workings of the physical world.

Science Electives

The following is a list of Science electives that students may take during their 4 years at Selwyn Upper School.

Earth Science (0.5 credit)

This course explores the foundations of Earth Science in the following related topics: Earth's place in the universe, dynamic Earth processes, energy in the Earth system, bio-chemical cycles, structure and composition of the atmosphere, and geology. Students use both self-assessment and teacher guidance throughout this project-based course.

Astronomy (0.5 credit)

This course introduces students to the wonders of the universe. Students begin an introduction to modern astronomy with insight into history and astrophysics. Star types, planets, comets, meteors, and black holes are among the topics investigated in this course.

Environmental Science (10th-12th grade) (1 credit)

This field-oriented interdisciplinary science course emphasizes data collection techniques in outdoor lab settings. In addition to field-based and laboratory activities, this course will involve numerous group and independent ecological projects to study various environments, their inhabitants, and the processes that allow them to function. The causes and the possible solutions to the challenges that impact these environments are also investigated.

Comparative Anatomy (10th-12th grade) (0.5 credit)

Comparative Anatomy and Physiology is a course which focuses on the structure, function, and evolution of the vertebrate body plan. Students study major groups of vertebrates – fish, reptiles, birds, and tetrapods – and investigate their functional morphologies. This is a challenging course and ideal preparation for pre-veterinary, biology, and even pre-med majors.

Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II (11th-12th grade) (1 credit)

Anatomy and Physiology of Human (A&P) Systems is the study of the structure and function of the human body, its individual systems, and the integration of bodily systems into an efficiently functioning organism. Dissection is a major component of this course.

Chemical Impact on History (10th-12th grade) (0.5 credit)

This course uses the book *Napoleon's Buttons* by Jay Burreson and Penny Le Couteur as a framework for exploration. *Napoleon's Buttons* is described as “the fascinating account of seventeen groups of molecules that have greatly influenced the course of history. These molecules provided the impetus for early exploration, and made possible the voyages of discovery that ensued... A change as small as the position of an atom can lead to enormous alterations in the properties of a substance-which, in turn, can result in great historical shifts.” In addition to reading the book, students learn fundamental chemistry concepts, connect historical and scientific knowledge, and examine the effect of certain chemical compounds on the body.

Environmental Research (11th-12th grade) (0.5 credit)

Environmental Research is designed as a strong laboratory and field investigation course. The goal of this course is to learn about the environment through firsthand observation. Experiences both in the laboratory and in the field provide students with important opportunities to test concepts and principles that were introduced in previous science classes.

Cellular Biology and Genetics (11th-12th grade) (1 credit)

This course delves deeper into the inner workings of a cell. During the first semester, students study the organelles and their specific contributions to a living system. From replication to membrane proteins, students gain greater understanding of how the body responds to different external stimuli and medications. During the second semester, students study the different way that genes affect our lives and the genetic mutations that cause genetic disorders. Students discover how stressful events (illness, poor nutrition, and common stress) affect humans on a genetic level.

Neurology (11th-12th grade) (0.5 credit)

Using a neuroscientific approach, this course explores topics in biopsychology and cellular/molecular biology. Students study the nervous system, mental illness, neurodegenerative diseases, and disorders of development and childhood.

Neuropsychopharmacology (11th-12th grade) (0.5 credit)

This course is a study of the neurology, psychology, and pharmacology of common legal and illegal chemical substances. This course is designed to teach students about the physiological effects of these drugs on the human body, along with their lasting impact on the body and mind.

Science of Vector-Borne Diseases (11th-12th grade) (0.5 credit)

In this course, students study entomology (the study of insects) and their role in the transfer of pathogens from animal to animal, and the effects on communities. This includes such topics as malaria, Zika, Lyme Disease, etc. In this course, students are introduced to current research and risk analysis related to travel in today's society.

Aero-Astro (11th-12th grade) (1 credit)

This is an aeronautics class based upon MIT's AeroAstro 1600 class. Students study how rockets function, orbital mechanics, life support systems, the effects of space travel on the human body, robotics and current trends, and plans for space exploration. Students are expected to carry out orbital calculations and make predictions on flight.

Science Independent Study (0.5 credit)

This course is designed to provide individual students with the opportunity to delve deeply into a topic about which they are passionate. Significant responsibility lies with the student to work independently

and to develop a proposal that must be approved by a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor provides counsel throughout the study and evaluates the student's incremental progress. The course culminates in a formal presentation of the student's final work.

Mathematics

At the Upper School level, Selwyn's Mathematics courses prepare students for successful advancement into college level math. The classes engage the students in higher level thinking skills by using the basic concepts of algebra, calculus, and statistics in practical applications such as data gathering and data analysis. The skills learned through the math program prepare students to tackle complex challenges in a real-world setting.

Mathematics Graduation Requirements: 4 credits

Required classes: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II

Algebra I (1 credit)

Students study linear, quadratic, and exponential functions, as well as their associated equations and solutions. They begin to learn graphing techniques and sharpen their equation-solving skills, including the use of exponents and radicals. Students also learn to set up equations based on data sets and word problems.

Geometry (1 credit)

Students learn the concepts of coordinate and transformational geometry, including logical arguments, proofs, measurement, constructions, congruence, similarity, and the properties of two- and three-dimensional figures. Basic right triangle trigonometry may also be introduced.

Algebra II (1 credit)

Students build upon their knowledge of polynomial functions and systems of equations acquired in Algebra I. They continue to develop factoring and graphing skills and will be introduced to more advanced algebra topics, including logarithms, exponentials, conic sections, radicals, and rational equations. Students are also exposed to the concepts of inverse functions and composition of functions.

Mathematics Electives

The following is a list of Mathematics electives that students may take during their four years in Selwyn Upper School.

Pre-Calculus (1 credit)

This course is designed as a precursor to the study of calculus. Students deepen their understanding of functions and graphs, including asymptotic behavior. The concept of limits is introduced graphically and gradually incorporated into the class. Trigonometry is extended beyond the right triangle through the use of both the circle and graphing. Students learn to prove trigonometric identities and learn to appropriately use the Laws of Sine and Cosine.

Calculus I (1 credit)

This course covers material typically taught in a first semester college calculus class. Students learn both differential and integral calculus, including the theoretical underpinnings of each concept. This course may be offered as AP Calculus AB.

Calculus II (1 credit)

This course covers material typically taught in a second semester college calculus class. Topics include curve length, improper integrals, sequences, power series, and Taylor series. This course may be offered as AP Calculus BC.

Statistics (1 credit)

Students are introduced to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Statistical concepts studied include exploring data, sampling and experimentation, anticipating patterns, and statistical inference. This course may be offered as AP Statistics.

The following electives will be offered in alternate years:

Consumer Mathematics (1 credit)

Topics covered equip students to assume financial responsibilities after high school graduation. During the first semester of this project-based class, students learn about budgeting, taxes, credit cards, loans, and credit scores. During the second semester, students learn about the use and misuse of statistics in our modern financial world, enabling them to be wise consumers.

Foundations for College Mathematics (1 credit)

This course prepares students to either successfully undertake the study of College Algebra during their freshman year of college or, alternatively, complete the CLEP exam in order to receive college credit. Students strengthen their basic algebra skills during the fall semester and cover College Algebra course material during the spring semester.

World Languages

At the Upper School level, the World Language Program is designed to help students discover, explore and communicate as global citizens. The courses prepare students to interact and learn about other cultures and open students' eyes to new ideas and insights while they gain a better perspective on their own culture. In each level of this program, students practice the four aspects of learning language: speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

World Languages Graduation Requirements: 3 credits

Required classes: Three levels of one language.

Spanish I (1 credit)

This course introduces students to the culture and language of the Spanish-speaking world in eight units, with emphasis on accuracy in pronunciation, oral fluency, vocabulary development, and grammatical knowledge of the language. Spanish culture and Hispanic civilizations are taught, including topics such as geography, cities, historical sites, birthday customs, food, cooking, shopping habits, sports, hobbies and entertainment.

Spanish II (1 credit)

This course is a continuation of Spanish I and includes an introduction to the Spanish language with emphasis on speaking, pronunciation, and the fundamentals of Spanish grammar. The course is taught mainly from an oral standpoint. The course provides students with opportunities to respond to and give oral directions and commands and to make routine requests in the classroom and in public places, understand and use appropriate forms of address, courtesy expressions, tell about daily routines and events, ask and answer simple questions and to be able to participate in brief guided conversations. Aspects of contemporary Spanish culture are introduced through the media, games, and adapted readings.

Spanish III (1 credit)

This course focuses on language acquisition with communicative competence in listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing, as well as understanding of Hispanic cultures and issues of identity of the heritage speakers of Spanish in the United States. Students also gain an awareness and understanding of Hispanic cultures, including language variation, customs, geography, history and current events. During

this course, students gain confidence using Spanish to express their thoughts on social and academic themes, interact with speakers of the language, and understand oral and written presentations.

Spanish Electives

AP Spanish Language and Culture (1 credit)

The AP Spanish Language and Culture course emphasizes communication by applying interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills in real-life situations. This includes vocabulary usage, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. The AP Spanish Language and Culture course strives not to overemphasize grammatical accuracy at the expense of communication. To best facilitate the study of language and culture, the course is taught almost exclusively in Spanish.

English

At the Upper School level, Selwyn's English courses prepare students to write with a strong understanding of the mechanics of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Throughout this program, students learn to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences using specific, concise, and contextually appropriate language. As global citizens, students apply empathic, critical thinking and contextual understanding to the study of literature and leave with an understanding of how literature both reflects and modifies cultural trends.

English Graduation Requirements: 4 credits

Required classes: English I, English II, English III, English IV

English I (1 credit)

The first semester of this course provides freshmen with a strong understanding of Latin and its relationship to English. Given Latin's enduring lexical and linguistic influence, students in this course learn how to apply a basic knowledge of classical language in order to broaden their vocabularies, enhance facility with English through the study of roots, and sharpen abilities in deductive, analogous, and critical reasoning. The focus during the second semester is on advanced English grammar to strengthen writing and communication skills in a variety of contexts while incorporating literary selections with specific focus on works from multiple time periods, genres, and forms.

English II (1 credit)

In this course, students study World Literature and the discipline of Language Arts through reading, analyzing and discussing literature, literary research, and creative writing at an introductory level. Global citizenship is enhanced as students explore literature from a variety of cultures and time periods.

English III (1 credit)

In this course, students practice the analysis of literature, from reading and discussion to independent research. Building on skills acquired in previous courses, students begin to create a synthesis of their reading in a scholarly manner as appropriate in a third-year high school level class. In this course, students are exposed to the foundational texts of American Literature and create a working definition of American identity. Students write resumes and a variety of essays in preparation for college applications.

English IV (1 credit)

In this critical analysis-focused course, students learn about major literary works within the framework of historical and social/cultural context. Students practice situating works within context and are introduced to the concepts of various schools of philosophy and literary criticism.

English Electives

The following is a list of English electives that students can take during their four years at Selwyn Upper School:

AP English Language and Composition (11th grade) (1 credit)

In this AP-level course, students will conduct a rigorous survey of rhetorical and written persuasive techniques. The focus of this course is on analysis of classic literary sources from a critical standpoint. Students will create a working definition of “effective writing” which will provide a framework for their work throughout the course.

AP English Literature and Composition (12th grade) (1 credit)

In this AP-level course, students conduct a rigorous survey of classic literature, with particular emphasis on critical analysis skills and understanding the social/historical context of canon literature. Students will create a working definition of “canon” which will provide a framework for their work throughout the year.

Creative Writing (0.5 credit)

In this workshop-style class, students explore the forms of creative expression available through the discipline of writing. This exploration occurs through the practice of various forms of writing, including (but not limited to): poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, scriptwriting, and journalism.

Genre Fiction (0.5 credit)

In this course, students explore non-literary genres of fiction, including science fiction, horror, fantasy, and mystery. Students read a number of texts from each of these genres, critically analyze standard tropes and conventions, and practice writing in these genres and styles.

English Independent Study (0.5 credit)

This course is designed to provide individual students with the opportunity to delve deeply into a topic about which they are passionate. Significant responsibility lies with the student to work independently and to develop a proposal that must be approved by a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor provides counsel throughout the study and evaluates the student's incremental progress. The course culminates in a formal presentation of the student's work.

Fine Arts

At the Upper School level, Selwyn's Fine Arts courses offer a multicultural view of the arts through history and various genres. Students have multiple opportunities to perform and display their art form.

Fine Arts Requirements: 2 credits

Digital Art (0.5 credit)

Students gain a comprehensive understanding of Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator in this course. This project-based course teaches the fundamentals of graphic design and digital illustration, as well as preparing artworks for print and web. Using these professional-grade programs exposes students to the current level of technology and quality in the design world today. Projects include but are not limited to movie posters, logo design, company branding, and animated .GIFs.

Drama (0.5 credit)

In this course students learn the elements of theatre, acting techniques, and theatre appreciation. Through improvisation exercises, voice and movement techniques, and the study of established acting methods such as Suzuki and Meisner, students gain confidence in speaking and moving on stage and off. Students learn audition skills, take part in a performance, and gain an appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of theatre.

Film and Audio Editing (0.5 credit)

In this course, students learn the process of filmmaking from pre-production planning, filming, and post-production editing. Students also learn to incorporate sound design to put the finishing touches on their own short film.

Instrumental Music (1 credit)

In this performance-based course, students play music in a group setting, read music notation, study fundamental music theory, and learn related music history. Student performances are held at least three times throughout the school year and include school, community, solo, and small ensemble performances.

Music Technology (0.5 credit)

In this course, students discover and explore introductory concepts used in music sequencing, notation, and recording. No prior musical experience is needed; however, having training with an instrument or voice is helpful. Students create music using sequencing/editing software and synthesizers.

Photography (0.5 credit)

In this introduction to photography, students take traditional film photographs and use darkroom processing techniques to produce portfolios of black and white photographs. Students also learn to enhance their own work using digital editing via Adobe Photoshop.

Studio Art (0.5 credit)

Students learn vital fundamentals and advanced techniques for traditional artmaking in this course, which emphasizes (but is not limited to) drawing realistically, oil/acrylic painting, and sculpture. Projects are tailored to students' goals and interests. Art history is a major component of this class, and students are encouraged to thoughtfully consider their own art in a global and historical context. In addition, students progress through the valuable steps of matting, framing, and displaying their art.

Technology (0.5 credit)

This course is an introduction to word processing, desktop publishing, presentation software, spreadsheets, and building simple e-portfolios. Students delve into creative computing (robotics and programming), explore educational technology like G Suite, email, and research databases, and become well-versed in the appropriate standards of digital citizenship .

Physical Education

At the upper school level, students learn the fundamentals of healthy living and exercise. Through indoor and outdoor activities, students develop team-building and problem-solving skills. The curriculum includes the rudiments of common team sports such as basketball, soccer, and volleyball, as well as individual conditioning and wellness.

Physical Education Graduation Requirement: 2 credits

Health (0.5 credit)

This course guides students through the many dimensions of wellness. Students explore concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention and learn to identify, access, and utilize valid health information. Students demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health-related risks, and to analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.

Electives

Students choose electives to deepen their knowledge of previous subjects, personal interests and passions and to meet the graduation requirements of 26 credits. Elective course descriptions are found in the previous sections under each academic subject.

Graduation Requirement: 2 credits