2024 COURSE SELECTION GUIDE

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL

Dear Upper School Families,

We are excited to present a dynamic new program that will be part of every Upper School student's experience. Beginning in January 2024, the two weeks following winter break will be January Term, or J-Term.

The goal of J-Term is manifold:

- Expose students to a kaleidoscope of topics that we cannot offer in the regular curriculum and that they might not otherwise explore
- Allow faculty and other experts to share their special interests and passions
- Provide authentic, hands-on learning experiences with deep-dive focus
- Spark new interests, tap into aptitudes students may not know they have, develop different skill sets, and broaden perspectives
- Create alternative contexts to develop leadership and problem-solving skills
- Collaborate across disciplines and grade levels
- Provide an opportunity for faculty and students to build meaningful relationships in new ways
- Take an alternative learning break between traditional semesters
- Create "different weather" at a time of year when days and weeks feel long and dreary

In short, J-Term provides one more way to fulfill Prairie's mission to nurture the creativity, interests, and abilities of every student and to inspire students to explore, thrive, and add value individually and in collaboration with others.

Participation in J-Term is a graduation requirement and appears each year on the transcript with a grade. Courses include individual and collaborative work, reflections, presentations, and other student work products, and final grades will be recorded as High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail. Enrollment will begin with students' course selections and every effort will be made to place students in one of their four choices. For oversubscribed courses, a lottery system may be used. Enrollment will intentionally blend grade levels. Only world language-based courses are limited to students who meet the posted language-level requirement (see Spanish trip course description). Serious disciplinary incidents prior to or during J-Term may result in forfeiture of certain J-Term courses, including fees already paid, and course reassignment.

Some courses, especially those that include travel, require a high level of maturity and responsibility. Parents, please consider your student's readiness for these experiences. Students with special needs should select courses in which they can participate fully without compromising their well-being. Winter-season varsity athletes should consult their coaches now about any prohibitions against J-Term travel or other course activities that conflict with practices and games, and select courses accordingly. (Prohibitions will not be imposed on junior varsity athletes.) Students considering travel courses should be aware that hotel stays may book up to 4 students per room (single sex).

J-Term course fees are not part of the School's Inclusive Fee because courses vary widely. Families who receive more than 50% financial aid are eligible for J-Term aid. Aid may be granted for courses whose estimated cost exceeds \$500. Up to 50% of the estimated cost may be awarded. Please note that the J-Term aid budget will be weighted towards juniors and seniors. Because funds are limited and aid is not guaranteed, students must be able to pay in full for at least two of their four selected courses. We strongly encourage students to invest in J-Term by getting summer jobs and embracing other opportunities to fund J-Term experiences.

We hope you share our excitement about J-Term 2024 and look forward to the enriching experiences represented in these pages.

Maggie McDonough Head of Upper School



FOAMSMITHING FORGE Armor Making

Greetings, Adventurers! The Prairie School equips you to face the world and your future – but what about the armor and loot that all young explorers need to fulfill their life-quests? Foamsmithing Forge fills that critical gap, allowing you to power-up your character with a custom handmade set of armor, made entirely out of foam! Students will learn about the materials and processes of foam-smithing and then create their own set of armor!

Instructor: Mr. Christianson Maximum/minimum enrollment: 15/4 Cost: \$200-\$250

SICK BEATS TO DOPE TRACKS Creating an Album

Students will produce an album from start to finish – from writing and recording to mixing and mastering. We will discuss business aspects of the music industry, too, including streaming, online distribution, physical sales, publishing (ASCAP/ BMI), marketing, and social-media presence. Join us in the Prairie Sound Studio, and then travel to a professional recording studio, a physical production plant, and a radio station.

> Instructor: Mr. Breiwick Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$100-\$125





PRAIRIE PROJECT RUNWAY Learn to Make and Design Your Own Clothes

Do you have a passion for fashion? Do you want to express your individuality and reduce your carbon footprint? The benefits of making your own clothing are endless! In this workshop, students will learn sewing basics such as how to sew a simple pattern; how to use a sewing machine; how to add ruffles, sequins, and embroidery to sewing projects; and how to create an original pattern. Additionally, we will deconstruct, reconstruct, and redesign clothing items from home and local thrift stores. This will culminate in a fashion showcase where each student will present three unique pieces designed by themselves.

Instructor: Mrs. Berkey Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$225-\$250

(Students may want to purchase their own sewing machine. This is optional. There will be sewing machines available for shared use. If you are interested in purchasing a machine, the Brother cs6000i is great for beginners and can usually be found online for under \$200.)

ORCS, ALIENS AND M3GAN, OH MY!

This is a class for those interested in Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Writing. We will explore the frontier of imaginative fiction – but connect those creations to the demands of the real world. After all, what good is writing a cool novel of dragontaming aliens and robots, if you can't get your words out to your audience? This course, taught by a published and self-published author, teaches the basics of writing, proofreading, editing, and preparing a manuscript to sell in the modern genre-fiction marketplace. Students will compose and market their own work of short fiction and then submit it to a professional venue for publication. Next stop, #BookTok!!

> Instructor: Mr. Huggins Maximum/minimum enrollment: 15/6 Cost: \$0





COOKING: PAST AND FUTURE

Join us on a culinary experience to find joy with food, learn and honor heritage, playfully create and cook a multitude of foods, and investigate a variety of cooking techniques. As a community, we will create and eat! This experience will incorporate culinary experts from The Prairie School family as well as the wider community and fold in food-related field trips. You will have the opportunity to consume and create food media, including a personal cooking journal, and explore, research, and present about a self-chosen food-related area. Every level of cooking experience is welcome. Come with a love of food.

Instructors: Dr. Wheeler and Mrs. Grobschmidt Maximum/minimum enrollment: 15/6 Cost: \$140-\$160

ART AND UPCYCLING Making with the Environment in Mind

This is a studio artmaking course where recycled and reused items will be the primary medium. Participants will learn about past and contemporary artists who have explored environmentalism through artmaking or used recycled materials as tools for creative expression. Materials may include cardboard, used paper, magazines, plastic bags, discarded books, etc. A range of 2-D and 3-D art will be created including handbound journals, paper beads, plarn (plastic yarn) and scrap fabric weaving, and more. A culminating exhibition will be held at the close of the course.

> Instructor: Mrs. Schmitz Maximum/minimum enrollment: 15/6 Cost: \$0



FINANCIAL FLUENCY Your Finances and You

Should you use a debit or credit card? Is it better to buy or lease your first car? Rent or buy your first home? What is the best age to start investing? These are questions that many TPS alums have said they wish they had learned before graduating. This is your chance to explore these important topics! This course will look into insurance plans, financial planning, bill paying, taxes, mortgages, investments, shopping on a budget, and more. Students will head into the community to explore these real-life decisions.

Instructors: Mrs. Santalucia and Mr. Friedman Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$0

STAR_STUFF! Astronomy for Beginners

When you look up at the night sky, you can see the distant past and our far-flung future. Through astronomy, we come to understand these nighttime visions and the universe in which we live. In this course, we learn the names and locations of the brightest objects in the sky, how to predict solar and lunar eclipses, and much more. As a bonus, we'll also talk about the strange astronomy of exploding stars and black holes! The course begins and concludes with evening trips to the Hawthorn Hollow observatory in Kenosha, and may include a trip to a Lake Geneva observatory.

> Instructors: Mr. Perez and Dr. William Parker (UW Parkside) Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$0





ZOOLOGY AND ANIMAL RESEARCH

Diving into animal research and the field of zoology with this intensive course in tandem with local zoos, you will learn about animal species, natural behavior patterns, and the scientific method, plus you will conduct and report on your own observational research! Through in-class work, visits to the Racine and Milwaukee Zoos, and special guests, we will look at and practice the science behind animal studies, with the hope of inspiring conservation efforts and environmental stewardship in our community.

Instructors: Ms. Lutterman and Mrs. Schafer Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/10 Cost: \$125-\$150

IN THEIR OWN WRITE

Designed for beginner and experienced playwrights, actors, crew members, and costume designers, this course will allow you to create a production that is truly your own. As you explore the fundamentals of theater, you can expect to visit places such as the Milwaukee Repertory Theater for inspiration. During this time, you will work toward truly honing your expertise and skill in writing, producing, and showcasing a one-act play written and performed by you.

> Instructor: Mrs. Kiesewetter Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$100-\$150



SUSTAINABLE PRAIRIE The Prairie School Environmental Audit

A changing climate will challenge and modernize every nation and every industry. Forward-thinking individuals, schools, and countries will thrive. Will you? This course will help you develop the attitude and skills to turn uncertainty and adversity into opportunity, expertise, and purpose. Using the Green School Alliance's START program, students will assess the environmental performance of Prairie. We will examine how our campus and way of schooling teach (or don't teach) how to live and thrive on this planet, and we will understand schools as microcosms of society. This experience is project-based and real-world: Students will gather and analyze data, work with school and community leaders, and communicate findings to a range of audiences.

Instructor: Mr. Peterson Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$0

HOW TO THRIVE IN WINTER SNOWBOUND STORYTELLING AND SURVIVAL

Exploring winter landscapes, reading by a cozy fire, and investigating winter's past form the heart of this class dedicated to embracing the often maligned season of winter. We will focus on celebrating winter and the cold, exploring various voices on winter fun and winter survival, focusing primarily on voices from Wisconsin and Quebec. Our class will travel to Baileys Harbor in Door County for three days to experience the season and explore both the stories of winter and the activities of snowshoeing, skiing, creating, and storytelling. Students will read excerpts from literature and non-fiction, with optional parallel tracks of readings available in French for students looking for a Frenchlanguage experience.

> Instructors: Ms. Davis and Dr. Willis Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/10 Cost: \$350-500





ART IN THERAPY AND WELLNESS

Did you know that research has found that making art can activate reward pathways in the brain, reduce stress, lower anxiety levels, and improve mood? In this workshop we will learn about the uses of Art Therapy. Students will use art exercises to practice mindfulness techniques that are often used to assist with stress management. Through creating works of their own, students will develop skills in imagining, reflecting, seeing, and feeling in art. Students will be introduced to the psychology of art and human development, color and emotion, and the purpose of art, and have the opportunity to hear from professionals in the field. The workshop will culminate in formal presentations of each student's Art Journal and Art Philosophy. *Disclaimer - The instructor is an art educator, not a licensed art therapist. Art therapy will not be practiced in the class.

Instructor: Ms. Buikus Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$75-\$100

SO YOU CALL YOURSELF A FOOTBALL FAN?

Explore the nation's most popular sport in a way that few people have. Travel to famous locations, learn at sports museums, watch documentaries, and read gripping histories – all to understand how football became the entertainment titan it is today. We will look at the game itself, as well as the "behind the scenes" systems – the trades, the draft, the financial structures – that make the NFL possible. To top it off, we travel to Lambeau Field – in JANUARY! So suit up and prove your fandom!

> Instructors: Mr. Johnson and Faculty TBD Maximum/minimum enrollment: 15/10 Cost: \$1,200-\$1,500





MONUMENTS, EXHIBITS & MUSEUMS

Therein Hangs A Tale

"History is more story than fact." What are some of the most compelling stories of our national history? Who gets to craft those narratives? How do we tell our story nationally and internationally? United States history is rich with everything from the sublime to the scandalous and from the banal to the bizarre. This course will begin with a selective survey of historians' work and then travel to D.C. for six days of exploration at national institutions and sites. Students will be invited to think about how their own story fits into the American story and how they want to help write it in future.

Instructors: Faculty TBD and Mr. Shannon Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$1,300-\$1,500 (meals extra)

PHILADELPHIA Exploring the Past and Writing the Present

From Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell to Franklin Square and the stories of the Underground Railroad, few cities are more connected with American history and identity than Philadelphia. This course introduces students to the literature on American travel writing, considers significant contributions that Philadelphians have made to this literature, and offers students a chance to explore the city with an eye toward understanding its sociohistorical past. Through a series of daily readings, visits, and reflections, students will develop an ability to interpret places and cultural artifacts and give insight into their meaning to us today. Students will build a travel journal that brings together reflections on place, time, and travel: We will explore the Penn plan, American independence, the University of Pennsylvania (Franklin's university), Amish culture, naturalism, and themes in modern art and architecture today.

> Instructors: Mr. Geary and Faculty TBD Maximum/minimum enrollment: 14/6 Cost: \$1,400-\$1,550 plus meals





COSTA RICA Felines and Primates

Imagine walking under the rainforest canopy and exploring the trails in search of jaguars. On this nineday field course, you will experience it all! Get excited to learn about rainforest ecology and contribute to research on some of the world's most incredible species from the canopy to the coast, including boisterous monkeys, stealthy jungle cats, and endangered sea turtles. You will spend the week living and thinking like a field researcher in this uniquely remote and pristine coastal hideaway, where sloths, toucans, iguanas, leafcutter ants, dart frogs, and a host of other species will be your constant companions.

Instructors: Dr. Weaver and Mr. Broetzmann Maximum/minimum enrollment: 16/12 Cost: \$3,700-\$3,850

iVAMOS A ESPAÑA! Spanish Travel Course

Snacking on late-night tapas or peering over the walls of the Alhambra, walking cobblestone streets or visiting some of the world's most famous art . . . all this and more await you in Spain! Our 2024 Spanish trip starts in Madrid and then takes you to the southern Mediterranean coast. The country will amaze you — but more importantly, you will amaze you — but more ability to interact with others, including three days living with a Spanish family. From cooking classes and boat rides in Madrid, to flamenco shows and train rides in Andalucia, this trip is jam packed!

NOTE: The Spanish travel course will not be offered again until 2026. Open to any students enrolled during 2023-2024 in Spanish 4 or above.

> Instructors: Sra. Lane and Dr. Sattler Maximum/minimum enrollment: 18/10 Cost: \$4,299 all inclusive





NAMIBIA

A Sociocultural Journey

A land of contrast and beauty, Namibia is one of the top adventure travel destinations in the world. With the highest number of conservancies in the world, Namibia offers superb landscapes, excellent wildlife viewing, and a safe country in which to travel. On this trip, we will have direct interaction with three of the country's distinct cultures: San/Bushmen, Himba, and Damara. In addition to National Parks visits and cultural experiences, we will complete a day-long service-learning project at the Oonte Center for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. This is an experience you will not forget!

Instructors: Mr. Paulsen and Dr. Peter Denee (Carthage College) Maximum/minimum enrollment: 15/10 Cost: \$4,000



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