

Our Curriculum

[Adolescents] develop in such a way that
the necessity of participating in world events...rises
from their whole individuality... So that we... really meet the needs of human
nature... human beings must grow into the social life in such a way that they can do
something by which they may advance both themselves & the world.

-Rudolf Steiner, 1921

Interdisciplinary inquiry: Today, continents & disciplines are utterly interconnected, so
our curriculum too is multidisciplinary & global in scope. Students are as likely to build
statistical literacy in social studies class as to recite poetry in a physics main lesson. A US
history block might examine migrants in our history & our communities today, while students
perform the Jewish diaspora through *Fiddler on the Roof*: one example of a curriculum
permeated by the arts. In every period of the day, poetry, song, movement & visual
creativity enliven all the disciplines. **Fostering global citizenship** is crucial to our
mission. A world of challenge & uncertainty needs human beings with not only knowledge,
but also **authentic ethical intuition** & the will to work for good. Hence every class
strives to ignite passion & compassion, & to stir individual initiative & collective collaboration.

	Natural Sciences	Math	Social Sciences & Humanities	World Language & Literature	Fine & Practical Arts	Movement	Health
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thermal Physics Geology Organic Chemistry Physiology 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra Geometry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Americas Atlantic Revolutions Current Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Novel Tragedy & Comedy Literature of the Americas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copper-work Black-&-White Drawing Chorus All-school Musical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurythmy Social Dance PE Electives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrition Habits of Health Disease Prevention Communication Awareness
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physics of Motion Acids & Bases Hydrology Physiology 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra Geometry Trigonometry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient World Modern Africa Intro to Political Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poetics Modern African Literature Myth to Literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaving Color Theory & Watercolor Blacksmithing Class Play All-school Musical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Dance PE Electives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reproduction Habits of Health Healthy Sexuality Disease Prevention Mental Health Hazards of Health
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acoustics Embryology Botany Elemental Chemistry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra Projective Geometry Math Topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval Afro-Eurasia World History 1870-1945 Intro to Philosophy & Religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dante's <i>Comedy</i> Wolfram's <i>Parzival</i> Global Modernisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Painting Portrait Busts Pit Band All-school Musical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurythmy Social Dance PE Electives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities of Reproduction Habits of Health Mental Health
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optics Zoology Meteorology Environmental Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calculus Math Topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World History 1945-present Intro to Economics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goethe's <i>Faust</i> Postmodern World Literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-portraits Class Play All-school Musical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Dance PE Electives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Health Care of Others Sharing Habits of Health Optimal Self Care

This schedule is representative of a student's four-year experience; the timing & format of topics & courses varies from year to year. Our robust academics more than cover the VT graduation requirements, allowing upperclassmen in good academic standing to participate in self-designed afternoon study, work & extracurricular activities for much of the year.

Our Vision of the developing human being*



Voices of our community

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"What

Waldorf founder Rudolf Steiner, & generations of teachers after him, have observed that most 9th graders arrive eager to know—and experience—the contemporary world. is going on?" becomes a question with great interest, & the students are flexing new abilities to grasp the answers in thought. Hence current events, causal sequences & the concrete realities of economic geography ground the social studies curriculum.

At the same time, powerful changes are stirring these young people—physiologically, emotionally & intellectually. Stark contrasts of mood, conflicts in which my identity & beliefs define themselves by butting up against others— we speak to these experiences in thermodynamics with its contrasts of heat & cold, in black-&-white drawing, & in the history of revolution in the Americas & Atlantic world.



Small classes "make adding your opinion much easier... we are a *close* class so we can state our thoughts freely"

—9th grader, Class of 2018

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"HOW

For many 10th grade students, new complexities & ambiguities appear on the scene. The process of identity formation sometimes seems to move from a phase of defining the self through conflict to a phase of finding the self in give-&-take with peers. Many of us remember the increased sensitivity & complexity of the inner life as we entered our mid-teens. Best friends & dating relationships become deeply important, & the Health curriculum helps students explore their emotional nuances. Close friendships can be intellectual as well as emotional, & students delight in testing & refining ideas in debate. do you know?" often leads to deeper questions along the lines of: "how did it get that way?" Ancient world history feeds the hunger to plumb the origins of things, while the science of pH, water, and the human body moves from extremes toward dynamic equilibrium.



"Writing an op-ed was really empowering... I feel like I grew a lot ... and improved my understanding of government... going to Peter Shumlin's [2015 inaugural] speech & having a real-life, inside view

—10th grader, Class of 2017

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"Why

Junior year brings new freedoms, responsibilities, & concerns, & often a sense of disillusionment with the interests and ideas of younger adolescence. The question: am I here; what am I doing with my life?" takes on a new poignancy & urgency. We see a turning inward, a new earnestness in questioning the fundamentals. If the age sometimes opens the abyss of inner darkness and depression, then it also brings a new ability of the intellect to soar to new heights of abstract thought, as the growth and turmoil of the body begins to find new balance. In math and science, forays into the "unseen"—electricity, atomic theory, projective geometry—compliment a humanities curriculum that plumbs the depths of Dante's hell, sets out on Parzival's quest for identity, & raises profound religious & philosophical questions through the history of music, the Afro-Eurasian Middle Ages, & the first half of the 20th century.



"We love the depth of caring, respect, and constant intellectual challenge of the Initiative, and how it is formed within the context of social issues and justice."

—Junior, Class of 2016

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WHO

At the peak of their Waldorf climb, seniors are invited to pause and survey their studies, which begin to assume the shape of a landscape, and also to gaze out at the horizon of the future. At the center of this panorama, young adults begin to experience a new sense of "I," a subjectivity situated, oriented in the world & in history. is this self who has acquired a new solidity & sense of definition, & who must now find a relationship to the world in a new way? Seniors study human development & paint self-portraits, plumbing the mysteries of the subject. At the same time, they find self-realization in dialectical relation to the objective world, through economics, world history since 1945, contemporary literature & ecology.



When I was at the Initiative as a guest teacher, the students were so *open, lively, and engaged*—a teacher's delight! And the school's sense of community makes being there a warm and embracing experience. It's the thoughtful "extras"—like weekly morning meeting and community lunch - that make the Initiative a special place. I'm impressed with the teachers' innovations in experiential learning, such as the new school gardening program... -Visiting faculty member, 2014

*We are indebted to the Center for Anthroposophy for the formulation of the "questions of the year."

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