Westminster Interactive Summer Experience

During the summer of 2020, Westminster faculty will offer a slate of tutorial-style, non-credit courses. These courses will be offered during two separate two-week sessions: Session I June 17 - June 28 and Session II July 8 - July 19. Students will engage directly with faculty each day for an hour as well as receive feedback on their independent work, with an overarching goal of improving their critical reading, writing and verbal skills. In many instances, the courses will provide a preview of an upcoming course or prepare for a specific standardized test or essay.

At Westminster, we believe that person-to-person interactions always come first. Unlike a traditional online course where students are presented material on a webpage and then evaluated by an instructor, WISE courses utilize live and interactive sessions that allow students to learn with a live teacher in a group, just like they would during the school year.

Class meetings take place online, and the daily meeting times will have flexibility but the class teachers may provide a likely range of meeting times to help with planning purposes.

Please find a description of the courses that we will be offering below. This information is also available at www.westminster-school.org/WISE

**English and History**

**Grammar and Vocabulary Training Camp** (Session II)  
Bryan Tawney

This class will provide students with a stronger understanding of vocabulary through a daily study of word roots as well as an enriched understanding of grammar through daily lessons in the parts of speech, parts of a sentence, sentence types, punctuation rules and usage. Students will study vocabulary lists each day and take daily “entry quizzes” through our OnCampus portal. Our online video classes via Google Hangout will include hands-on grammar lessons and culminate in OnCampus “exit quizzes.” Students will not receive a grade in this class, but they will have to take the aforementioned assessments until they achieve a minimum acceptable score. Each week of the session will end with a comprehensive assessment.

*Prerequisites: None*

*Likely meeting time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group*
The Vietnam War (Session II)  
Colleen Joncas

The Vietnam War was one of the most divisive, controversial and tragic events in American history. Students will examine the U.S. role in the Vietnam War through primary and secondary source readings, lecture, discussions and even interviews with Vietnam War veterans. Also featured will be excerpts from and discussions about the recently released (2017) PBS documentary, “The Vietnam War,” directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novik. Students will sharpen their critical reading, listening and writing skills in the process of analyzing the origins, development, consequences and legacies of the war. Ideally, this course would be great for anyone interested in learning about the topic, but certainly for those that may have taken a year off from history and may benefit from revisiting the types of reading and writing required of standard history courses.

Prerequisites: None

 Likely meeting time: Mid-morning (Eastern Standard Time)

Individual Editing Sessions (Scheduled as needed after July 1)  
Bryan Tawney

Students can decide how often they want to meet in this highly personalized course: one session per week for the entire summer, a couple of times per week for a shorter five-week session, or perhaps even one intensive two weeks of daily writing and feedback. The goal of this class is to cultivate better writing skills in students and to provide them with close feedback on their writing at regular intervals. Students are welcome to pursue their individual interests (a series of short stories, college essays, a novel or play, etc.), but those with no particular writing goal will execute a number of personal/creative compositions over the course of the summer, submit their work via Google Docs, and receive notes and feedback in 10 one-on-one Google Hangouts, to be scheduled at the discretion of student and teacher alike. Feedback will be crafted to suit the particular strengths and weaknesses of particular students, but writers can expect to be guided on their content, mechanics, style and organization.

Prerequisites: None

Likely meeting time: Each student will craft a schedule with the instructor

Essay Writing (Sessions I and II)  
Lee Huguley

This course will focus on the four major essay types (narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive). Students will examine the mechanics and nuances of the essay by reviewing a collection of creative nonfiction essays and producing original work based on four essays types. Nightly, students will be required to evaluate the assigned reading and write one-page responses using the information covered during the online Google Hangout session. Grades will not be assessed to the written work, but feedback will be provided. Additionally, each Friday of the session, a more extended essay of the student’s choice will be submitted. Ideally, the collection of essays read and produced will afford all participants both the essential practice needed for improving the primary mode of communication used in all humanities classrooms and provide an opportunity to begin thinking and preparing for the college essay.

Prerequisites: None

Likely meeting time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group

Theater

Playwriting and Screenwriting (Sessions I and II)  
A-men Rasheed

Students will explore dynamic playwrights and screenplays through individual reading, group discussion and instruction. By the end of the course, students will have learned enough to write a
screenplay of their own and share it with the group. Expect 60 minutes of live meeting each day, with an additional 60 minutes of individual work each night.

Prerequisites: None
Likely meeting time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group

**Metacognition**

**Effective Study Skills** (Session I)  
Kelly Curtis

Students are often expected to have effective study skills by the end of middle school, but they are not hardwired into our brain. Successful study skills need to be learned and the summer is the perfect time to do it! This class is a combination of individual and group instruction. Students will discover their learning style and will receive personalized tips that will help them throughout the school year. Group lessons will include organization, time management, setting and achieving goals, the importance of a great attitude and self-motivation, flexibility and building grit, task initiation, using a planner, successful note taking, test taking strategies and tips, critical thinking skills, active listening and sustained attention, and working memory. We will talk about, and learn, important strategies for the PSAT, ACT and the SAT. This summer course is a great way for students to prepare for future high school and college courses. Students will gain confidence, learn more efficiently, save time and reduce academic anxiety. Students will also have the option to contact me throughout the school year to review tips or ask questions.

Prerequisites: None
Likely Meeting Time: Flexible depending on the needs of the group

**Advanced Academic Skills** (Session II)  
Kelly Curtis

The human brain is capable of so many amazing things and with the right tools and strategies, anyone can learn to read faster, understand more information and increase their knowledge base. This class is designed to help improve memory, increase reading comprehension and teach cutting edge learning techniques that will help in high school, in college and beyond. This class is interactive and students will learn strategies such as active reading, creating study guides, associations, using schema as an anchor, the FAST Method, the Infinity Technique, powerful tips to remember vocabulary words (ACT/SAT prep), how to remember names and faces, how to use a visual pacer, and more. We will talk about the importance of focus, a healthy diet and sleep. We will also dive into motivation and accelerated learning. Students will create projects throughout the course that they can use as resources throughout the school year. Students will talk about and define success, set up goals for the upcoming year, and plan the steps that he/she needs to take to achieve those.

Prerequisites: Completion of Effective Study Skills or prior work with Mrs. Curtis
Likely Meeting Time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group

**Mathematics and Science**

**Geometry Preview** (Session II)  
Nancy Urner-Berry

This survey of Geometry topics will serve to introduce students to various concepts that are covered in a yearlong course. Daily classes will consist of a one-hour meeting on Google Hangout; students will have notes and a work sheet in order to preview the day’s lesson ahead of the meeting time. Homework will be completed each night and discussed the next day; answers
to problems will be accessed online. Sample problems will be covered in detail during the online sessions, and questions with a range of difficulty will be assigned for nightly homework. Additionally, students will take an online daily quiz in order to assess their own understanding. Topics that will be covered include points, lines, segments and angles; triangles (equilateral, isosceles and right triangles); parallel lines and a transversal; quadrilateral figures and other polygons; similar figures and ratios; circles (including central and inscribed angles); and areas of plane figures. If a student misses a day of class, a review of that topic is posted online for the associated Khan Academy tutorial. Throughout the two week session, topics from Algebra I (such as working with fractions, solving for an unknown, and solving systems of equations) will be used in solving problems.

Prerequisite: Completion of Algebra I
Meeting time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group

Survey of Algebra II (Session I)  
Kelly Wosleger
The objective of this course is to provide preparation and preview for an Algebra II or Algebra II Honors course. Building on their work with linear functions, students will introduce themselves to quadratic, exponential and logarithmic functions. By studying the families of functions in this course, students will be prepared for an in-depth study during the upcoming school year. Students will work through nine problem sets posted on the Portal page for this course. In addition to our live meetings, several screenshots and online tutorials will be provided. We will use Google Hangout to meet each day for 60 minutes in a virtual classroom. This unique classroom environment is highly visual, interactive and engaging. Each session will begin with a review of the previous problem set and then an explanation of the new material. Our classroom allows each student to participate fully during class, ask questions about new material and respond during fun but competitive drills. For this course, each student must have a graphing calculator or access to graphing software. We will have class for 60 minutes each day and the expectation is that the student will spend another 30-60 minutes on the daily problem set.

Prerequisites: Algebra I
Likely meeting time: Morning (Eastern Standard Time)

Pre-Calculus Preview (Session I)  
Kelly Wosleger
The year in Pre-Calculus begins by reviewing many Algebra 2 concepts with an emphasis on graphing. This WISE course will review the concepts that will be covered in the first trimester of the year in a typical Pre-Calculus course. Daily classes will consist of a one-hour meeting on Google Hangout, with students completing a work sheet and taking notes ahead of the meeting time. Homework will be completed each night and discussed the next day; answers to problems will be accessed online through the Portal. Sample problems will be covered in detail during the online sessions, and questions with a range of difficulty will be assigned for nightly homework. Additionally, students will take an online daily quiz in order to assess their own understanding. Topics that will be covered include factoring, simplifying expressions with exponents, simplifying radicals (of nth roots), rationalizing radicals as well as solving and graphing these polynomial, rational, exponential and logarithmic functions. Inverse functions and composite functions will round out some of the topics that will be addressed. Students should have a TI graphing calculator as well as graph paper for the course.

Prerequisite: Completion of Algebra II
Likely Meeting time: Morning (Eastern Standard Time)
**Survey of Calculus** (Session I)  
Mike Greenwald  
The objective of this course is to provide preparation and preview for an AP Calculus AB or non-AP Calculus. Building on their work with families of functions, we will go over limits and reinforce the concept of the difference quotient. We will also spend time reviewing the major concepts from trigonometry. Understanding limits is the foundation of differential calculus. These two weeks will prepare students for the fall terms of both courses. We will have nine problem sets posted on the Portal page for this course along with several screencasts and videos for the students to watch. We will meet each day for 90 minutes in a virtual classroom where students will use Google Hangout. This unique classroom environment is highly visual, interactive and engaging. Each session will begin with a review of the previous problem set and then an explanation of the new material. Our classroom allows each student to participate fully during class, to ask questions about new material and to respond during fun but competitive drills.  
*Prerequisites:* Precalculus (including trigonometry)  
*Likely meeting time:* Morning (Eastern Standard Time)  

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**Chemistry Primer** (Session II)  
Nancy Urner-Berry  
Chemistry requires a combination of analytical skills and conceptual mastery that can be challenging on the first pass; this summer course will provide students with a preview of what they will be learning during the first few months. Using online materials, including short videos, students will cover topics ranging from dimensional analysis, atomic theory, the periodic table, writing and naming compounds, calculating molar mass, and writing and balancing simple chemical reactions. Worksheets and online assessments will require students to review and assess their knowledge each day. During live video sessions, students will have opportunities to ask questions, consider the topics at a higher level, and move forward into the next concept. In addition to the 60-minute video conference with the class, this course will require approximately 60 minutes of independent work which culminates with a short online exit quiz.  
*Prerequisites:* Geared for students about to begin chemistry  
*Likely meeting time:* Flexible depending on the needs of the group  

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**Physics Primer** (Session II)  
Susie Bailey  
As the introduction to our science program, Physics is a critical course that teaches the fundamentals necessary to succeed in later science classes while informing students about the mathematical relationships that govern our world. This summer course will provide students with a preview of their first term and teach important skills useful during their first year of high school science. Using online materials, short videos and personalized instruction, we will cover topics in mechanics ranging from mechanical equilibrium, Newton’s Laws, linear motion and projectile motion. Daily classes will consist of one-hour virtual class over Google Hangouts where new ideas are taught and old ones are reinforced. During these live video sessions, students will have opportunities to ask questions, work through problems together, and consider the concepts at a higher level. Daily homework will require about 60 minutes of time after each class and will reinforce the topics learned that day. This course is recommended for students who lack confidence in their quantitative and scientific skills and would benefit from extra instruction.  
*Prerequisites:* Geared for students about to begin physics  
*Likely meeting time:* Morning (Eastern Standard Time)
STEM Lab (Session I)  
Susie Bailey

This summer course will provide students with a foundation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) using activities to highlight core STEM themes. Using online materials, short videos and personalized instruction, we will cover topics such as Environmental Engineering, Civil Engineering and Robotics. Daily classes will consist of a one-hour virtual class over Google Hangouts where students will learn how engineers help create a healthier, safer world. Students will learn about environmental engineers who help solve problems such as providing clean drinking water to hard to reach communities; civil engineers who help solve transportation issues and computer engineers and the basics of code and where and how coding is used in our everyday lives. During these live video sessions, students will have opportunities to ask questions and discuss topics together. Daily homework will require about 60 minutes of time after each class and will reinforce the topics learned that day. This course is recommended for students who are interested in STEM and who would like to enhance their STEM knowledge.

Prerequisites: None  
Likely meeting time: Morning (Eastern Standard Time)

Introduction to Java Programming (Sessions I and II)  
Dan Aber

The goal of this course is to expose students to the widely-used Java programming language while teaching good programming style and software engineering principles. Students will work in the JKarel programming environment, a steppingstone to Object-Oriented Programming. By learning to program various tasks for the JKarel virtual robot, the students will become familiar with the fundamental programming structures and concepts such as classes, methods, conditional instructions and loops. There will be assigned readings, screencasts viewings and rigorous programming exercises. Students will receive daily feedback on their progress and have the opportunity to learn from and critique their fellow students’ work. No previous programming experience is required and this course is open to students entering grades 8-12. This course serves as a nice introduction to AP Computer Science, which uses Java as its programming language.

Prerequisites: None  
Likely meeting time: Either between 7-10 a.m. or 7-10 p.m. (EST), depending on the needs of the group

Languages

Spanish Primer (Sessions I and II)  
Odalis Hidalgo Session I/Sandy Palala Session II

The WISE Program for Spanish will focus on the four fundamental skill areas of Spanish: speaking, listening, reading and writing. This course will serve as a preview for students transitioning to Spanish 1 or 2, and who may have had some previous exposure to Spanish but need a refresher. There will be short videos explaining the basics of Spanish grammar and structure, including parts of speech, gender, indirect and direct object pronouns, present, imperfect and preterit tenses, and a review of regular, irregular and stem changing verbs. Students will be expected to watch relevant videos, take notes and complete formative online assessment to see if they comprehend the material fully. Assessments will review skills that are considered essential to a level 1 class and preview some of the more advanced concepts taught in level 2. Students should plan on averaging 60-90 minutes of individual work per day and 45-60 minutes of live instruction. Students will be grouped according to proficiency level and/or instructed individually to maximize the effectiveness of the course for each participant.

Prerequisites: Some previous work in Spanish  
Likely meeting time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group
Advanced Spanish (Sessions I and II) Odalis Hidalgo Session I / Sandy Palala Session II
The WISE Advanced Spanish course will build upon skills acquired in the elementary levels of Spanish and prepare students to communicate confidently in Advanced Spanish Studies or AP Spanish Language, Literature & Culture. It will enhance familiarity with the culture and language of Spanish-Speaking people worldwide. This course involves all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are practiced within a cultural context as much as possible. Since this class is conducted almost exclusively in Spanish students will improve their level of comfort when speaking in addition to their listening comprehension. Through the reading of short stories, poetry, songs, and articles along with various writing assignments, students will improve their reading speed, comprehension, and confidence with the Spanish Language. Cultural exploration will include projects, class discussion, readings, music, films and internet research. Students should plan on 60 minutes of live instruction and 60 minutes of individual work per day.
Prerequisites: Completed at least Spanish 2H or Spanish 3
Likely meeting time: Flexible, depending on the needs of the group

French Primer (Sessions I and II) Claudia McGuigan
The WISE Program for French will focus on the four fundamental skill areas of French: speaking, listening, reading and writing. This course will serve as a preview for students transitioning to French 1 or 2, and who may have had some previous exposure to French but need a refresher. There will be short videos explaining the basics of French grammar and structure, including parts of speech, gender, indirect and direct object pronouns, present, imperfect and preterit tenses, and a review of regular, irregular and stem changing verbs. Students will be expected to watch relevant videos, take notes and complete formative online assessment to see if they comprehend the material fully. Assessments will review skills that are considered essential to a level 1 class and preview some of the more advanced concepts taught in level 2. Students should plan on averaging 60-90 minutes of individual work per day and 45-60 minutes of live instruction. Students will be grouped according to proficiency level and/or instructed individually to maximize the effectiveness of the course for each participant.
Prerequisites: Some previous work in French
Likely meeting time: Morning (Eastern Standard Time)

Questions
If you have questions, please contact: Bryan Tawney, Director of WISE Program, at btawney@westminster-school.org.

About Westminster School
Westminster School enjoys a reputation as one of the finest small college-preparatory schools in the country. The challenging academic program, grounded in the liberal arts tradition, prepares students in grades 9-12 for success in college and in life. Westminster attracts boarding and day students from Connecticut and around the world, and awards over $5.1 million in financial aid. With 398 students and 95 faculty members, Westminster is the ideally sized educational environment for young people. Guided by its core values — community, character, balance and involvement — Westminster offers broad opportunities in the arts, athletics and extracurricular programs.

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