

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## ACADEMIC PLACEMENT

Course prerequisites are guidelines set for the purpose of placing students in the academic course, with the appropriate level of academic rigor. Please refer to pages 6 & 7 for school guidelines on academic placement. For appropriate recommendation, it is advised that students and parents consult with their current academic teacher and their assigned school counselor.

## PENNSYLVANIA CITIZENSHIP TEST

*Act 35 of 2018 requires the administering of a citizenship test to students in grades 7 through 12. The one-time assessment, typically administered during Civics & Government, will test each student's understanding of the nature, purpose, and principles of the United States constitutional democracy and the responsibilities and rights of United States citizenship. Students who score a perfect on the assessment will qualify for a certificate developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.*

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### HONORS AMERICAN HISTORY

**Credit Value: 1.0**

(#1060)

**Periods Per Week: 5**

**Semester: Full Year**

**Prerequisites: 89% or above in American History 8**

**Open to Grade: 9**

The Honors American History course covers the time period from approximately the mid-1800s to the present. It is a continuation of study from the 8th grade history course. Students will embark on an exciting and thorough course of study, in which the learning objectives will tackle the main themes of American growth, struggles, and strengths as a powerful nation both domestically and internationally.

The course offers students the opportunity to analyze a multitude of historical perspectives in order to try to gain a stronger understanding of all parties involved.

At the honors level, students will be engaged in daily rigorous learning expectations which will be enriched with additional interpretive readings and media, advanced critical thinking, writing, and research skills, as well as independent and group study development. A strong foundation of these skills is highly recommended.

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### AMERICAN HISTORY

**Credit Value: 1.0**

(#1065)

**Periods Per Week: 5**

**Semester: Full Year**

**Prerequisites: 60% or above in American History 8**

**Open to Grade: 9**

The American History course provides an effective foundation for the study of modern-day history of the United States. This is a continuation of study in American History begun in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The course provides a thorough treatment of the significant phases and problems the United States faced as it developed from the 1900's to the present time. Two dominant themes are developed: the emergence of the United States as an industrial and urban nation and the emergence of the United States as a world power. Both developments point out the problems and changes that bring about a re-evaluation of some of the traditional institutions, ideas, and beliefs of the country.

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**HONORS WORLD CULTURES****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1045)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: 80% or above in Honors American History****Semester: Full Year**  
**Open to Grade: 10**

The Honors World Cultures engages students in the study of modern world history (~1450CE-present) in order to achieve a more critical and integrated understanding of global societies, cultures, and issues during the past five hundred years. Students will explore developments in Australia, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe; consider the rise of the West following the Renaissance; investigate the origins and outcomes of war, revolution, and genocide; trace the disintegration of western empires after World War II; and ponder the global challenges of the post-Cold War era. The honors course is designed for the exceptionally able student who has a keen interest in history and world studies. To prepare students for challenging coursework in the future, this course will stress note-taking and interpersonal, organizational, technological, reading and writing skills in addition to the content covered in class.

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**WORLD CULTURES****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1050)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: 60% or above in American History****Semester: Full Year**  
**Open to Grade: 10**

The World Cultures engages students in the study of modern world history (~1450 CE-present) in order to achieve a more critical and integrated understanding of global societies, cultures, and issues during the past five hundred years. Students will explore developments in Australia, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe; consider the rise of the West following the Renaissance; investigate the origins and outcomes of war, revolution, and genocide; trace the disintegration of western empires after World War II; and ponder the global challenges of the post-Cold War era.

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**HONORS CIVICS & GOVERNMENT****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1030)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: 80% or above in Honors World Cultures****Semester: Full Year**  
**Open to Grade: 11**

The Honors Civics & Government course is an introduction to the theory and practice of American Government. Students will examine the framework of federal, state and local governments in detail – their histories, traditions, values and structures. The cultural, political, economic and legal foundations will be a focus within the daily practice of political parties, voting practices, interest groups, civil rights, and mass media. The institutions of Congress, the Presidency, and Federal and Supreme Courts will be explored in depth. Students will also spend time examining the writings of our Founding Fathers (The Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, Federalist papers, etc.) to better understand the evolution of our government and citizen rights.

This course will contain a series of prepared reading and may be demanding for students who do not have an honors background. Students will be required to complete frequent writing assignments including a research project, position papers, essays, and department project.

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**CIVICS & GOVERNMENT****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1035)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester: Full Year****Prerequisites: 60% or above in World Cultures****Open to Grade: 11**

The Civics & Government course is designed to provide a survey course in the study of political theory and government formations, including civic life, political life, and personal life, as well as the purpose and functions of government. This course will contain a series of prepared readings. Students may be exposed to learning through the "Socratic Method", i.e., question and answer method. Instructional methods may include essay writing, debate, and objective examinations are used for evaluation.

The purpose of the Civics & Government course is to increase students' knowledge of the governmental structure and political processes in a democratic society. It will encourage involvement and responsibility, promote a sense of political efficacy, and help students to clarify and access political problems in our society. The course is organized around a text, class discussion, selected readings, and visual media in such areas as political awareness; the role of the individual in a democratic society; rights and responsibilities of citizens; the role and structure of government at the federal, state, county, and local levels; and the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Classroom activities are more experimental than theatrical. Students will be required to complete writing assignments including position papers, essays, and a department project.

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**A.P. ECONOMICS****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1010)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester: Full Year****Prerequisites: A.P. Criteria****Open to Grades: 11, 12\***

**\* Although open to juniors and seniors, this course is recommended for seniors.**

The Advanced Placement Economics course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in economics. This program prepares students for college courses in microeconomics and macroeconomics and is equivalent to a full year introductory college course in economics.

The purpose of an A.P. course in microeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to the functions of individual decision-makers, both consumers and producers, within the larger economic system. It places a primary emphasis on the nature and functions of product markets and factor markets, as well as the role of government in meeting general economic goals.

The macroeconomics A.P. course is intended to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole. This course places particular emphasis on the study of national income and price determination, and also develops students' familiarity with economics performance measures, economics growth, and international economics.

Students who enroll in this course may take the Advanced Placement Economics tests which are given each spring. This course is demanding, but it is designed to provide interesting and challenging opportunities to develop student abilities beyond the level they might obtain in a less demanding class.

**A.P. Test Date:** May 2025  
**Test Cost:** \$98 (2024) each test\*  
**Registration Deadline:** See Teacher  
**Summer Assignment:** Yes

**(\*Two separate tests – Macroeconomics & Microeconomics)**

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**HONORS ECONOMICS****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1015)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester:****Full Year****Prerequisites: 80% or above in Honors Civics & Gov't****Open to Grade:****12**

**\*For this course it is highly recommended that students have completed Algebra 2 with an 80% or higher.**

The Honors Economics course will provide an opportunity to explore economics concepts in depth. Both microeconomics and macroeconomics will be covered within the framework of the class. Students will have numerous opportunities to apply economics to real life situations. This will be accomplished through the use of simulations, business plan development, case studies, stock market and independent research projects. Students will be required to complete frequent writing assignments including position papers, essays, and a department project.

While it is a social studies course, the content in Honors Economics requires students to utilize mathematical skills and often involves thinking similar to that used in algebraic math. Therefore, a relatively strong math background is encouraged.

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**ECONOMICS****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1020)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester:****Full Year****Prerequisites: 60% or above in U.S. Government****Open to Grade:****12**

The Economics course will provide an opportunity for students to explore and clarify attitudes toward the American economic system and learn the skills necessary to function as an informed citizen within that system. Students will balance economic theory with economic practicality. Both microeconomics and macroeconomics will be covered within the framework of the class. Students will be required to complete writing assignments including position papers, essays, and a department project.

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**PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1025)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester:****Full Year****Prerequisites: None****Open to Grade:****12**

The Problems of Democracy course is designed to increase students' knowledge of current economic, social, and political problems facing the United States today. Students will spend time exploring historical context, debating issues, and creating projects to better understand the complex makeup of a democratic country and the challenges facing their citizens. This one-year course is organized into three main units of study: 1) criminal justice, 2) foreign policy and 3) economics and wealth-related issues. Upon completion of this course students should have a better understanding of events in the news, the actions of various levels of government, and how the government, economy, and other social groups impact all of our lives. This course encourages students to develop and express opinions and ideas, particularly when there is not necessarily a "right answer."

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**INTRODUCTION TO WORLD POLITICS****Credit Value: 1.0****(Pitt - College in the High School)****(#1295)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester: Full Year****Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra 2****Open to Grades: 10, 11, 12**

World politics is the study of how states interact with each other. This course builds a working knowledge of the field of Political Science, introducing the background, theoretical, and empirical tools necessary to understand international relations today. Students will learn about important findings in a variety of subfields, including war, international political economy, institutions, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism. The course will use problem sets to dive a little deeper into the decision-making process behind political actions. We'll also work with common international relations datasets to obtain a working understanding of the discipline's methodological foundations.

<b>College/University:</b>	University of Pittsburgh
<b>Course Equivalent/Credits:</b>	University of Pittsburgh PS0500 / 3 credits
<b>Cost:</b>	\$75 per credit/\$225 (2023-24)
<b>Registration Deadline:</b>	See Teacher
<b>Summer Assignment:</b>	No

**\*10<sup>th</sup> grade students** may enroll in Intro to World Politics as their required social studies course in lieu of Honors World Cultures by gaining approval through the required waiver application process. This should be considered by the most mature and high achieving 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who maintain an A average in Honors American History and consistently score high on mid-term and final exams. Please see your school counselor.

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**A.P. EUROPEAN HISTORY****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1005)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester:****Full Year****Prerequisites: A.P. Criteria****Open to Grades:****10\*, 11, 12**

The Advanced Placement European History course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the study of European History from the Renaissance to the present. The course is taught on a college level utilizing materials and methods found in many universities. This level of expectation is not meant to intimidate students, but instead to prepare them for their post-high school studies. It also places them in a challenging, yet comfortable, academic environment with other students who are similarly motivated. The college level materials and methods are introduced gradually allowing the student to make the necessary adjustments in his/her study and preparation.

As the student is exposed to material relevant to the study of European history, he/she will be taught to assess the reliability, relevance and importance of each source and, most importantly, draw his/her own informed conclusions. To adequately provide the necessary materials, the course will utilize a general text and several supplemental source books. While the text provides the necessary historical background, the supplemental materials cover special themes and interpretations. The student will also be exposed to primary source materials including documents, statistical data, historical pictures, videos, and maps. In addition to exposure to these sources, the student will be taught to gather, evaluate, analyze and express historical information effectively in both writing and speech. Students will be taught to take notes and will be expected to keep a notebook and three ring binder on readings, class discussions and lectures. Evaluation will include objective and essay tests, written assignments, class participation and projects. Again, every effort will be made to prepare the students to perform all of these tasks effectively.

Students who enroll in this course may take the Advanced Placement European History examination given in May of each school year. Based on the results of this examination, students may qualify for college credit and/or advanced college standing.

**A.P. Test Date:** May 2025  
**Test Cost:** \$98 (2024)  
**Registration Deadline:** See Teacher  
**Summer Assignment:** Yes

**\*10th grade students** may enroll in AP Euro as their required social studies course in lieu of Honors World Cultures. This should be considered by the most mature and high achieving 9th grade students who maintain an A average in Honors American History and consistently score high on mid-term and final exams.

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**A.P. UNITED STATES HISTORY****Credit Value: 1.0****(#1000)****Periods Per Week: 5****Semester:****Full Year****Prerequisites: A.P. Criteria****Open to Grades:****11, 12**

The Advanced Placement United States History course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and events in United States History. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those of full-year introductory college courses.

Students will learn to assess historical materials--their relevance to a given interpretive problem, their reliability, and their importance--and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. A variety of texts and related supplementary materials, including documents, essays or books on special themes, will be used to provide substantive and thematic coverage. These materials should also provide students with an overview of the subject matter of history and in major interpretive questions that derive from the study of selected themes. In addition, students will learn to analyze and interpret primary sources, including documentary materials, maps, statistical tables, and pictorial and graphic evidence of historical events. Students will also learn to take notes from printed materials and lectures or discussions, write essay examinations, and write analytical and research papers.

Students who enroll in this course may take the Advanced Placement United States History examination given in May of each school year. Based on the results of this examination, students may qualify for college credit and/or advanced college courses.

This course is demanding and is designed to provide interesting and challenging opportunities to develop student abilities beyond the level they might obtain in a less demanding class.

The placement of the student will be reviewed if he/she is not performing according to expectations.

**A.P. Test Date:** May 2025  
**Test Cost:** \$98 (2024)  
**Registration Deadline:** See Teacher  
**Summer Assignment:** Yes

# SOCIAL STUDIES ELECTIVES

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## **CURRENT EVENTS 1**

(#1220)

**Periods Per Week:** 5

**Prerequisites:** None

**Credit Value:** .5

**Semester:** Either

**Open to Grades:** 9, 10, 11, 12

The Current Events 1 course will provide an opportunity for students to broaden their public awareness and to increase their ability to analyze and cope with events. Important people and places in the news will also be studied. The course is organized as a forum for student collection, analysis, and discussion of current news events. Student materials used are newspapers, magazines, CNN Newsroom and other supplementary materials dealing with the news media and related concerns.

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## **CURRENT EVENTS 2**

(#1225)

**Periods Per Week:** 5

**Prerequisites:** None

**Credit Value:** .5

**Semester:** Either

**Open to Grades:** 9, 10, 11, 12

The Current Events 2 course will provide students with an opportunity to analyze all phases of the news. Students will use a variety of sources for current information. Magazines, newspapers and television will be used to provide course content. Time will also be spent on learning how to critique those news sources. Improving speaking and writing skills will also be course objectives. (Current Events 1 is recommended.)

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## **GEOGRAPHY**

(#1290)

**Periods Per Week:** 5

**Prerequisites:** None

**Credit Value:** .5

**Semester:** Either

**Open to Grades:** 9, 10, 11, 12

The Geography course is designed to further develop the basic insights and skills of geography through a systematic study of the purpose of geography, its methods and tools of study, the interrelationships of geographical inquiry and the development of modern geographic, ecological and spatial perspectives. Emphasis in the course is on the study of weather, climate and landforms. This course is planned for students who want to develop the insights of geography for their personal interest or who wish to prepare for the rigors of geography at the college or professional level.



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**THE HISTORY OF WESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA****Credit Value: .5****(#1165)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: None****Semester: Either**  
**Open to Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12**

The History of Western Pennsylvania course provides students an exciting opportunity to increase their awareness of Western Pennsylvania history, culture, and trivia. The students will study the chronological history of Western Pennsylvania from 1754 to the present. Primary and secondary documents will be used from newspapers, magazines, and databases as crucial learning tools in this class. Learning will occur through a mix of traditional classroom techniques as well as student-centered projects such as posters, presentations, and station activities. Units of study include but are not limited to: maps and geography, early settlement, Pittsburgh's rise of industry, rebirth as a modern city, Pittsburgh sports, Shaler Area's history, Pittsburghese, and "What Pittsburghers Do/Did for fun."

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**THE HOLOCAUST: BACKGROUND,  
TRAGEDY & AFTERMATH****Credit Value: .5****(#1155)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: None****Semester: Either**  
**Open to Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12**

The Holocaust: Background, Tragedy, and Aftermath course will study Jewish history and culture, the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany prior to WWII, the attempted genocide of the Jews and other social undesirables by the Nazis, and the resulting postwar consequences. Throughout the duration of the course, students will be expected to read at least one novel, complete various quizzes, tests, reading assignments, and long-term projects, and participate in daily classroom discussion. This is not a course to be taken lightly – it will be emotionally and intellectually challenging - though it is a course students will find completely unique and insightful.

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**MODERN GLOBAL CONFLICTS****Credit Value: .5****(#1215)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: None****Semester: Either**  
**Open to Grades: 11, 12**

The Modern Global Conflicts course is designed as a collegial study of worldwide conflicts that have occurred primarily after 1980. Because of the nature of the material, the course requires a great deal of feedback, discussion, and critical thinking regarding the material. We will utilize the conflicts as a backdrop to study the political, economic, technological, geographical, and, most importantly, cultural characteristics of all participants involved during classic cases of genocide and civil, religious and imperial disputes. In most cases the course will focus on engagements where the United States has little or no direct involvement. Conflicts discussed usually include the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the Bosnian War, Rwandan Genocide, etc. It is important to note, however, topics of study can be requested and will be considered if enough interest in the topic exists. The course will combine traditional historical approaches to understanding conflicts, as well as a number of non-traditional and independent projects designed to help personally connect students to these issues.

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**MULTICULTURAL STUDIES****Credit Value: .5****(#1150)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: None****Semester: Either**  
**Open to Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12**

Multicultural Studies is a three-part course. First, students will study multiculturalism through multicultural storytelling, the story of human migration (“Big History”), and in-depth looks at minority and indigenous groups in America and abroad. Second, students will learn the history of the development of human rights and learn about violations of these rights historically and currently. Lastly, students will focus on numerous case studies of the ultimate human rights violation – genocide. The Holocaust will provide the framework to learning about other genocides that have occurred since 1945. This course, like the Holocaust course, will include numerous guest speakers and field trip opportunities where students will learn about historical events from those who lived them. Though the Holocaust elective is not a prerequisite, together the “Multicultural Studies” and “Holocaust” course will give students a solid foundation in Holocaust, genocide and human rights education.

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**PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY****Credit Value: .5****(#1280)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: None****Semester: Either**  
**Open to Grades: 10, 11, 12**

The Principles of Psychology course is designed to bring about an understanding of the principles of human behavior. This knowledge provides the scientific basis for studying methods of predicting or modifying behavior. The course is open to students who desire a sampling of various psychological findings, and who wish to use this science’s methods and theories to help understand their own personal experiences and development.

This course is organized around a text and some group process experiments. It is supplemented with readings and media. Topics studied include methods and theories of behavior, the brain, states of consciousness, sensation/perception, learning, human development from birth to death, psychological disorders/ therapy, and personality traits.

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**ADVANCED TOPICS IN PSYCHOLOGY****Credit Value: .5****(#1210)****Periods Per Week: 5**  
**Prerequisites: 60% or above in Principles of Psychology****Semester: Either**  
**Open to Grades: 10, 11, 12**

Building upon the foundational knowledge gained in Principles of Psychology, the Advanced Topics in Psychology course delves deeper into the intricacies of human behavior, cognition, and mental processes. This semester-long course is designed for high school students who have a keen interest in psychology and a desire to explore more advanced concepts and applications. Through a combination of in-depth discussions, projects, presentations, and hands-on activities, students will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities within the field of psychology. This course aims to prepare students for higher-level academic pursuits in psychology and related fields, fostering a passion for understanding the workings of the human mind.

Course topics will include an investigation into: Thinking and Intelligence, Motivation and Emotion, Social Psychology, Psychological Disorders and Therapies, Positive Psychology, Forensic Psychology, and other emerging trends in psychology.

## SOCIOLOGY

(#1285)

Periods Per Week: 5  
Prerequisites: None

Credit Value: .5

Semester: Either  
Open to Grades: 10, 11, 12

Sociology is the study of development, structure, and functions of human societies. This is an introductory course, which will provide you with a basic, **to semi-expansive** foundation of knowledge in this field of study. Sociology shares with other scientific disciplines the objective of seeking to **understand, analyze, and** explain the nature of social order and disorder **and their outcomes and effects. This is done by studying social interaction, patterns of group behavior, and constraints among groups in order to** discover and explain the underlying relationships in a social structure. **Simply put, Psychology** studies the “tree”- **the mental & emotional process of the individual-** *Sociology* studies the “forest” - **Patterned behavior of people in Groups.** Central concepts studied in this course **include but are not limited to:** the **history** of Sociology, culture, social interaction, socialization, **types of societies, group identification,** social change, anti-social behaviors, norms, language, conformity, adolescence and family structure, as well as social science research and data collection.

This academic survey course is organized around **typical introductory level Sociology courses, which includes, but is not limited to: an in-class textbook, supplemental articles, media, & previous studies, individual and group processing, lectures, note-taking, and discussion,** observations, experiments, **and surveys, quizzes, tests, & occasional homework.** Sociology can be useful in helping students **understand & navigate** the **social** world in which they live, providing them with the opportunity to develop a **broader** sociological perspective, **providing** new insights to combat conventional social wisdom, arguing what “most think is true.”

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## TRIAL LAW

(#1205)

Periods Per Week: 5  
Prerequisites: None

Credit Value: .5

Semester: Either  
Open to Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12

Trial Law is designed for students interested in legal careers, criminology, or who just enjoy taking part in the academic exercise of mock trials. By the end of the course, students will have learned to prepare witnesses, deliver convincing direct examinations, effectively cross-examine witnesses, raise and overcome evidentiary objections, and select the strongest facts to persuasively present to the judge and jury. It will also focus on effective advocacy skills, appropriate professional conduct, and overall trial preparation. The interpretation of both criminal and civil law will be emphasized with additional stress placed on cases relating to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Amendments. While classes will include some level of explanatory lectures, the emphasis of the course will be on learning through case study legal debate and by participating in a significant number of mock trials in class. This class is perfect for a student who would like to learn more about law and legal interpretation through a hands-on experience.