

# PARKMONT SCHOOL

## ACADEMIC COURSES and SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### Sample Catalog



## PARKMONT SCHOOL History

Parkmont was founded in 1971 as a cooperative Middle School by a parent group in McLean, Virginia. The parents were acquainted with the work of progressive educator Maria Montessori and they consulted extensively with John Bremer, founder of the Parkway School in Philadelphia and a proponent of experience-based learning. Parkmont has always emphasized educating the individual in the context of a close-knit community, and the program has strong roots in both the progressive and experiential educational traditions.

Parkmont moved to Washington in 1977 to take better advantage of the educational opportunities available in the city. Parkmont started an Upper School program in the fall of 1991 that serves students in the 10th through 12th grades. In the spring of 1991 Parkmont joined forces with the Somerset School and moved to its permanent home at 4842 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

The school currently enrolls 65 students and has a fulltime and parttime staff of more than 15. The Middle and Upper School programs have different schedules and staffs and it is still assumed that some students who enter in the early grades will matriculate to larger high schools in the area as they have in the past.

Parkmont's primary goal is to help adolescents develop the skills, motivation, and selfdiscipline necessary for success in school and in life. It respects the roles that they must play in their own development and in the larger society.

Enrollment is limited to guarantee that each student receives sufficient individual support and has the opportunity to participate significantly in all aspects of the program. Parkmont students reflect a rich diversity of learning styles, talents, and cultural backgrounds, indicative of the heterogeneous population of the metropolitan area. Students are selected on the basis of their ability and willingness to contribute to and benefit from the programs of the school. For each of the past fifteen years, more than 50% of our enrollment has been comprised of students of color.

The academic programs include a core curriculum that allows the students to choose from a wide range of course selections. Basic skills are acquired in activityoriented classes that include projects and field trips to stimulate an adolescent's interest. Every student is permitted to proceed responsibly at his or her own pace with the support and guidance essential to the development of selfawareness and respect for others.

Parkmont faculty members are active role models, chosen not only for their subject mastery and enthusiasm, but for their empathy with this age group. Their teaching role is reinforced by families who are committed to supporting the school and its values. Adultstudent relationships remain the constant in a program that allows other elements to be flexible.

Although the school's facilities and staff have changed since 1971, its mission has remained constant. Parkmont's commitment to excellence is shared by its trustees, faculty, parents, students and alumni. Their continuing dedication to Parkmont's mission assures its success in the future.

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

How do we help adolescents develop the confidence and skills they need to move ahead energetically with their lives?

At Parkmont we create a community where students ally themselves with creative adults whose driving concern is their success and well-being. We provide them with substantial experience in the world beyond school that invites them to see more clearly the possibilities ahead. And we challenge them with an academic program that fuses adolescent interests with traditional disciplines and respects the variety of their talents and motivations.

They get ready to chart their own course; we make sure they're prepared for the journey.

## **STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Parkmont 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. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## PARKMONT SCHOOL Daily Schedule

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### **Monday**

8:30-9:30 English  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Math  
1:45-2:15 Advisory  
2:15-3:30 PM Class

#### **Tuesday**

8:30-9:30 English  
9:30-10:00 School Meeting  
10:00-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Math  
1:45-2:15 School Meeting  
2:15-3:30 PM Class

#### **Wednesday**

8:30-9:30 English  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Math  
1:45-3:30 Study Hall/Advisory

#### **Thursday**

8:30-9:30 English  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Math  
1:45-2:15 Advisory  
2:15-3:30 PM Class

#### **Friday**

8:30-9:30 English  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch

### UPPER SCHOOL

#### **Monday**

8:30-9:30 Math  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Reading Seminar  
1:45-2:15 Advisory  
2:15-3:30 PM Class

#### **Tuesday**

8:30-9:30 Math  
9:30-10:00 School Meeting  
10:00-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Reading Seminar  
1:45-2:15 Advisory  
2:15-3:30 PM Class

#### **Wednesday**

8:30-9:30 Math  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
1:00-4:00 Internship

#### **Thursday**

8:30-9:30 Math  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-1:45 Reading Seminar  
1:45-2:15 Advisory  
2:15-3:30 PM Class

#### **Friday**

8:30-9:30 Math  
9:30-9:45 Announcements  
9:45-12:00 Main Lesson  
1:00-4:00 Internship

12:45-1:45     Math  
1:45-2:00     Advisory/Study Hall

## **UPPER SCHOOL Program Description**

In the fall of 1991, Parkmont started an Upper School program for students in the 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The program now includes the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and serves approximately 40 students, most of whom will go on to college following graduation. Parkmont has a history of successfully working with students with diverse learning styles and needs. The Upper School program is designed to be challenging, flexible, and supportive. The Upper School Program consists of the following components:

### **Math**

Morning math seminars meet daily throughout the year. Students work in small groups or individually in courses that range from preAlgebra to Calculus and include consumer math and computer instruction.

### **Reading Seminar**

In Reading Seminar students are expected to do a substantial amount of reading and discussion of literature of various types during the year. Course objectives are to have students do more sustained reading, with increased comprehension and enjoyment of what they read, while writing critical papers and journal entries. One full credit of English may be earned. Some classes focus on specific subjects (science, history), allowing students to earn ½ credit in English and ½ credit in another subject area. Classes meet for one hour, three times a week throughout the year.

### **Main Lesson Intensive Courses**

These courses meet for 10 hours a week for seven weeks. They include offerings in all the major disciplines. This structure allows students the opportunity to study a particular subject area in depth and allows the teacher to utilize a wide variety of learning activities. Parkmont courses emphasize hands-on learning and students are likely to find that Washington, D.C. is their laboratory for learning. Students receive ½ credit for each Main Lesson class they pass. Their selection of courses reflects their own interests and their individual needs for meeting the graduation requirements.

### **Afternoon Classes**

Courses are offered in Sports, Exercise, Art, Ceramics, Photography, Cooking, Performance Art, Study Skills, SAT Prep, and Petition Writing. These classes meet at the end of the day on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

### **Evaluations & Grades**

Students and their families receive written evaluations in their courses every seven weeks. Some classes are evaluated on a pass-fail basis. In 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, students must earn a C- or higher to pass a class. Additionally, seniors must pass every class they take senior year in order to graduate. Interim reports are sent, mid-session, to students who are in danger of not passing, or to those who are showing exceptional progress.

### **Internships**

Semester or yearlong internships meet on Wednesday and Friday afternoons after lunch when students work and study in a variety of settings around the city. All students meet with the Internship Coordinator to select an activity they are interested in and which will provide a significant learning opportunity for them as they get ready for further study and work after high school. Students do internships in child development centers, law offices, small businesses, hospitals, radio stations, the National Zoo and Smithsonian, and with carpenters, artists, and other craftspeople in the area.

### **Advisory**

Students meet with their advisors in small groups three times a week, and in an all-school meeting once a week, to consider personal issues and community concerns. In addition, the school provides college and vocational counseling for all of its students.

## UPPER SCHOOL Graduation Requirements

Parkmont graduation requirements have two components: academic requirements that fulfill the District of Columbia graduation requirements and specific Parkmont requirements that include internships and a senior petition.

**Requirements for Grades 9-12:** These requirements must be met in order to graduate from Parkmont. Remember this when choosing your courses. If you are not sure what you need to take, talk to your advisor.

|                            |           |                    |             |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| English                    | 4 Credits | World Geography    | ½ Credit    |
| Math                       | 3 Credits | World History      | 1 Credit    |
| Science                    | 3 Credits | Foreign Language   | 2 Credits   |
| American History           | 1 Credit  | Physical Education | 1 ½ Credits |
| DC History                 | ½ Credit  | Fine Arts          | 1 Credit    |
| American Govt.             | ½ Credit  | Electives          | 5 ½ Credits |
| <b>Total: 23 ½ Credits</b> |           |                    |             |

### **Additional Requirements**

All Upper School students are required to participate in the internship program, which grants one non-academic credit for one year-long or two semester-long internships during each academic year. In addition, all seniors must complete a petition (an extensive paper describing their educational history and future plans), and must earn a C- or higher in every course that year.

**Internship Requirements (Grades 9-12):** Students must earn 1 credit per year for Internship. These may be used to meet the Electives requirements or, in certain cases, may be used to meet specific subject area requirements listed above.

**Senior Petition (Grade 12):** In the senior year, Parkmont students must petition the faculty to graduate by preparing a 20-25 page personal essay. The graduation petition gives each student the opportunity to reflect on the progress and self-awareness each has gained from closely working with the staff, and to consider future goals and plans.

**Participation in Graduation Activities (Grade 12):** All seniors are required to take part in both senior night and the graduation ceremony.

### **At Parkmont, credits are earned as follows:**

|                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Each Main Lesson        | ½ Credit    |
| Full Year of Math       | 1 Credit    |
| Reading Seminar         | 1 Credit    |
| Full Year of PM Class   | 1 Credit    |
| Full Year of Internship | 1 Credit    |
| One Year Total          | 6 ½ Credits |

Credit may also be given for classes taken outside of Parkmont (with approval of the faculty). Such classes could include summer school and junior college courses, art classes, physical education/sports, and health/CPR courses.

## **UPPER SCHOOL Internship Program**

Coordinators: Willa Reinhard

FULL YEAR  
REQUIREMENT

The Internship Program for Upper School students evolved out of the strength of thirteen years of experience in operating a program in our Middle School. We are proud to offer high school students the opportunity to experience the world of work first hand. For these 14- to 18-year-olds, the program is a crucial element of preparation, whether their path after Parkmont leads them to college or directly into a vocation. We also believe that the Internship Program strengthens our ties with Washington's diverse metropolitan community and opens the eyes of the community to the potential of motivated and directed high school students.

The program is designed to provide a significant learning opportunity for each student. Through interviews and discussions with each student, the faculty and staff help the student decide the kind of skills he or she would like to learn and the type of environment best suited for that learning. Students become better informed about career opportunities and about what courses to take to advance their college or vocational goals.

Students are evaluated on periodic checklists by the onsite supervisors, by information received through phone calls, site visits, and by biweekly student evaluations. In this way, students have the opportunity to review newly acquired skills and comment on the experience in general.

Students are required to spend either 90 or 180 hours at an internship. They are released from school each Wednesday and Friday at 12:00 to work at internships for 3 hours each day. Students may not be paid for these six internship hours per week. All Upper School students must participate in the Internship Program.

Two students can work together to design a community service project for internship credit. Students may also use internship time to study at another site or to work on an independent study project, pending faculty approval. Before graduation, students must complete at least one community service internship.

The importance of the Internship Program reflects Parkmont's emphasis on experiential learning and has helped foster positive mentor relationships in the community. Past internship placements include:

Adams Morgan Animal Clinic  
Adventure Theater  
Advanced Computer Center  
Amnesty International  
Arena Stage



Bread for the City  
CD/Game Exchange  
Circle Yoga  
City Bikes  
Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind  
Common Cause  
Community Council for the Homeless  
Congressman Charles Rangel  
Create Arts Center  
Dale's Music  
The Dance Place  
D.C. Arts Center  
D.C. Jewish Community Ctr.  
D.C. Rape Crisis Center  
DCTV  
The Democratic National Committee  
Dream Wizard Games and Books  
Doggie Style  
Fillmore Arts Center  
Financial Mgmt & Reporting  
Folger Theatre  
Food and Friends  
Footlocker  
GAP Community Child Care  
Gala Theater  
Greenpeace  
Greenpets  
Guitar Center  
Harriet Tubman Elem.School  
Holy Cross Care Center  
Joy of Motion  
L'Academie de Cuisine  
Latin American Youth Center  
Little Flower Montessori  
Martha's Table  
Meadowbrook Stables  
National Capital YMCA  
National Children's Museum  
National Geographic  
National Institute of Mental Health  
Natural Medicine  
The Obama Presidential Campaign  
Parkway Deli  
PFLAG  
Planet Chocolate City  
Politics and Prose  
Population Connection  
Rock Creek Stables  
Rock Creek Sports Club  
Southeast Library  
Spanish Education Development Center  
Sports World  
Springvale Terrace Retirement Community  
Studio Theatre  
Suburban Hospital  
Sullivan's Toy Store  
Takoma Park Animal Clinic  
Teens Against the Spread of Aids  
TennisTopia  
The Tropical Lagoon  
Therapeutic Riding Center  
Third and Eats  
Touchstone Gallery  
Unity Center of Truth  
US Capitol Historical Society  
US International Trade Commission

## **UPPER SCHOOL Main Lesson Course Descriptions**

### ***Science***

#### ***Science and Technology***

This course will examine current scientific concepts and issues, technological advances, and their impact on society. How scientific knowledge is acquired, advantages and limitations of scientific progress, and the ethics behind science and technology will be studied. We will also study the Scientific Method, exploring what actually makes something science. There will be a focus on learning to read about science and learning to write about science. While there will be projects, field trips, quizzes and exams a big focus of the class will be two large science projects that you will undertake.

#### ***Anatomy and Physiology***

Eating and digestion... We often do it three times each day without considering how it actually works. This critical activity requires the use of muscles, enzymes, nervous system coordination, and several specialized organs of the digestive system. In this class we will learn about movement, digestion, respiration, circulation, reproduction, and disease. The learning activities of the class will include dissections, drawings, models, field trips, films, and lectures.

#### ***Botany***

This course will focus on the study of plants. We are going to examine how we define plants, how plants work and reproduce, and how people interact with plants. Considerable attention will also be given to learning to identify plants, particularly those found locally. Our source materials will be the Glencoe *Diversity of Life* textbook, specifically chapters 17 and 21-24 and, of course, outside. Students will also be responsible for maintaining a field notebook with pictures and descriptions of plants that we see on our expeditions as well as completing a final independent plant report on a widely used commercial plant.

#### ***Chemistry***

Chemistry is the study of chemicals. Everything around us is made of chemicals—the earth, the sky, buildings, cars, food, even yourself. By studying what things are made of and how they react with other materials, chemists can better understand the world around us. They can use this knowledge to develop new, useful substances such as medicines, plastics, cosmetics, and much more. In this class we will learn about atoms and molecules, bonding, states of matter, chemical reactions, compounds, energy changes, acids and bases, and elements. Hands-on labs, field trips, computer research, discussions, quizzes and tests will be given throughout the session.

## ***Literature and Writing***

### ***Language of Film***

This course will undertake an exploration of film as an art form and as an expression of the human condition. Beginning at the beginning and using genres of movies as our guideposts, we hope to learn the language of film and how it is employed to create tone, style, and theme. Students will be expected to write frequently in both critical and creative voices. The films themselves and documentaries about them will serve as teaching tools, and we'll view many excerpts as well as at least one film per week in its entirety. Final presentations will further investigate a filmmaker, a style or genre, or a film technique in the form of oral presentations to the group by each student with visual support.

### ***Creative Writing***

Mystery! Drama! History! Love sonnets! The creative writing class will delve into these and other forms of literature as students learn the ins and outs of creative character, mood and setting, developing unique descriptions, and establishing intrigue and suspense to keep readers on the edge of their seats. The class will function largely as a writing workshop – giving students a chance to decide what they'd like to write. Students will create their own plans, schedules and deadlines (with the help of their teacher) for how they will complete each of their writing projects. They will give and receive feedback from peers. In addition, portions of class time will be devoted to studying professional writers in order to examine different techniques and styles.

### ***Research Writing***

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental elements of the college research paper. Through intensive research in the library and individual analysis in the classroom, students will acquire skills in topic selection, researching and note-taking, the development of an efficient outline and thesis statement, and in accurate documentation through in-text citations and a Works Cited list. Students will be required to utilize rough drafts in the completion of a substantial research paper. Although this course is demanding, it is a necessity for the college-bound student who wants to be prepared.

### ***Poetry***

“Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee . . .” Even Ali (the Greatest) was given to bouts of simile and hyperbole. If you are too (or if you just want to find out what simile and hyperbole are), join us for a session of deep diving into the study of poetry. (Enough metaphor already!) We'll read, listen to, and discuss works by poets of different generations and cultures writing in traditional and contemporary styles – from Whitman to Walcott, from sonnets to rap. We'll study the mechanics of poetry, discovering the method to the meaning. We'll also write original poems, talk to practicing poets, and attend performances to enhance our critical appreciation and enjoyment of poetry.

### ***Contemporary Short Stories***

This is a literature course undertaking to teach the form and structure of the short story through an examination of some 15 or more examples of acclaimed short American fiction of the past 5-10 years. We will read a minimum of three new stories per week, exploring how the character was

revealed, plot structure, narrative voice, imagery and meaning. Over the course of this reading and sharing, each student will start to evolve and shape the elements of an original short story that will be honed and polished during the final week of the session. Some of the authors to be covered will be Joyce Carol Oates, Raymond Carver, Amy Tan, Alice Walker, Jamaica Kincaid and John Sayles.

### ***Contemporary Theater***

Some contemporary playwrights are changing the voice of American theater with their work. We'll explore these works and examine the structure of dramatic writing and the role of theater in our lives. Intensive reading and writing, theater workshops and performances, as well as creative dramatics of our own will keep things varied and fresh.

## **Social Studies**

### ***US Government***

What is the purpose of government and how does it affect our daily lives? How does our constitution protect our most basic rights and liberties? In this class we will discuss the formation and principles of the US Constitution along with American government and the modern political system. The class will examine the three branches of government, the role of individuals and organized interests in our political process, and key debates faced by our founders and current leaders. We will also discuss the adaptations to the constitution, the political parties, and the process of political campaigns. We will discuss and debate key issues, analyze political and media messages, and learn about our role in a democracy.

### ***DC History***

Who were Benjamin Banneker and Pierre L'Enfant? How did these two figures affect the development of the District of Columbia? What do you know of Black Georgetown and the U Street corridor? About the alley communities? These questions and more will be discussed. The primary objective of the course will be to examine the economic, historical, political, and social development of the District of Columbia from its inception to the present. Through maps, pictures, interviews, on-site visits, texts, and other sources, students will research and create a project on a selected D.C. neighborhood.

### ***Race Relations***

This course surveys 400 years of race relations in the United States, focusing in particular on the shared and unique experiences of blacks and whites in this country. How did a nation willing to aspire to the notion that "all men are created equal" get so dependent on a system of enslavement and later apartheid, the consequences of which still pervade our social fabric today? We pay particular attention to the ways our political system has been used both to support and diminish great inequity and injustice. We focus on the growth of slavery in colonial times, the pre-Civil War political campaigns to expand and limit the "peculiar" institution, the growth of Jim Crow after the

War, and the Civil Rights movement in the 60's and 70's. And we examine the current state of these race relations and what might lie ahead.

## **Foreign Language**

### ***Spanish 1A***

This class does not require any knowledge of a foreign language, and introduces students to basic Spanish structures, including: present tense, regular and irregular verbs, definite and indefinite articles, use of "ser" and "estar", simple sentence formation, and beginning vocabulary words. The class is designed to develop students' ability to speak, read, write and understand Spanish. Spanish and Latin American culture are also explored.

### ***Spanish 1B***

This class is designed for students who have taken Spanish 1A or who have taken Spanish elsewhere. The course covers the use of stem-changing, irregular and reflexive verbs, object pronouns, preterit tense and commands. Emphasis is placed on developing students' comprehension through reading stories, plays and poetry in Spanish.

## **UPPER SCHOOL READING SEMINARS**

### ***Making a Difference: Finding Sustainable Solutions to Our World's Environmental Problems***

Although the United States has less than 5% of the world's population, we use about 25% of the world's resources – five times more than our fair share! In fact, the US plays a role in many of the world's environmental problems, so it's important that we're directly involved in creating sustainable solutions. Since it first began to evolve and grow in importance a century ago, environmental education has moved away from traditional conservation education and nature study towards a more interdisciplinary and interactive form of education that stresses the importance of creativity and innovation to solve the environmental problems affecting our communities. Through readings, discussions, field trips, projects and films, we will explore some of the most important environmental issues that the world is facing today, while taking a critical look at what we can do to make a difference in our communities. Students will have regular writing assignments – either in depth research papers, or shorter essays/journal assignments that will allow them to share critical thoughts and opinions on the topic of study. Students will earn ½ credit in English and ½ credit in Science for this reading seminar.

### ***Around the World in 180 Days: Reading and Writing About Place***

In this class, some basic themes of geography will guide our journeys through the literature and cultures of the world. We'll look at everything we read and study through the context of its place of origin, while also learning basic geography skills. We'll read novels, short stories, travel writing, essays and poetry as well as listen to music, watch movies and study some visual arts from around the world. We'll also write our own inspired (and inspiring!) pieces about travel and place. Each

session, students will choose a country from the region we're studying and work on an individual or small group project to present to the class. (.5 English/.5 Geography credit).

### **Social Justice in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Race and Class in America**

How do race, economic class, and social labels define and affect the progress of an individual? A "group?" The United States as a whole? Are race and class/income relevant issues today? If injustices exist, what methods of action are possible now? What methods have worked in the past? This reading group focuses on these questions through the examination of American history, literature and film. As a class we will read fiction, non-fiction, and/or a play each session in addition to newspaper articles, other factual sources and personal experiences as a springboard for class discussions, projects and writing. An open mind is required for entry into this course! (.5 English/.5 American History credit).

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL Program Description**

The Middle School Program at Parkmont consists of the following components:

### **English**

English is a yearlong course that meets daily. Students are placed in classes according to their ability and age. The English program at Parkmont is designed to improve a student's ability to read and write as well as develop an interest in various genres of literature. Small classes allow teachers to be creative in their assignments and promote full participation in class discussions. An emphasis on good organizational skills helps to sustain achievement of the program's goals.

Underlying the entire curriculum at Parkmont is a strong emphasis on writing skills. The mechanics of clear writing, correct grammatical usage and proper spelling are all introduced within the context of teaching writing. Rewriting serves as a major tool for improvement, and all final drafts will be collected in a writing folder to monitor each student's progress during the year.

Cooperative learning is highly valued at Parkmont. Student writing and editing groups learn to evaluate their own work. Peer review is seen as an important evaluating tool. There is always the recognition that success in the English classroom will translate into positive results in Main Lesson classes and greater ease with academic work in general.

### **Math**

Math is also a year-long class that meets daily. The Math program at Parkmont focuses on an understanding and utilization of basic math skills. Classes are organized on the basis of tested skill levels, with courses offered in General Math I, General Math II and PreAlgebra, Algebra I and Algebra II. Homework will be assigned every day and weekly review tests will be given to help students develop confidence in test taking and to improve their speed.

### **Main Lesson Courses**

An Important Note about Main Lessons...

Main lesson classes are very different from the kinds of courses most students have taken at other schools. Parkmont has the following reasons for offering this selection:

- The seven-week intensive classes meet ten hours a week and cover topics in Science, Social Studies, and Arts.
- Students can concentrate all their academic energy on one major topic rather than dividing their interests over four or five main academic areas. They can give each Main Lesson their best effort with undivided attention.
- One of the things that Parkmont students, past and present, like about this school is how easy it is to get to know the teachers. Students spend several hours a day with their main lesson teachers, so both students and teachers get to know one another well.
- There is a lot of flexibility in the way that the school day is set up. Parkmont devotes a considerable amount of time to Main Lesson courses in order to give students the opportunity to go on field trips, see movies, invite guest speakers to their classes, work on special projects, start researching for a paper at the library, conduct simulations, play games, role play, etc. Education becomes more exciting when students are able to use the community as a resource, talk to people and experience new challenges.
- Main lessons provide a unique, special plan that reflects students' individual interests, abilities, and needs. Students choose their own Main Lesson courses with the help of their advisors. Each student is viewed as deserving an academic program that reflects his or her particular interests.

### **Afternoon Classes**

Courses are offered in Sports, Exercise, Visual Art, Ceramics, Digital Photography, SAT Prep, Study Skills. These classes meet at the end of the day on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Students should take at least one sports class per year.

### **Advisory**

Students meet with their advisors in small groups three times per week, and in all-school meetings once a week, to consider personal issues, community concerns, and academic progress.

### **Evaluations & Grades**

Students and their families receive written evaluations in their courses every seven weeks. Some classes are evaluated on a pass-fail basis. Interim reports are sent, mid-session, to students who are in danger of not passing, or to those who are showing exceptional progress.

### **Internships**

The internship program gives Parkmont students the opportunity to experience a job environment, to learn new skills and test ideas about working, to help the community by providing useful services, and to develop responsibility in a new setting. The internship program will run for 14 weeks, during Sessions Four and Five. Students will go to their internships once a week, for two hours at a time.

Students work with the Internship Coordinator to find placements that reflect their interests and strengths. Students and internship sponsors sign contracts outlining their respective responsibilities.

Parkmont has been running an internship program for Middle School students for the past 18 years.

Student placements have included a veterinary office, museum, photo lab, nursing home, record store, pet shop, toy store, bike shop, non-profits, and various other organizations. In past years, internships have led to summer jobs for some Middle School students.



## **MIDDLE SCHOOL Course Descriptions**

### ***Science***

#### ***Scientific Discovery***

Science encompasses the arts of questioning, hypothesizing, investigating, discovering, and communicating. Mathematics is the language that provides clarity and understanding. Using a hands-on approach that integrates mathematics, science and other disciplines, students in "Scientific Discovery" explore a problem or solve a mystery rather than fixating on the so-called right answer. Relying on direct experiences rather than textbooks, the various activities in the course will captivate the student's imagination while illuminating essential scientific themes, concepts, and methods. Activity titles include: "Oobleck: What Scientists Do"; "Paper Towel Testing"; "Bubble-ology"; and "Hot Water and Warm Homes from Sunlight". A student's grade in this course is based on quizzes, class participation, and weekly evaluation of their laboratory notebooks.

#### ***Crime Lab***

Become a super science sleuth while performing crime-solving, case-breaking, and crook-catching activities. From dusting for fingerprints to analyzing handwriting and identifying ink found on a ransom note, this course is designed to give you a first-hand look at how detectives and forensic scientists use science to solve real-life crimes. Make a plaster cast of a shoe, identify lip prints left on a glass. Examine hair and clothing fibers. Practice chemistry to identify mystery substances. You will learn even more of the techniques practiced by professional crime detectors. In addition to having many opportunities to experiment with forensic science techniques, you'll also learn about some famous crimes and how they were or weren't solved. But more important, by using your crime-detecting skills, you'll learn how to think more clearly and effectively, abilities that will help you in whatever you do. Evaluation in the course will be based on quizzes, evaluation of student notebooks, and a book report.

#### ***Food Science***

Chemistry is at the heart of how everything works: it's the science of change. What makes something soft or hard, or a solid, liquid, or a gas? Chemistry tells you. It also looks at what makes something explode or freeze, sizzle and pop, or not change at all, because it's about how those substances interact and change. Students in Food Science use food and cooking to discover and learn the answers to some of those questions. From making rock candy, sprouting bean seeds, making ice cream, lemon fizzes and pretzels, students will learn the chemical principles involved in a myriad of experiments you can eat!

#### ***Inventor's Workshop***

So, you want to be an inventor. Great! This course can help you. Like any other skill, inventing can be learned. And, the more you practice, the better you become at it. In this course, students are presented challenging projects that involve the construction of an intriguing invention or scientific device. Elements of mystery, illusion, humor and fantasy are combined with basic scientific principles to entice students to play with ideas, to dream, take gadgets apart, build oddball contraptions and have fun. Projects to be built will include a candle-powered steamboat, a steadiness tester, a bubble-making machine and a disco light show machine.

## **Social Studies**

### ***Race Relations***

This course surveys 400 years of race relations in the United States, focusing in particular on the shared and unique experiences of blacks and whites in this country. How did a nation willing to aspire to the notion that "all men are created equal" get so dependent on a system of enslavement and later apartheid, the consequences of which still pervade our social fabric today? We pay particular attention to the ways our political system has been used both to support and diminish great inequity and injustice. We focus on the growth of slavery in colonial times, the pre-Civil War political campaigns to expand and limit the "peculiar" institution, the growth of Jim Crow after the War, and the Civil Rights movement in the 60's and 70's. And we examine the current state of these race relations and what might lie ahead.

### ***World Religions***

In this course we will explore some of the world's great religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam and the relationships between these religions and international cultures. Our readings will include religious classics, such as the Ramayana, and writings about or inspired by these traditions. We will discuss the common elements of these religions and students will be challenged to use these ideas in a creative project. This course will involve ongoing reading and reflective writing work, as well as group projects and many field trips.

### ***The U.S. Civil Rights Movement***

In this course we will examine the origins, major events, and key figures involved in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Questions that we will address in class include: Which key people, organizations, and institutions determined the course of the movement? What legislation was created because of this movement? What changes did the movement bring to U.S. law and culture? How has the Civil Rights Movement affected our lives? What has been the legacy and continued impact of the movement on present day race politics and social/economic issues in our country?

## **Writing**

### ***Creative Writing***

Mystery! Drama! History! Love sonnets! The creative writing class will delve into these and other forms of literature as students learn the ins and outs of creative character, mood and setting, developing unique descriptions, and establishing intrigue and suspense to keep readers on the edge of their seats. The class will function largely as a writing workshop – giving students a chance to decide what they'd like to write. Students will create their own plans, schedules and deadlines (with the help of their teacher) for how they will complete each of their writing projects. They will give and receive feedback from peers. In addition, portions of class time will be devoted to studying professional writers in order to examine different techniques and styles.

### ***Journalism***

The role of journalism in our everyday lives is to provide us with information about the world around us and help us become more active and interested citizens. Whether we get our news from blogs, newspapers, the radio or TV, everyone in some way is receiving news everyday. So how is it done? How is the news delivered to us and why is it so important? During this class we will look at and examine all different forms of journalism, from print to blogging and everything in between.